

# **Unit 2: Communication Skills**

## Slide 2 Unit 2 Objectives

After successful completion of this unit, learners will be able to

Objective 1: list the components of effective communication.

Objective 2: define listening.

Objective 3: list the three primary methods of communication.

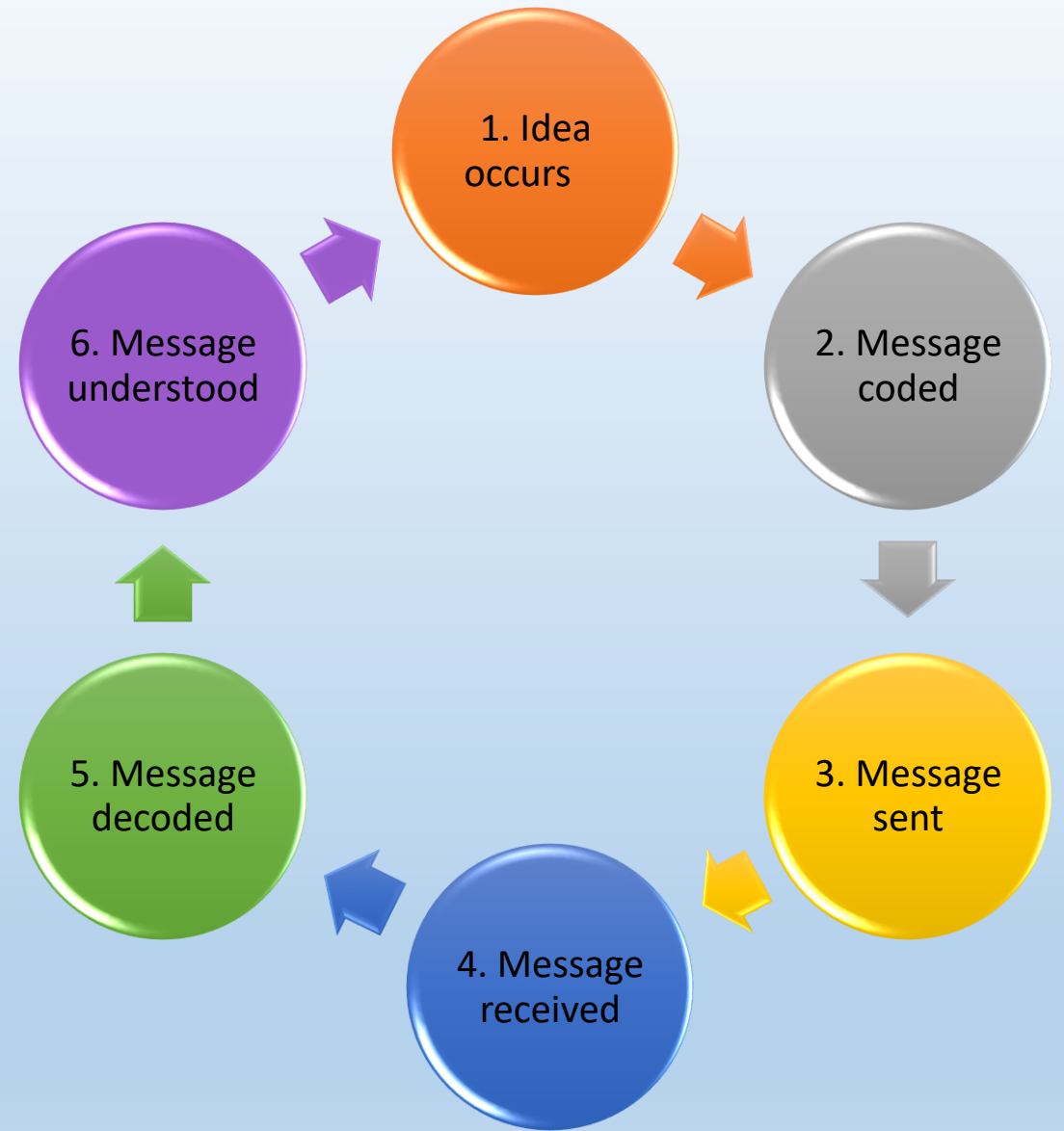
Objective 4: identify the five types of verbal responses.

