



INTEGRATED CARE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Facilitator Guide: Module 05



WHO / Julio Takayama

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Contents









Introduction to the Guide	4
Iconography	4
Module 5: Communication Skills.....	6
Communication Skills.....	7
Learning Objectives	8
Bottom Line	9
Strategies for a Person-centred Approach	10
Communication	11
Forms and Barriers to Communication	12
Core Functions of Communication	13
Challenges to Effective Communication.....	14
Effective Communication	15
Improved Communication	16
Improve Communication - Environment.....	17
Improve Communication - Organisation	18
Improve Communication – Health and Care Workers.....	19
Summary	26
References.....	27

Introduction to the Guide

Welcome to the Facilitator Guide for the WHO Integrated Care for Older People (ICOPE). This guide serves as a roadmap for the facilitators, helping them navigate through the session while ensuring that key topics are covered and participants are engaged. It may also include tips, potential challenges and suggested ways to handle different situations that may arise during the session.

Iconography

The following icons are used in the Facilitator Guide to indicate the type of content being presented.

Icon	Action	Description
	Session Title	Indicates the name of the session being conducted.
	Session Objectives	Lists the learning objectives to be achieved.
	Timing	Indicates the duration of the session or activity.
	Show	Indicates the slide to be presented.
	Say	What to say or explain while facilitating. It will contain the recommended script/ answers to be discussed.
	Ask	Ask the participants a question and encourage them to respond.
	Do	What to do to facilitate an activity or provide guidance to learners.
	Play	Indicates a video clip to be presented.

Session Structure

This facilitator guide is organised according to the way you will present the material on each slide:

- **Show** – The slides
- **Say** – This is a scripted narrative outline for you.
- **Ask** – Questions to prompt dialogue with and among the participants
 - The dialogue associated with the questions should take between 5 to 10 minutes. However, you will need to use your best judgement about the time to dedicate to the question-and-answer sessions. Some sessions may last longer.
- **Do** – Prompts you to do an action

Keep in mind that this Facilitator Guide is only a roadmap. You are expected to apply your voice and experience in making this tool work for you. The ‘Say’ sections are simply indications; you can use them as a script when you feel the need to, but you can and should adapt it to suit your natural training style.




Add your personal touch and personality to every training while carefully sticking to the session objectives.

A key component of successful face-to-face training is establishing trust and rapport with your learners. Use your good judgment to assess the attitude and cultural sensitivities of the people in your workshop. Adapt your training techniques and approach accordingly.

You are going to be great at conducting this training.

Draft Version for field testing

Module 5: Communication Skills

	Session Title:	Communication Skills
	Timing:	20 min
	Session Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe communication, including its forms, functions, and barriers.• Identify the challenges to effective communication.• Explain the ways to improve effective communication.• Understand the benefits of effective communication.• Recognise the skills and strategies needed to communicate effectively with older people.

Communication Skills



Time: 10 min



Do:

- *Formal welcome*
- *Introduction of facilitator*



Show: Slide 1



Say:

Welcome to the module on Communication Skills. By the end of this session, you'll grasp the fundamentals: what communication entails, its various forms and barriers, ways to enhance it, and the benefits, particularly when engaging with older people.

We'll explore verbal and non-verbal communication, acknowledging that 93% of our communication is non-verbal. Plus, we'll address the unique challenges that come with communicating with older people, emphasising tailored approaches and skill development.

Let's get started on mastering the art of effective communication.

Learning Objectives



Show: Slide 2



Say:

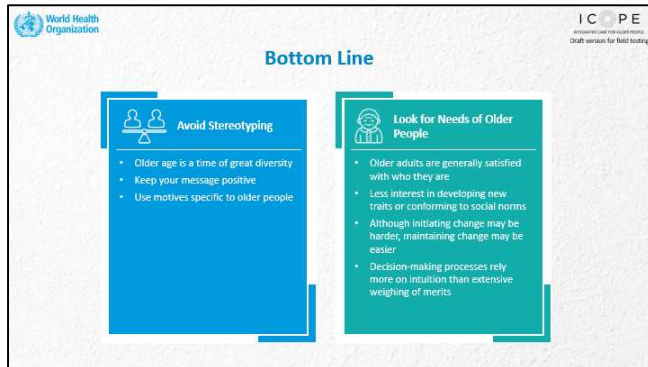
Let's take a moment to understand what we aim to achieve by the end of this module:

1. We'll describe communication comprehensively, including its various forms, functions, and barriers.
2. We'll identify the challenges hindering effective communication.
3. We'll explain methods to enhance effective communication.
4. We'll discuss the benefits of effective communication.
5. We'll recognise the skills and strategies required to communicate effectively with older people.

