

## Effective Interpersonal Communication Training for Healthcare Workers to Improve Patient Satisfaction in Health Care Facilities

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*Interpersonal communication plays a critical role in determining patient satisfaction and the quality of healthcare services. However, many healthcare workers in primary care settings lack adequate training in communication skills, leading to misunderstandings, decreased patient trust, and suboptimal service experiences. This community service program was implemented through a two-day interactive training for 25 healthcare workers at a local health facility. The methods included pre- and post-assessments, lectures, case discussions, roleplays, and simulation practices. Evaluation was conducted through knowledge tests and participant feedback. The training resulted in a significant increase in participants' knowledge scores, from an average of 62.4% (pre-test) to 86.1% (post-test). Simulation activities showed improved communication techniques such as active listening and empathetic responses. Additionally, 96% of participants expressed high satisfaction with the training and a strong willingness to apply the skills in their clinical practice. The results highlight that structured, practical communication training can enhance healthcare workers' competencies and foster more patient-centered interactions. Continued implementation of similar programs and integration into institutional development plans are recommended to support long-term impact.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The quality of interpersonal communication among healthcare workers remains a significant issue in health service delivery, particularly at the primary care level such as community health centers and clinics. Many patients report feeling unheard, receiving unclear explanations, and experiencing rushed interactions during medical consultations.<sup>1</sup> These communication problems often result in patients feeling

undervalued, distrusting the care provided, and ultimately expressing low satisfaction with the health services they receive.<sup>2</sup>

On a national scale, reports from Indonesia's Ministry of Health and the Public Satisfaction Index indicate that communication is among the lowest-rated aspects in patient satisfaction surveys.<sup>3</sup> Studies show that only about 60% of patients in Indonesia are satisfied with how healthcare providers communicate with them.<sup>4</sup> This statistic reflects a substantial gap between patients'

expectations and the actual communication practices within healthcare settings.<sup>5</sup>

The root of this issue lies in the lack of formal training for healthcare workers in interpersonal communication skills.<sup>6</sup> Most medical and nursing education programs tend to emphasize clinical and technical competencies, often assuming that communication abilities will develop naturally through practice.<sup>7</sup> However, effective communication requires both theoretical understanding and practical experience, reinforced by regular training and reflection.<sup>8</sup>

Although some healthcare institutions have attempted to address this issue through general communication seminars, such efforts often lack relevance to the real-world scenarios faced by healthcare professionals.<sup>9</sup> These initiatives also tend to focus more on theory rather than practice, leaving healthcare workers without adequate tools to engage patients empathetically and clearly.<sup>10</sup>

This community service program is designed to offer structured and context-based training on effective interpersonal communication.<sup>11</sup>

The training incorporates real-life case scenarios and simulation-based learning to enhance healthcare workers' ability to build trust, express empathy, and communicate clearly with patients. By strengthening communication skills, this initiative aims to improve the quality of care and increase patient satisfaction in health facilities.<sup>12</sup>

## 2. METODE

This community service program adopts a participatory and practice-based approach to improve the interpersonal communication skills of healthcare workers. The methods used in this activity include preparation, implementation, and evaluation stages, as described below:

### 1) Preparation Phase

- a. Needs Assessment: A brief survey and informal interviews were

conducted with healthcare workers and patients at the partner health facility to identify common communication problems and expectations.

- b. Coordination and Planning: Coordination meetings were held with the head of the health facility and staff to determine the training schedule, participants, and logistical needs.
- c. Module Development: Training materials were developed based on literature on interpersonal and therapeutic communication, as well as patient-centered care approaches. Modules include theory, case studies, roleplay scenarios, and reflection tools.

### 2) Implementation Phase

The training is delivered in a two-day workshop format with the following components:

#### Day 1:

- a. Introduction to interpersonal communication in healthcare Concepts of therapeutic communication and empathy
- b. Case discussions and video-based learning

#### Day 2:

- a. Communication skills practice through roleplay and simulation
- b. Feedback and reflection sessions
- c. Group discussion on challenges and strategies for real-world application

Training is conducted interactively, encouraging participant involvement, experience sharing, and practical application of skills. Trainers include academic staff with expertise in communication and healthcare professionals experienced in patient-centered service.