Objective 5: define and apply “frame of reference” in communication.

Objective 6: apply effective verbal responses in communication with a community member in a typical CHERP setting.



**Communication** is the act of conveying information. This means that information must be sent, received, and understood before the process of communication is complete.



Communication breaks down when any stage in the process is flawed. As a CHERP, you need to be able to convey information in a way the receiver understands what you are saying. Just as important, you also need to be able to understand information that you receive.





Communication conveys information through different methods. One of the most common methods of communication used in your role as a CHERP will be talking face-to-face with either a community member or a health care professional.



Take a look at the following statements between a community member and her CHERP. Based on what you know about communication, which statement sends the most understandable message? What information is missing from the other statements?

## Slide 7 Test your knowledge

Which statement below sends the most understandable message?

- a) I really need you to help me figure out how many calories there are in foods I eat.
- b) I really need you to help me with my low calorie diet.
- c) I really need you to help me design a meal plan for a 1,500 calorie weight-loss diet.
- d) I really need you to help me lose weight.
- e) I really need you to help me figure out a way to diet and lose weight.

If you chose option “C”, you are correct!



In each of the choices, the community member had in her mind exactly what she wanted from the CHERP. However, the intended message was clearly communicated only through statement number three, because it was the most specific.



Let's take this exercise one step further by demonstrating how the CHERP can facilitate the communication process by listening and then responding most appropriately. In this example, Jane, the community member, makes the general statement to her CHERP. "I really need you to help me lose weight."

There are several possibilities for a CHERP response. Choose the best CHERP response on the next slide. Think about why the other responses may be less effective?



**Jane:** "I really need you to help me lose weight."

## Slide 10 Test Your Knowledge Quiz 2

Review the following statements. Decide which is the best response that communicates more specific information concerning what Jane wants.

1. Why do you want to lose weight?
2. Well, I can put you on a low-fat diet.
3. How much weight to you want to lose?
4. Do you want to lose weight by dieting, exercise, or both?
5. Please explain to me just exactly what kind of help you need from me.

If you selected option 5, you are correct!

