



- Goal:** To help staff send the correct signals to patients, family members and customers through their body language.
- Objective:**
1. Be aware of the signals body language can communicate to our patients and other customers.
 2. Use body language to convey an interest in the person you are assisting with an attitude of service.
- Materials:** Handouts (please make enough copies for your staff)
Body Language Exercise (1-3)
- Activity:**
1. Drama Class. YOU are the drama teacher. Ask students to stand up. As you call out the following words, have them non-verbally (with only facial expressions and body position) depict that word. (2 minutes).

TENSE	TIRED
ANGRY	CLOSE-MINDED
HAPPY	INTERESTED IN LISTENING
THOUGHTFUL	IMPATIENT
DISINTERESTED	AGREEMENT

2. Give handouts to staff and allow them time to read directions and fill in the blanks. Discuss. (5 minutes)

3. *Body Language Exercise.* Get two volunteers, one to play the patient or customer and one to play the staff member. Ask one volunteer to begin voicing a complaint to the other volunteer. As the complaint is being voiced, have the person playing the role of the staff member give incorrect body language and facial expressions in response to the complaint (confused, angry, not interested in listening, etc.) Then, ask them to start over. This time, ask the volunteer playing the role of the staff member to give the appropriate body language and facial expressions that should be expressed while the complaint is being voiced. Ask the person who was voicing the complaint if they had different feelings when the wrong body language and facial expressions were being shown versus the second scenario. Ask staff for their feedback and comments. (5 minutes)

Simply Extraordinary

BODY LANGUAGE...it's what you don't say!

Communication involves both body and mind. Most people think of communication as words and language. But language is only a small part of total communication. Several other factors affect the meaning of your message. Gestures, facial expressions, body position, personal space and touch can change the intended meaning of the message. Body language can convey interest in a person, concern for the situation or compassion for the emotions. Some people may reject bodily contact in normal situations, but in a healthcare environment with its fears, worries and concerns, a touch can be very reassuring.

Through the body language messages that you send, do your customers always understand what you intend for them to understand? By paying attention to both verbal and nonverbal messages, you can positively shape communication with your customers.

Read the following descriptions of gestures, positions or facial expressions and write down what you think each communicates to the customer:

Arms crossed:
Chin resting in hand:
Nodding head:
Tapping fingers on table:
A light pat or touch on the arm:
Leaning back in chair:
Rolling the eyes:
Shrugging shoulders:
Leaning toward the customer:
Standing over the customer:
Well-groomed appearance:
A smile:

Besides speaking correctly to your patients and customers through your own body language, keep in mind we need to read "*between the lines*" and interpret our customer's body language. Eighty percent of communication is non-verbal. Look around you throughout the day. Look at the way people sit and stand, how they use their hands, and expressions on their faces. Each facet of an individual's body language is a clue to what he or she is thinking or feeling and may contrast with what is being said!

"... and never underestimate the power of body language".

-Ursula the Sea Witch from Disney's "The Little Mermaid".