Bottom Line



Show: Slide 3



Ask:

Have you ever wondered how to communicate effectively with older people? Broadly speaking, what are the key considerations when addressing the needs of older people? Let's explore these questions together.



Say:

Firstly, we must steer clear of stereotyping. Remember, older age encompasses a wide spectrum of people with diverse experiences and backgrounds.

When crafting our message, let's keep it positive and uplifting. Let's aim to resonate with the specific motives of older people, understanding that their priorities and concerns may differ from those of other age groups.

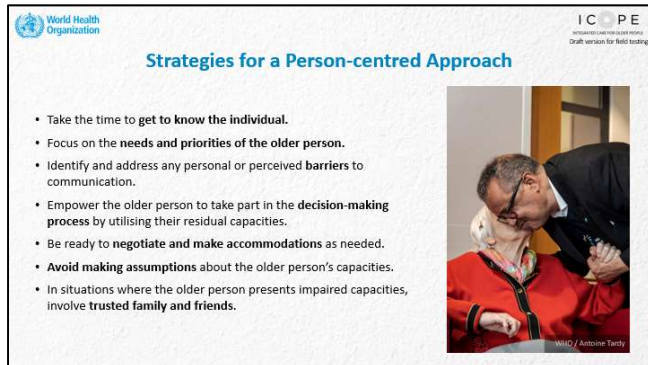
Now, on a broader note, let's focus on identifying the needs of older people. It's crucial to recognise that they are generally content with who they are. They may have less inclination towards adopting new traits or conforming to societal norms. However, this doesn't mean they are resistant to change. In fact, while initiating change might be more challenging, maintaining it could be easier for them.

Moreover, it's essential to understand that their decision-making processes might lean more towards intuition rather than extensive analysis. So, as we design our strategies or interventions, let's keep these insights in mind to ensure they resonate effectively with older people.

Strategies for a Person-centred Approach



Show: Slide 4



Say:

Let's break down some effective strategies for adopting a person-centred approach:

1. Start by getting to know the person. Understand their background, preferences and values.
2. Keep the focus on the older person's needs and priorities throughout your interactions.
3. Identify and address any personal or perceived barriers to communication that may arise.
4. Empower the older person to participate in decision-making, leveraging their residual capacities actively.
5. Be flexible and willing to negotiate or compensate as needed to ensure their comfort and agency.
6. Avoid making assumptions about the older person's capabilities or limitations.
7. Consider involving trusted family members or friends to help facilitate communication and decision-making for the person dealing with impaired capacities.

These strategies focus on respecting the person's independence and dignity, creating a supportive environment for older people.

Communication



Show: Slide 5



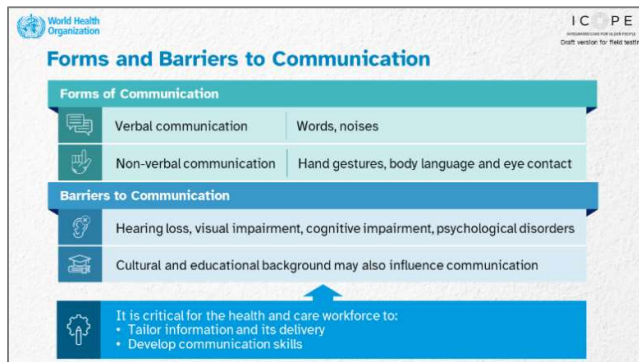
Say:

Let's delve into the topic of Communication. But first, what exactly is communication? Simply put, it's the process of transmitting information. The word itself stems from the Latin word 'communicare,' which translates to 'to share' or 'to be in relation with.' So, when we talk about communication, we're essentially discussing how we share and connect with others. Let's explore this further.

Forms and Barriers to Communication



Show: Slide 6



Say:

As mentioned, communication may have different forms. It might be use verbal and non-verbal means. Verbal communication involves words and noises, while non-verbal communication encompasses gestures, body language, and eye contact.

Now, onto barriers to communication. These can arise from various factors, such as hearing loss, visual impairment, cognitive challenges, or psychological disorders. Additionally, cultural and educational backgrounds can significantly influence how we communicate.

For the health and care workforce, it's crucial to address these barriers effectively. This involves tailoring information and its delivery to suit individual needs and developing strong communication skills to navigate diverse situations. By doing so, we can ensure effective communication and enhance the quality of care provided.

