

self awareness

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HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE · SKILLS FOR PRACTICE

Communication

The heart of safe, person-centred care

Presented by [Your name]

[Your course / cohort] · [Date]



About me & what I'll cover



A little about me

I'm a health and social care learner currently on placement in a residential care setting, supporting older adults with their day-to-day needs. Working alongside nurses, carers and families has shown me how much good care depends on clear, kind communication.

In this presentation I will:

- 1 Explain what communication means in everyday care
- 2 Show why it is essential for safety and quality
- 3 Introduce the SBAR communication tool
- 4 Apply SBAR to a real work situation
- 5 Reflect on my own development and next steps



What is communication?

Definition

The two-way sharing of information — speaking, listening, body language and written notes — so meaning is understood by everyone involved.

In everyday practice

Listening to what a person needs, explaining care clearly, recording it accurately, and handing over safely.

Where I developed it

On placement: daily handovers, updating care plans, and reassuring residents and their families.

Why communication is essential

In health and social care, communication is a patient-safety skill — not just a soft skill. When it fails, people are harmed.

80%

of serious medical errors
involve miscommunication
during handover

Joint Commission, cited in HIPAA
Journal, 2026

1,700

+

malpractice cases linked to
communication failures, with
almost 2,000 avoidable
deaths

CRICO, cited in HIPAA Journal, 2026



Safe & effective care Accurate handovers stop medication errors, missed observations and duplicated tests.



Good quality outcomes People feel heard, consent is informed, and care is truly person-centred.

Who benefits from good communication?



Service users

- Feel listened to, safe and respected
- Give informed consent to their care
- Fewer errors and better experiences



Staff & colleagues

- Clear handovers and shared understanding
- Stronger teamwork and less conflict
- More confidence in decisions



The organisation

- Fewer incidents and complaints
- Better CQC ratings and reputation
- Safer, more efficient services

When communication breaks down

Most communication failures happen at handover — when information is passed between staff, shifts or services.

Medication errors

Wrong dose or missed medicines when notes are unclear

Missed information

Key changes not passed on at shift change

Delays to care

Tests and treatments held up or repeated

Distress & lost trust

People feel unheard, anxious or unsafe

A structured, shared way of talking prevents these gaps — that is where SBAR helps.

The model: SBAR

What is it? SBAR is a simple, structured way to share critical information. It gives every conversation the same clear, predictable shape so nothing important is missed.

Where it comes from Developed by the US Navy for nuclear submarines, adapted for healthcare by Kaiser Permanente in 2002, and now promoted across the NHS and by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement.

“Structured handover tools like SBAR have been shown to improve patient safety, especially for telephone handovers.” — Ruhomaulu et al., 2019



The four steps of SBAR



Situation

State who you are, the person, and what is happening right now.



Background

Give the relevant history and clinical context.



Assessment

Say what you think the problem is.



Recommendation

Say clearly what you need — and by when.



SBAR in practice

A support worker phones the doctor about a deteriorating resident:

S

"It's Sam on Oak Ward. Mrs Patel in bed 6 has become drowsy and her oxygen has dropped to 88%."

B

"She was admitted with pneumonia two days ago and is on antibiotics."

A

"I think she's deteriorating and needs urgent review."

R

"Please can you assess her within 15 minutes? Shall I start oxygen now?"

Structured words → shared understanding → faster, safer action.