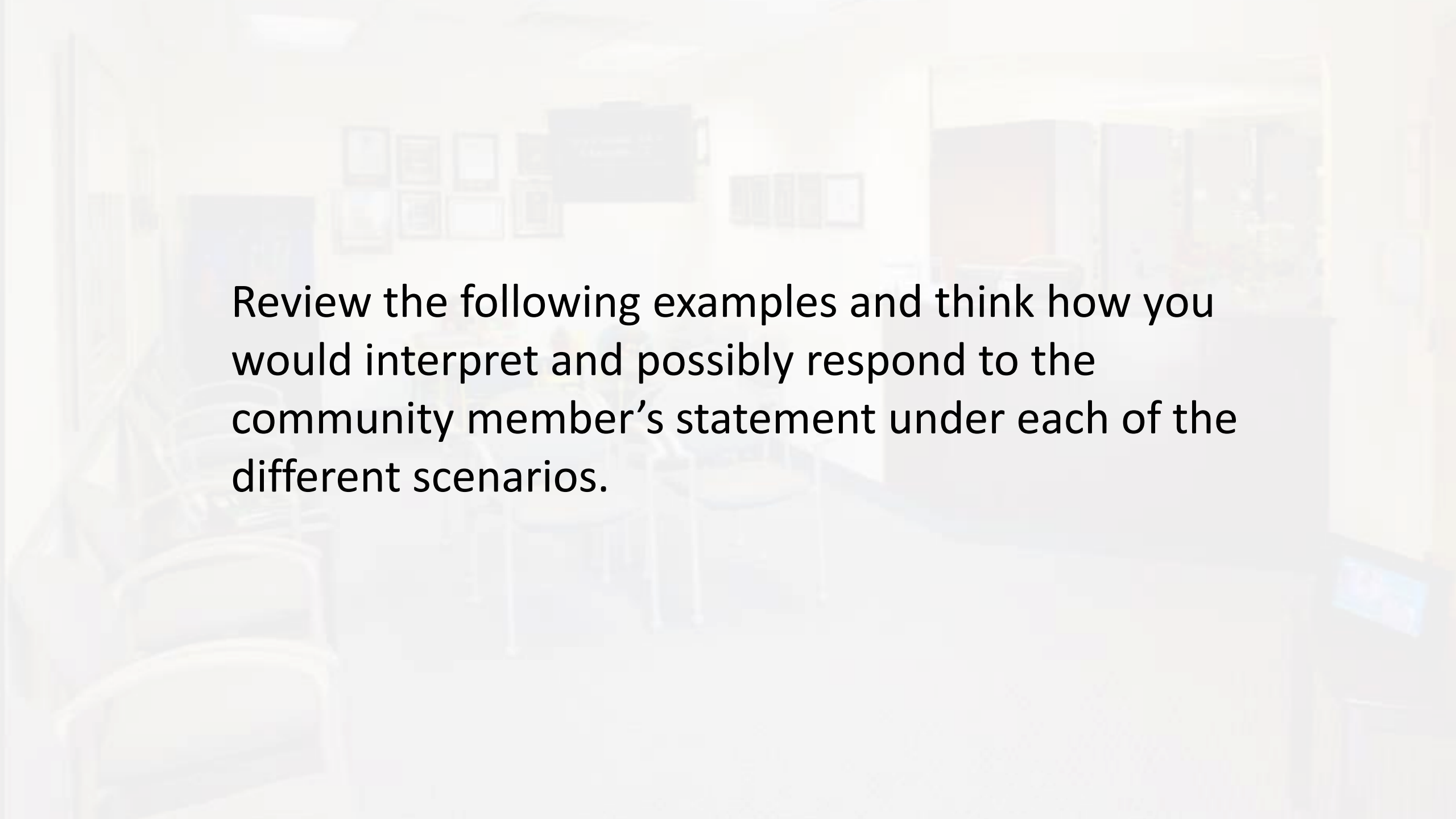


These examples show how the communication process of sending, receiving, and understanding messages is important. In reading through these examples, did you find out what skill the CHERP used to learn what Jane actually needed? The answer is listening. Listening goes beyond hearing, in that listening involves understanding and comprehending. The first four responses of the CHERP to Jane's statement, **"I really need you to help me lose weight"**, did not demonstrate listening. Those responses showed that the CHERP heard a message, but did not listen. The fifth response showed that the CHERP did not clearly understand Jane's message, and therefore, asked for more clarifying information. ***Listening is the most important communication skill a CHERP can possess.***



Although true listening involves understanding and comprehending the intended message, we use more of our senses than hearing to listen. It is possible to use all of the five senses when listening (hearing, sight, touch, smell, and taste). However, the senses most often used when communicating and listening face-to-face are hearing, sight, and touch. An effective CHERP understands how the senses are used to transmit and receive messages during communication.





Review the following examples and think how you would interpret and possibly respond to the community member's statement under each of the different scenarios.

**Listening Scenario One:** You are the CHERP and John is a community member who brought his wife with him to his third CHERP visit.



I am sure glad that my wife is helping me keep track of my medications.





As the CHERP makes eye contact with John, she takes him at his word and does not pick up on anything communicated through the senses.





**Listening Scenario Two:** You hear John emphasize the word ***sure***, but you make no other observations related to communicating with the other senses.

I ***sure*** am glad that my wife is helping me keep track of my medications.



**Listening Scenario Three:** You hear John emphasize the word *sure*, and see a smile on John's face as he make the statement.

I *sure* am glad that my wife is helping me keep track of my medications.



**Listening Scenario Four:** You hear John emphasize the word *sure*, and see him look at his wife with appreciation.

I *sure* am glad that my wife is helping me keep track of my medications.