Core Functions of Communication



Show: Slide 7



Say:

Let's focus on three core functions of communication. We communicate because we want provide information, enable decision-making, and have empathic behaviour.

Firstly, when it comes to information provision, it's important to recognise that older people may not actively seek or request information as frequently as younger people. This can lead to unmet clinical needs. Additionally, due to factors such as reduced working memory, older persons may have slower processing abilities, especially when large amounts of information are provided.

Moving on to enabling decision-making, most patients, including older people, prefer to be involved in the decision-making process. This involvement leads to a better understanding of treatment options, increased confidence in decisions, and higher satisfaction with care. It's essential to identify meaningful goals of care, considering what gives life meaning to the person and addressing any concerns they may have.

Finally, empathic behaviour plays a crucial role in building trust and relationships with patients. This not only leads to greater patient satisfaction but also reduces anxiety and improves information recall. It becomes particularly important in situations where conditions may worsen.

By understanding and addressing these factors, we can ensure a more effective and empathetic approach to healthcare for older people.

Challenges to Effective Communication



Show: Slide 8



Say:

Effective communication can be challenged by various factors.

Older person-related factors include needs, values, and priorities different from what a younger person may expect. Impaired capacities (e.g., hearing or vision loss) may also impact on effective communication. Social dynamics may also influence communication, including scepticism towards younger or less experienced healthcare workers.

Health and care worker-related factors involve difficulties in prioritising problems, establishing rapport and trust, and inadequate training in geriatric medicine. There may also be discomfort in addressing difficult topics like bad news or realistic goals of care.

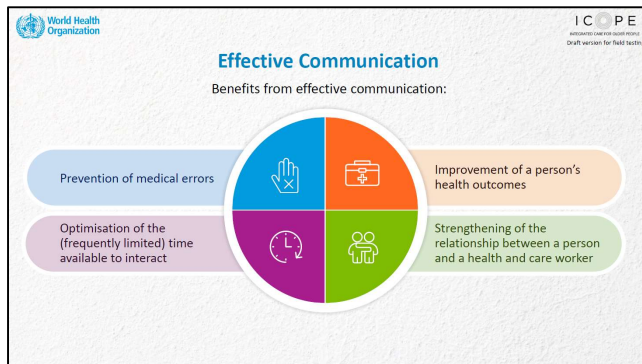
Lastly, person- and system-related factors contribute to communication challenges, such as time constraints and inadequate consideration of the older person's needs and priorities in the healthcare system's design and operation.

Navigating these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the complexities inherent in communication between older people and healthcare providers.

Effective Communication



Show: Slide 9



Say:

Be aware that effective communication is necessary to:

- Prevent medical errors
- Improve the person's health outcomes
- Strengthen the relationship between the person and the care provider
- Optimise the (frequently limited) time available to interact

Prioritising clear communication is crucial for positive healthcare experiences.

Improved Communication



Show: Slide 10



Say:

To improve communication, it is necessary to act at different levels:



- Environment
- Organisation
- Health and care workers

Prioritising clear communication is crucial for positive healthcare experiences. It is also important to act at all the three levels for maximising and optimising communication.

Improve Communication - Environment



Show: Slide 11

 		
Improve Communication - Environment		
Promote easy accessibility	Promote a familiar environment	Guarantee hygienic conditions and tidiness
Consider the potential need to compensate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility limitations • Cognitive impairment • Sensory limitations (hearing loss and vision impairment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide seating in a quiet, comfortable area • Reduce noise and interruptions to the minimum • Maintain a comfortable temperature • Ensure good lighting • Make material easy to read 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleanliness of surfaces and objects • Toilets should be easily accessible without environmental barriers • Availability of material for handwashing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verify the access and environment, taking into account the specific needs the older person may have. • Do not assume that something that works for younger individuals will also work for older people. • Experiment and identify which solutions are most effective. 		



Say:

First, let's focus on improving communication by optimising the environment. We need to:

1. Promote easy accessibility:
 - Consider potential needs to compensate for physical, cognitive, and sensory limitations such as hearing loss and vision impairment.
2. Promote a familiar environment:
 - Provide seating in a quiet, comfortable area with minimal noise and interruptions.
 - Maintain normal temperature, good lighting, and ensure easy-to-read materials.
3. Guarantee hygienic conditions and tidiness:
 - Ensure cleanliness of surfaces and objects.
 - Provide easy access to a toilet without environmental barriers and materials for handwashing.
4. Verify access and environment tailored to specific needs:
 - Don't assume what works for a younger person will work for an older person.
 - Experiment to find the best solutions.

