



Facilitator Guide: Introduction to Health Communication

This module is designed to offer an introduction to health communication. Students should complete this module before engaging in any of the other modules to ensure that key threshold concepts are understood.

These modules are designed to support student learning outcomes in a variety of ways across your course, in tandem with, or directly supporting your own courses learning objectives and other class activities. It can also be useful to scaffold assessment in your course.

Learning Objectives for Introduction to Health Communication module:

1. Understand the central role of health communication in supporting the health and wellbeing of individuals, communities, and populations.
2. Identify the range of health contexts, audiences, and purposes of health communication.
3. Identify the features of successful health communication practices.
4. Recognise the role that values and ethical practice play in health communication.

Estimated learner time for Introduction to Health Communication module: 35 minutes

Ideas for extending on the module content with students:

We suggest that students engage with this module on their own prior to class and that elements can be imported to tutorials or other classroom settings for further discussion. Example discussion questions for exploring the content in more depth are provided below. Additionally, the videos from the module can be shown in class or tutorials as a prompt for further discussion:

- [Video 1](#) unpacks the scope of health communication and where this happens.
- [Video 2](#) reflects on the impact of good health communication and factors involved when health communication is most challenging.
- [Video 3](#) touches on the importance of values and ethical grounding in health communication.

Example learning activity: (using Jamboard):

- 1) What does health communication **look** like? Can you share an example where you have been involved in (either receiving or providing) health communication? Where did it take place? Who was involved? Describe the scene.
- 2) What does health communication **sound** like? Who was doing the talking in the example provided above? What were the messages being delivered? Did one person dominate the discussion? Did the person receiving the health communication messages have an opportunity to engage in the dialogue?
- 3) What does health communication **feel** like? Describe how you felt when you were engaging in this process of health communication? Did you feel confident? Confused? Why do you think you felt this way?

You can ask students to share these experiences in a variety of ways, such as via small group discussion, or perhaps via an online platform such as Padlet or Jamboard. We have created a [Jamboard template here](#) that you may like to [make a copy](#) of and use with your students.

Example discussion questions:

- Do you think health communication is important? Why or why not? Do you identify with being a health communicator?
- What is the role of your audience when communicating concepts about health and wellbeing? Think about your clients in your care, communities or even populations.
- What are some ways we can learn more about our audience(s)?
- What are the three communication strategies that help support effective health communication? Can you think of ways to use them in your context?
- What are some of the values that guide you as a health communicator? That is, what is important to you when you are giving and/or receiving health communication?

Additional resources that support the teaching content

1. Schiavo, R. Interpersonal Communication. In: Health communication from theory to practice. In: Shiavo, R., editor. Health communication: From theory to practice. 2nd Ed. San Francisco; Wiley & Sons; 2014. p. 104-132.
2. Cohen, E. L The Multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary nature of health communication. In: Thompson and Harrington, editors. The Routledge Handbook of Health Communication. New York, New York: Routledge; 3rd Ed. S 2022. p. 3-16.
3. Shiavo, R. Introduction to Health Communication. In: Shiavo, R., editor. Health communication: From theory to practice. 2nd Ed. San Francisco; Wiley & Sons; 2014. p.3-32.
4. Gallups SF, Ejem D, Rosenzweig MQ. Power and Privilege: A Critical Analysis of Interpersonal Communication in Health Care as a Guide for Oncology Patient Navigation in Breast Cancer Care. Advances in nursing science. 2021. Publish Ahead of Print.
5. Dutta, M.J. The critical cultural turn in health communication: Reflexivity, solidarity, and praxis. Health Communication. 2010; 25(6-7); 534-539, DOI: 10.1080/10410236.2010.497995
6. Segal, Judy, Z. Health and the rhetoric of medicine. Southern Illinois University Press, 2008. Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/21758.
7. World Health Organisation. Human rights and health [Internet]. World Health Organisation; 2017 [updated 2017; cited 2022 Feb 28] Available from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/human-rights-and-health>.
8. Mitchell AG, Diddo J, James AD, Guraylayla L, Jinmarabynana C, Carter A, et al. Using community-led development to build health communication about rheumatic heart disease in Aboriginal children: a developmental evaluation. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health [Internet]. 2021. [cited 2022 Feb 28];45(3):212–9. Available from: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1753-6405.13100>
9. Panchevski G, May S, Munshi D, editors. The Handbook of Communication Ethics. London: Taylor & Francis Group; 2010.