Impact on care — and on me

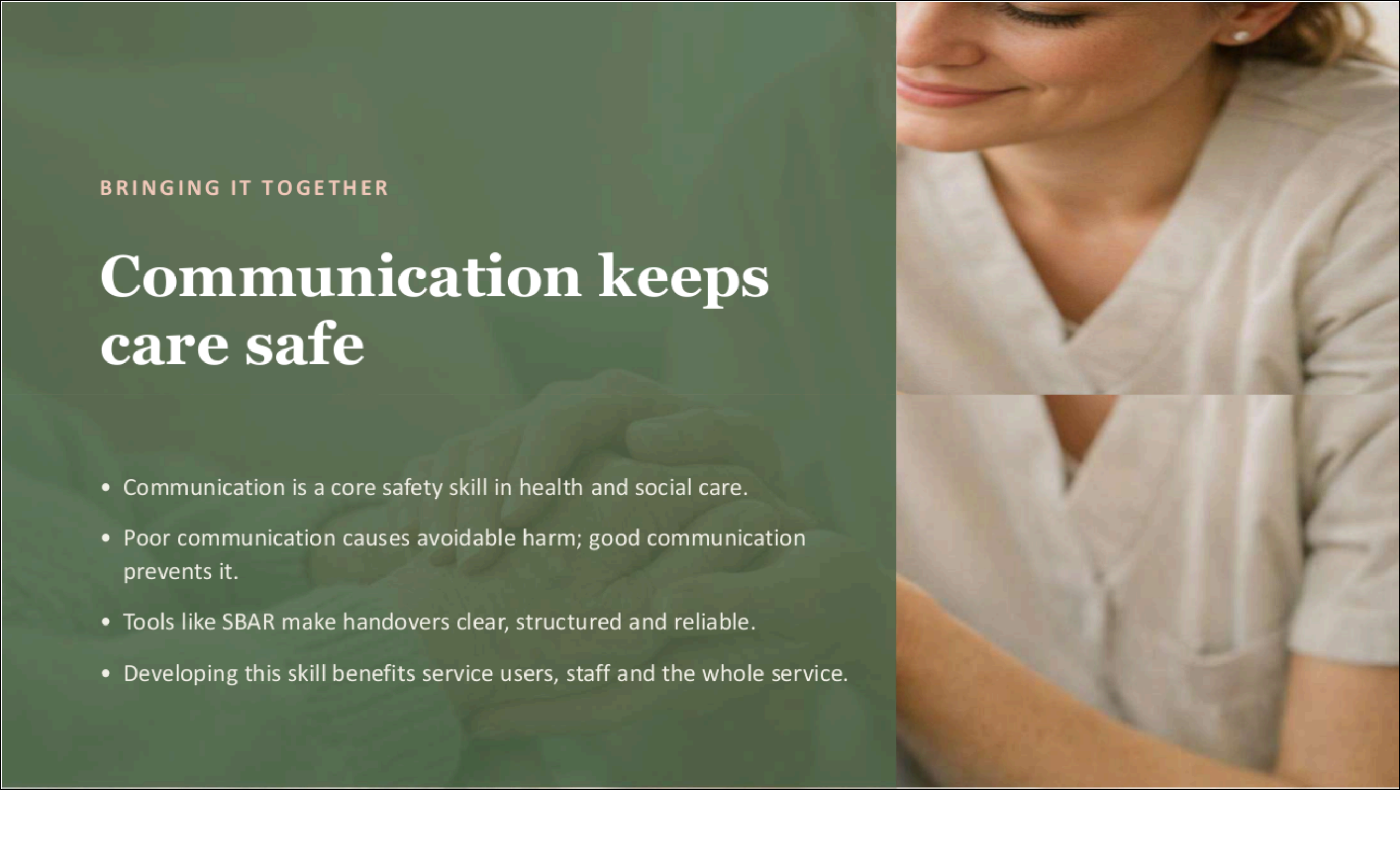
Impact on care

- Safer patients — fewer errors and faster escalation
- A better experience — people feel heard and informed
- Stronger teams — clear, confident handovers
- The link is clear: skill → my role → patient safety

For my development

Employability Clear, structured communication is valued in every care role and supports my next step into practice.

My reflection Listening is a strength I bring. Speaking up confidently under pressure is my area to develop — practising SBAR is helping me grow.

A woman in a white lab coat is shown from the chest up, with her hands clasped in front of her. She is looking down with a slight smile. The background is a solid dark green color.

BRINGING IT TOGETHER

Communication keeps care safe

- Communication is a core safety skill in health and social care.
- Poor communication causes avoidable harm; good communication prevents it.
- Tools like SBAR make handovers clear, structured and reliable.
- Developing this skill benefits service users, staff and the whole service.

References

Harvard style

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