By focusing on these environmental factors, we can enhance communication and overall comfort for older people.

Improve Communication - Organisation



Show: Slide 12

Improve Communication - Organisation

Scheduling of appointments	Make older people comfortable
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide clear information• Schedule older people earlier in the day• Allow additional time for older people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greet the older person warmly• Ensure their privacy is guaranteed• Be prepared to physically assist them• Check in on the older person periodically• Help the older person stay relaxed and focused• Say "Goodbye"

Older people expect staff to be friendly, considerate, humorous, and to take sufficient time with them. Improving communication from the first contact can help the individual feel at ease feel comfortable.



Say:

Let's now discuss strategies for improving the organisation of care delivery to older people. It is important to consider actions on:

1. Scheduling of appointments:
 - Provide clear information about appointments.
 - Schedule older people earlier in the day when possible.
 - Allow extra time for appointments to accommodate potential needs.
2. Making older people comfortable:
 - Greet them warmly upon arrival.
 - Ensure privacy during consultations.
 - Be prepared to physically assist the older person if necessary.
 - Check on them periodically to ensure their comfort.
 - Keep the atmosphere relaxed and focused.
 - Bid them farewell courteously at the end of the appointment.

We need to keep in mind the following:

- Older persons expect staff to be friendly, kind, and able to engage in light conversation.
- Allocate sufficient time for consultations to avoid rushing through appointments.

By implementing these practices, we can enhance communication and create a more comfortable environment for older people from the moment they engage with our facility.

Improve Communication – Health and Care Workers



Show: Slide 13

World Health Organization **ICOPE**
improving care and quality of life for older people
draft version for field testing

Improve Communication – Health and Care Workers

Use the proper form of address	Sit face-to-face	Establish a rapport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use formal language Avoid using familiar terms (e.g., "dear") Eventually, inquire about preferred forms of address 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the distance (do not invade the personal space) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid ageist attitudes

- Introduce yourself.
- Clearly state your name and role within the organisation.
- Explain that you are here to listen to a person's concerns.
- Show respect.
- Avoid taking anything for granted.
- Do not assume a person's capacity without assessing them.



Ask:

Have you ever wondered how healthcare workers can improve communication with older people?



Say:

Let's explore some key strategies.

it is recommended that, at the initial approach, care workers use the proper form of address and formal language, avoid using overly familiar terms (e.g., "dear"), and eventually, ask the person about their preferred forms of address.

- The positioning is important. Sit face-to-face with the older person to establish a connection. Always consider maintaining an appropriate distance to respect personal space.

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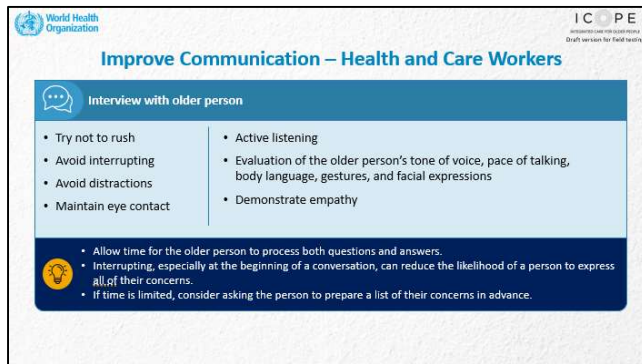
To establish rapport, it is critical to:

- Avoid ageist attitudes and stereotypes.
- Introduce yourself clearly, stating your name and role within the organisation.
- Express that you're here to listen to their concerns.
- Be respectful, and don't assume the person's capacity without testing him/her.

By following these simple recommendations, health and care workers can foster better communication and rapport with older people, ultimately improving the quality of care provided.



Show: Slide 14



Say:

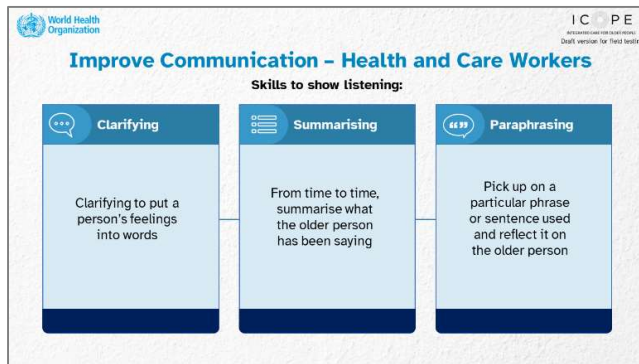
Let's delve into how health and care workers can enhance communication during interviews with older people. When interviewing an older person, always consider to:

1. Approach with patience:
 - Try not to rush the conversation.
 - Avoid interrupting and minimise distractions.
2. Engage actively:
 - Maintain eye contact to convey attentiveness.
 - Practice active listening to truly understand the person's concerns.
3. Evaluate non-verbal cues:
 - Pay attention to the person's tone of voice, pace of talking, body language, gestures, and facial expressions.
4. Demonstrate empathy:
 - Show understanding and compassion towards the person's situation.

