

**Module 3 Unit 4: Capacity-building for migrant sensitive health systems. Communication Skills**

**Optional Activity 1: Good practices in inclusive communication**

This activity is based on Scottish Government (2011) Principles of Inclusive Communication: An information and self-assessment tool for public authorities; available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/09/14082209/0>

- Description: This activity focuses on the applicability of the six principles of inclusive communication to the interaction of health professionals with patients and communities in a culturally diverse context.
- Time: 30 minutes
- Method: This activity consists on individual reflection over the six principles of inclusive communication. Participants are asked to contribute examples of good practices, considering their daily experience. Fill in the template contributing with examples of good practices.

<b>Principles of inclusive communication</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Communication accessibility and physical accessibility are equally important</b></li> </ul>
To make health services fully accessible means considering communication accessibility as well as physical accessibility in the traditional sense.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Every community or group will include people with different communication support needs</b></li> </ul>
You should presume that every group you are working with, or expect to work with, includes people with communication support needs. In this training context, support needs also refer to interpretation and mediation services. Inclusive communication should be considered at all times, whether providing information or planning an event, meeting or activity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Communication is a two-way process of understanding others and expressing yourself</b></li> </ul>
Everyone communicates differently regardless of their cultural identity. When somebody has communication support needs, it may take more effort and time to ensure that health professionals and patients or communities using the service understand each other.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Be flexible in the way your healthcare service is provided</b></li> </ul>
In order to match the way you communicate to the needs of all the patients and communities who use health services avoid the “one size fits all” approach. Think about how accessible your health service will be, what methods are best and be flexible in your approach.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Effective user involvement will include the participation of people with different communication support needs</b></li> </ul>
Identify the full implications of health service access for all members of the community, involving patients. Services delivered around the needs of the people who use them will be more cost effective, user friendly and fit for purpose.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Keep trying</b></li> </ul>
Small, simple changes to the way you communicate will make a big difference to the healthcare service delivery.

Participants are asked to contribute with examples of good practices considering their daily experience with migrant and ethnic minority patients.

### **Group 1: Communication accessibility and physical accessibility are equally important**

To make health services fully accessible means considering communication accessibility as well as physical accessibility in the traditional sense.

#### **Good Practice Example:**

When arranging an appointment or a meeting:

- Consider the patient or the community and ensure appropriated setting
- Allow sufficient time to provide communication support as required

#### **Other Good Practice Example:**

### **Group 2: Every community or group will include people with different communication support needs**

You should presume that every group you are working with, or expect to work with, includes people with communication support needs. Inclusive communication should be considered at all times, whether providing information or planning an event, meeting or activity. **Good communication practice** will help you reach your target audience more effectively and allow patients to access services on an equal basis.

#### **Good Practice Example:**

Some ideas to support patients or migrant and ethnic minority communities with communication needs:

- You may require information in **alternative formats**, for example pictures, audio or print.
- You may need **nonverbal communication** e.g. head and body language, simple gestures, photographs, drawings, cartoons or symbols.
- You may need the support of **cultural mediation services**.
- You may have difficulty using a phone and need a **one-to-one meeting**.
- To ensure you can provide communication accessible health services, it is good practice to **allow time to arrange different formats or communication support** depending on the needs you have identify.

#### **Other Good Practice Example:**

### **Group 3: Communication is a two-way process of understanding others and expressing yourself**

Everyone communicates differently regardless of their cultural identity. When somebody has communication support needs, it may take **more effort and time** to ensure that health professionals and patients or communities using the service understand each other.

You need to:

- Match your communication to the needs of the people who use health services.
- Recognise and respond to the variety of ways that individuals may express themselves.

#### **Good Practice Example:**

- Use **symbols on signs** outside and inside buildings, or to represent service on appointment cards, information leaflets and letters.
- Ensure **staff training** to effectively simplify speech and to speak clearly, and to support verbal information by writing down key words.
- Offer **double appointments** for individuals who will require more time, therefore supporting communication needs as required.

#### **Other Good Practice Example:**

### **Group 4: Be flexible in the way your service is provided**

In order to match the way you communicate to the needs of all the patients and communities who use health services **avoid the “one size fits all” approach**. Think about how accessible your health service will be, what methods are best and be flexible in your approach.

#### **Good Practice Example:**

Many public services are moving towards online service delivery because it is cost effective and efficient. This may be a good option for the majority of people who use services, but can present barriers to patients with communication support needs. Good practice ensures good quality service is available offline too.

#### **Other Good Practice Example:**

**Group 5: Effective user involvement will include the participation of people with different communication support needs**

To help you identify the full implications of health service access for all members of the community, involve patients, including people with communication support needs, from the beginning of improvement participatory processes. *Services delivered around the needs of the people who use them will be more cost effective, user friendly and fit for purpose. It is important that people with communication support needs have the opportunity to participate in the change process in the same way that others can.*

**Good Practice Example:**

When planning a service change, think about how to support everybody to ensure they can be involved. This may mean training for staff before a consultation, or cultural mediation and other forms of communication support available during a consultation. Although this may incur additional costs, the benefits of getting the change right first time will provide a more economic outcome in the long term. Remember, change needs to be monitored and reviewed, with continual improvement based on user feedback.

**Other Good Practice Example:**

**Group 6: Keep trying!**

Small, simple changes to the way you communicate will make a big difference to your service delivery. Some changes may take longer, but will deliver positive outcomes, resulting in cost efficiencies and an increase in user satisfaction.

**Good Practice Example:**