**Listening Scenario Five:** You hear John emphasize the word *wife* as he rolls his eyes upward and crosses his arms.

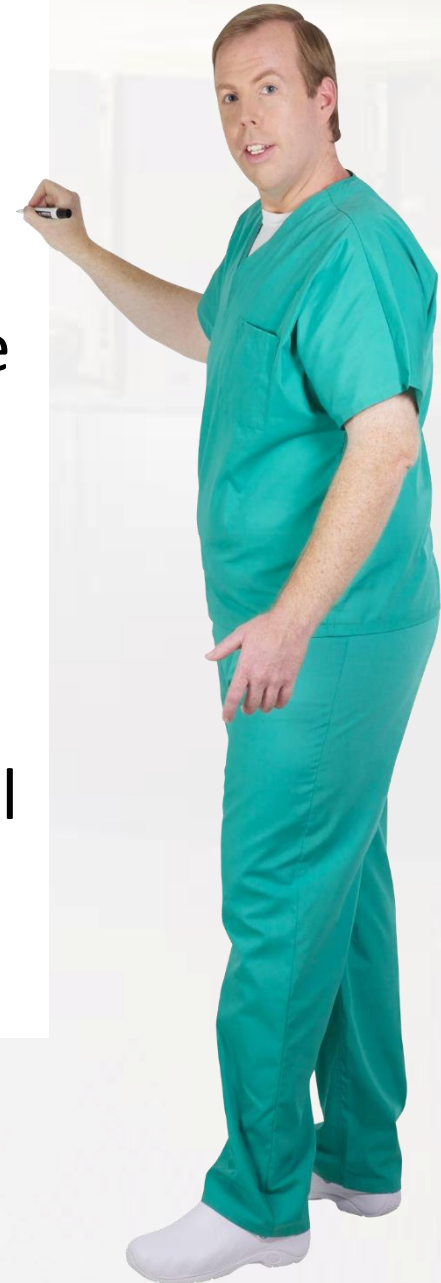
I sure am glad that  
my *wife* is helping  
me keep track of  
my medications.



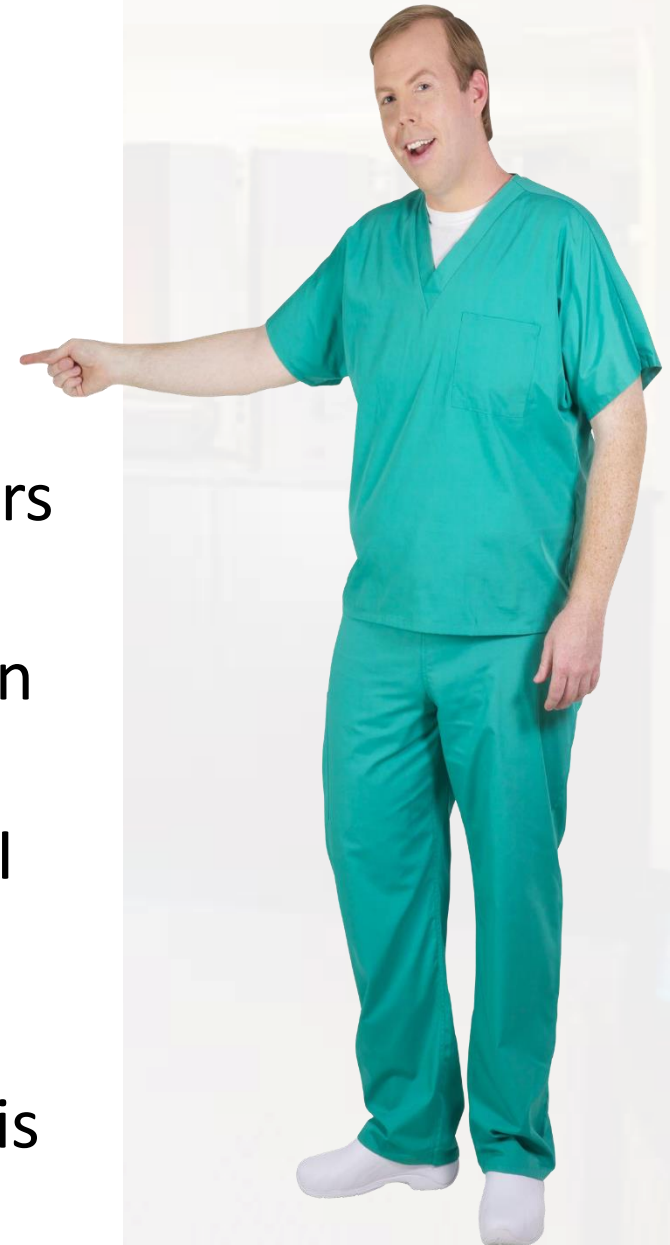
# **Prerequisites to Effective Listening**