Always remember to allow time for the person to process questions and formulate answers. It is also important to avoid interrupting, especially at the beginning, as it may inhibit the person from expressing his/her concerns.

If you expect time to be limited, you may want to suggest preparing a list of concerns in advance to ensure important issues are addressed.

By applying these strategies, health and care workers can create a supportive environment for effective communication and a better understanding of the older persons' needs.

**Show:** Slide 15**Ask:**

How can health and care workers better demonstrate active listening skills when communicating with older people?

**Do:**

Encourage participants to provide some suggestions.

**Say:**

Thank you all for sharing your insights. It's great to see such engagement in discussing how health and care workers can improve active listening skills when communicating with older people.

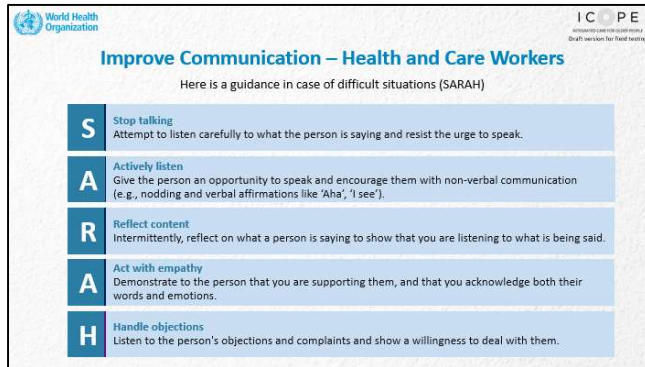
Now, let's delve into specific strategies that align with your suggestions. Summarising, paraphrasing, and clarifying are indeed critical skills. Summarising what the older person has been saying from time to time not only demonstrates attentive listening but also helps to ensure a full understanding of key information and fosters empathy.

Similarly, picking up on specific phrases or sentences used by the older person and reflecting on them through paraphrasing shows an effort to gain clarity and indicates that their words are valued.

Lastly, clarifying by putting the person's feelings into words and asking for more details when needed communicates that their thoughts and feelings are important and helps to deepen understanding.



Show: Slide 16



Say:

You may find a useful guide in the acronym SARAH, providing the key aspects to keep in mind in case of difficult situations. SARAH stands for:

1. 'Stop talking.' It sounds simple, but it's essential. Resist the urge to jump in and focus on what the person is saying.
2. 'Actively listen.' Give the older person space to express him/herself and show that you're engaged through those subtle nods and encouraging words like 'Aha' or 'I see.'
3. 'Reflecting content.' It's about periodically repeating what they've shared so they know you're tuned in.
4. 'Acting with empathy.' Let's make sure they feel heard and understood. Show them you're with them, acknowledging their emotions and experiences.
5. 'Handling objections.' Listen carefully to any concerns they raise, and demonstrate a willingness to address them head-on.

Now, imagine yourself in a challenging conversation. How might you apply SARAH's guidance to navigate through it?



Ask:

Now, imagine yourself in a challenging conversation. How might you apply SARAH's guidance to navigate through it?



Do:

Encourage participants to provide some suggestions.



Show: Slide 17

World Health Organization

ICPE
IMPROVING COMMUNICATION FOR OLDER PEOPLE
Draft version for field testing

Improve Communication – Health and Care Workers

Discussing with the older person

- Consider and compensate for possible hearing loss and/or vision impairments.
- Focus on one topic at a time
 - Avoid overwhelming with too much information at once.
- Use short, simple words and sentences.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Avoid jargon.
- Be careful with language.

- Ensure understanding of health information
 - Frequently summarise the critical points
 - Allow older individuals to ask questions and express themselves
- Write down key takeaways
 - Simplify and write down your instructions
 - Use charts, models, and pictures



Say:

When communicating with older persons, it is important to consider and compensate for any possible impairments they may have, such as hearing loss or vision impairment.

