

# BUILDING PURPOSE WITH STRENGTH-BASED COMMUNICATION

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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- I acknowledge that I am delivering this presentation from my clinic space in East Vancouver, on the unceded traditional territories of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əy'əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.
- These nations have a long and ongoing relationship with this land, stewarding it since time immemorial.
- I am a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation settler who was born and raised in Vancouver.
- I acknowledge that this territory remains unceded and that the rights and responsibilities of these First Nations continue to this day.
- I am grateful to be on this land and acknowledge the importance of this land acknowledgement as a step toward reconciliation.

**“Great communication begins  
with connection.”**

**—Oprah Winfrey**

## DISCLOSURES

I have no actual or potential conflict of interest in relation to this presentation.

# WHO IS KATE?



WHO ARE YOU?

## OBJECTIVES OF THIS PRESENTATION

- Learn the key principles of strength-based communication and how it can improve workplace relationships.
- Understand how focusing on individual strengths can reduce misunderstandings and prevent conflict.
- Explore practical tools to communicate effectively with colleagues, residents and their families.
- Gain insights into how strength-based communication can create a supportive and positive work environment.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR PARTICIPANTS

- Feel more confident using strength-based communication in daily interactions.
- Apply techniques that highlight strengths to prevent miscommunication and workplace conflict.
- Leave with practical tools to create a more supportive, purpose-driven work environment.

## CHECK YOUR CURRENT KNOWLEDGE I...

- What is strength-based communication?
- Do you use it in your workplace?
- Why or why not?

## STRENGTH-BASED COMMUNICATION

- Focuses on highlighting the positive aspects and potentials of individuals, groups or communities, rather than dwelling on their weakness or strengths.
- Emphasizes their strengths, abilities and resilience, fostering a more empowering and authentic communication style.
- Promotes positive relationships and builds trust.
- Reduce misunderstandings, prevent conflicts.

## WHY USE THE STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH TO COMMUNICATION?

- Values the capacity, skills, knowledge, connections and potential in individuals and communities
- Focusing on strengths does not mean ignoring challenges, or spinning struggles into strengths
- Health-care professionals working in this way have to work in collaboration-helping people do things for themselves.
- In this way, people can become co-producers of support, not passive consumers of support.

- Strength-based approaches concentrate on the inherent strengths of individuals, families, groups and organizations deploying personal strengths to aid recovery and empowerment.
- In essence, to focus on health and well-being is to embrace an asset-based approach where the goal is to promote the positive.

## EXAMPLES OF STRENGTH-BASED COMMUNICATION

- Use person-first language.
- Use active voice.
- Honor self-identification by ensuring that you are referring to individuals or groups in the way that reflects their identity.

## EXAMPLES OF STRENGTH BASED COMMUNICATION CONTINUED...

- Uphold clarity by using proper nouns as needed.
- Normalize challenges and emphasize supporting, rather than saving people.
- Respect and invite the voices and experiences of the people you serve.



PARTICIPANT  
SHARING:  
STRENGTH-BASED  
COMMUNICATION

***Think of a miscommunication with a colleague in your current workplace...***

- What was the cause of that?
- What was the outcome?
- How could it have looked different if you applied strength-based communication?

*Please share in the comments*

## CHECK YOUR CURRENT KNOWLEDGE 2...

- What is authenticity in communication?
- Do you use it in your workplace?
- Why or why not?

## AUTHENTICITY IN COMMUNICATION

- Authenticity in communication means being genuine and true to oneself while expressing thoughts and feelings openly and honestly.
- It involves aligning what you say and how you act with your values and beliefs, while also being mindful of the context and audience.
- Authentic communication fosters trust, builds credibility, and strengthens relationships.

## AUTHENTICITY IN COMMUNICATION

- We know that showing up as your authentic self in all aspects of your life is advantageous, especially in communication.
- When you are authentic in your communication, it can create ease, and interactions that are more straightforward with better, more complete outcomes.
- Whether you are providing complicated information, sharing bad news, or supporting a family grieving a loss, how you communicate can make a difference.
- When in doubt, be yourself!

## KEY ELEMENTS IN AUTHENTIC COMMUNICATION

- Honesty and Transparency
- Self-awareness
- Active Listening
- Respect and Empathy
- Clear and Direct Communication
- Knowing Your Own Voice
- Vulnerability

## WHY IS AUTHENTIC COMMUNICATION IMPORTANT IN HEALTHCARE?

- Improved resident-provider relationships.
- Enhanced resident experience.
- Better health outcomes.
- Reduced burnout.



PARTICIPANT  
SHARING:  
AUTHENTIC  
COMMUNICATION

***Think of a time when you did not use authentic communication in your current workplace...***

- What was the outcome?
- How could it have looked different if you utilized authentic communication?

*Please share in the comments...*

## CASE STUDY

- The care plan for a resident at Cherry Blossom, Norm, has changed due to their medical condition deteriorating, their involvement in activities has stopped, and staff would like to discuss this with Norm's family.
- Since Norm's wife (also a resident at Cherry Blossom) died 2 years ago, Norm has become increasingly sedentary and withdrawn, with a slow decrease in both cognitive and physical functioning.
- Norm has a DNR
- Norm has two daughters, who are both POA and trustees.
- They come to visit their father regularly but often at different times.
- They do not include Norm in discussions with staff in his room, and often talk about him as if he isn't there.

HOW DO WE ENSURE THE RESIDENT IS CARE FOR EFFECTIVELY, STRENGTH-BASED COMMUNICATION IS USED WITH NORM AND THEIR FAMILY AND YOU ARE PUTTING YOUR AUTHENTIC SELF-FORWARD IN THE CONVERSATION?

Think about how to approach this using open, honest, strength-based, authentic communication...



What is a good first step?



How would you include both Norm and the daughters so they feel empowered and that their input is welcome?

## TO SUMMARIZE...

- Discussed key principles of strength-based communication and how it can improve workplace relationships.
- focused on individual strengths to reduce misunderstandings and prevent conflict.
- Looked at tools to help communicate effectively with colleagues, residents and their families.
- Gained insights into how strength-based communication can create a supportive and positive work environment.

## THINGS TO REMEMBER:

Employ strength-based and authentic communication whenever possible.

Avoid:

- *Assumptions*
- *Language that perpetuates stereotypes or diminishes value*
- *Losing your confidence-you know what you're doing, believe in yourself!*

## ADDITIONAL HELPFUL TOOLS:

- Learn how to take a deep, resetting breath during the conversation (that no one knows you are taking).
- Work on including the resident in the conversation whenever possible.
- Focus on strengths, rather than weaknesses.
- Get to know your colleagues communication style.
- Brief your supervisor, and involve them if necessary-teamwork is more effective when everyone is on the same page!
- If you don't know the answer to something, admit it! Commit to getting more information and/or connecting them with someone who does.
- If you make a mistake, own it (and follow the requisite path in your workplace)! You're only human, we all make mistakes!

# Questions?



## ONLINE REFERENCES

- <https://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/insights/strengths-based-approaches-working-individuals>
- <https://positivepsychology.com/strengths-based-interventions/#:~:text=The%20strength%2Dbased%20approach%20allows,than%20focus%20on%20negative%20characteristics.>
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