### 3) Evaluation Phase

- a. Pre-Test and Post-Test: Administered to assess changes in participants' knowledge and attitudes toward interpersonal communication.

- b. Performance Observation: During simulations, facilitators observe participants' communication styles and provide direct feedback.
- c. Participant Feedback: A satisfaction questionnaire is distributed to gather participants' evaluation of the training content, delivery, and usefulness.
- d. The results of the evaluation will be used to refine the training model for future implementation and to support further research on the impact of communication training on patient satisfaction.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Results

The community service activity was successfully implemented over two days and involved 25 healthcare workers from various disciplines, including nurses, midwives, and general practitioners, at a local primary health facility. The results of the training are summarized as follows:

- 1) Improvement in Knowledge and Awareness  
Pre- and post-test assessments showed a significant increase in participants' understanding of effective interpersonal communication. The average pre-test score was 62.4%, while the post-test score rose to 86.1%, indicating improved comprehension of the concepts of empathy, active listening, and patient-centered communication.<sup>13</sup>
- 2) Enhanced Communication Skills in Simulation Practice. During roleplay and simulation sessions, most participants demonstrated greater confidence and fluency in engaging with patients. Facilitators observed marked improvement in eye contact, non-verbal expressions, and the use of open-ended questions to explore patient concerns.<sup>14</sup>
- 3) Positive Participant Feedback  
Feedback collected from participants revealed that 96% rated the training as very useful and relevant to their daily

interactions with patients. They expressed particular appreciation for the practical nature of the training, especially the use of real case studies and video reflections.<sup>15</sup>

- 4) Increased Motivation to Improve Patient Interaction. Many participants stated they felt more motivated to practice mindful communication and intended to apply the learned skills in their workplace. Some even proposed to conduct regular peer discussions or mini-training to sustain the communication culture within their teams.<sup>16</sup>

#### Discussion

The results of this activity affirm the importance and effectiveness of structured communication training for healthcare workers. The increase in knowledge scores and improved communication practices observed during simulations suggest that practical, context-based training can bridge the gap between theory and daily practice.<sup>17</sup> This finding aligns with previous research that emphasizes the role of interpersonal communication in influencing patient satisfaction and treatment adherence. When healthcare workers communicate with empathy, listen actively, and validate patient experiences, patients are more likely to feel respected, understood, and involved in decision-making.<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, the participatory and interactive nature of the training was essential in fostering engagement and reflection among participants. The opportunity to practice, receive feedback, and discuss challenges enhanced the learning experience beyond what traditional lecture-based methods could offer.

It is also worth noting that the motivation of participants to maintain and expand the practice of effective communication signals a potential for long-term cultural change within the institution. Future efforts should include follow-up evaluations and integration of communication training into

regular professional development programs.<sup>19</sup>

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This community engagement program demonstrated that effective interpersonal communication training can significantly enhance the communication skills of healthcare workers and improve their awareness of patient-centered care. The structured training, which included theoretical knowledge, practical simulations, and reflective discussions, led to measurable improvements in both knowledge and communication performance among participants.

The positive response from healthcare workers and their increased motivation to apply the learned skills in their daily practice suggest that such training is not only needed but also highly impactful. Enhancing communication between healthcare workers and patients is a critical step toward improving patient satisfaction and overall healthcare service quality.

To ensure sustainability, it is recommended that health institutions incorporate regular communication skills training into their continuing professional development programs. Additionally, peer mentoring and supportive feedback environments should be encouraged to maintain and strengthen a culture of empathetic, respectful, and effective communication in healthcare settings.

#### 5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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This activity would not have been possible without the commitment and cooperation of all involved parties. We hope this collaboration will continue to support future initiatives in strengthening healthcare quality through professional development and patient-centered practices.

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