Remember to stick to one topic at a time to avoid overwhelming them with too much information.

Use short, simple words and sentences, speak slowly and clearly, avoid using jargon, and be mindful of your language to ensure it's easily understood.

To ensure comprehension of health information, frequently summarise the critical points and give the older person opportunities to ask questions and express themselves.

Consider providing take-away points in writing, simplifying instructions, and using visual aids such as drawings, charts, models, and pictures to enhance understanding.

Next, let's explore how you can incorporate these steps into your communication with older people having hearing or vision impairment.



Show: Slide 18

Improve Communication – Health and Care Workers	
Hearing loss	Vision impairment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the person can see your face while you are speaking • Make sure there is good lighting on your face • Keep your hands away from your face while talking • Get the person's attention before you start speaking • Try to minimize distractions, such as noise • Speak clearly and at a slow pace; do not shout • Do not stop trying to communicate with people who have difficulty hearing • Keep a notepad handy for notes • Indicate when changing the subject using pauses, questions, and gestures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure there is adequate lighting, especially on your face • Check whether the person uses eyeglasses • Make sure all instructions (both written and unwritten) and materials are clear • If there are issues with reading, consider alternative options (e.g., recording instructions, diagrams, using aids or devices).



Say:

Let's focus on how we can improve communication with older people who may have hearing or vision impairments.

For those with hearing impairment:

- Ensure they can see your face when you speak, with good lighting.
- Keep your hands away from your face while talking and minimise distractions.
- Get their attention before speaking and speak clearly and slowly without shouting.
- Don't give up speaking to them; keep a notepad handy to aid communication.
- Clearly tell the person when changing subjects and use pauses, questions, and gestures to indicate the same.

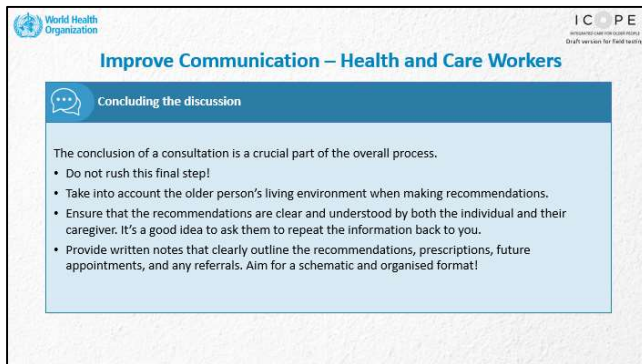
Now, turning to persons with vision impairment:

- Check for adequate lighting, including on your face, and inquire if they use eyeglasses.
- Ensure all instructions and materials are clear, considering alternatives if reading is challenging, such as recorded instructions, diagrams, or aids/devices.

By implementing these considerations, we can ensure effective communication and understanding, promoting better care for older people with hearing or vision impairments.



Show: Slide 19



Say:

As we wrap up our discussion on improving communication in healthcare settings, let's remember the importance of concluding consultations effectively.

The conclusion is a critical part of the process, and it's essential not to rush through it. Always remember this part will summarise your work and deliver the key information for subsequent actions to take. Being unclear or misunderstood at this stage may waste the previous work with detrimental consequences for the individual. Take the time to ensure that the older person has understood the care plan and feels satisfied with the interaction.

Consider their environment when delivering recommendations, ensuring clarity and understanding. Don't hesitate to ask for repetition if needed from the older person and any caregivers involved.

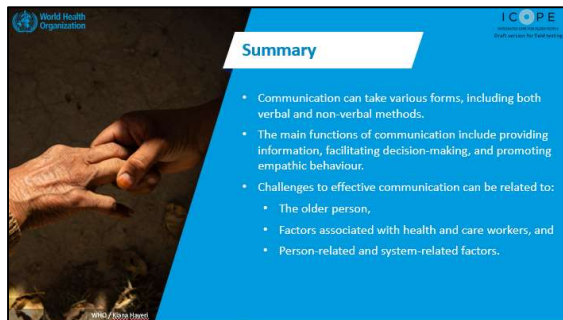
Providing clearly written notes summarising recommendations, prescriptions, future schedules, and referrals is key. Aim for simplicity and clarity in these notes to facilitate follow-up and continuity of care.

By paying attention to these details in concluding consultations, we can ensure that older people feel supported and empowered in managing their health.

Summary



Show: Slides 20 and 21



Do:

Go through the slides and recap the points discussed during the session.

References



Show: Slide 22



Here are some references to essential publications or websites.