You have already learned that communication is the process of sending, receiving, and understanding a message; and that in order to better communicate, we need to be able to understand how senses other than hearing are used to send messages. Communicating with senses other than hearing is called **nonverbal communication**. More details on nonverbal and verbal communication will be presented later in this training. For now, the attention will be directed on some prerequisites to effective listening.



There are two key prerequisites to effective listening that the CHERP should be aware of in order to best understand messages sent by community members with whom CHERPs work. The first of these prerequisites is that of **openness**. A CHERP must be open to receive communication and be open to others influencing the CHERP's perception. We all have experienced the frustration with a lack of openness in communication many times. When was the last time you walked away from a conversation thinking, "Oh, I am so frustrated with him because he is so closed minded"? That frustration came from the listener's refusal to see things from a perspective other than his own, in other words, your perspective.



As a CHERP, you must be open to perspectives other than your own. Regardless of your own prejudice or bias, and even regardless of whether another perspective is right or wrong, you must be open to all other perspectives. This does not mean that you need to accept another's perspective as being right, or that you need to disregard moral values. It just means that you need to be open to receiving another's perspective so that communication can occur. A wise saying to help you remember the importance of openness in communication is ***“See the world through their eyes.”*** In seeing things from the other person's perspective, your listening will reflect back to his or her empathy and compassion.





The second prerequisite to effective listening is **frame of reference**. Frame of reference is the starting point or the foundation upon which we begin to understand messages sent through communication. Each of our frames of reference is formulated by our own human experience. Sometimes two people's frame of reference is the same, because they have experienced the same thing under the same situation. More often than not, two people's frame of reference is different. Frame of reference is important to successful communication, because we interpret and understand messages according to our frame of reference. Watch the following videos to see frame of reference in action.



# Let's Talk Snow!

Click the link below to play the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jFjVHmOUF28&feature=youtu.be>

# Let's Talk Bikes!

Click the link below the play the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pgd8JxpWWYM&feature=youtu.be>

A CHERP who is a good listener will constantly remind himself or herself that communication will be best when the frame of reference of the sender and the receiver of a message is the same. Frame of reference is similar to openness in that the listener must be open to a new or different frame of reference than his or her own when trying to understand a message. Frame of reference is also related to openness in that our frame of reference almost always forms our perspective. Thus, our frame of reference may cause us to be closed-minded.

# **Barriers to Listening**

Concentration is the first essential ingredient to maintain effective listening throughout the communication process. An effective listener is able to focus his or her energy on the communication process, and shut out all other distractions or preoccupations. This may not be as easy as it sounds. There are often distractions in the surroundings (e.g., noise, movement, other people, objects), distractions from the person talking (e.g., mannerisms, smell, dress), and personal preoccupations (e.g., personal problems, stress, anxiety, tiredness, emotional issues) that draw the listener away from the focus of the communication.



Concentration is an aspect of communication that CHERPs can develop through practice. One way to practice concentration is to imagine that every interaction you have with a community member is vital to their health and well-being. Let them know that they are the most important thing happening at the time you are with them. Keeping the importance of your CHERP-community member interaction in mind will help prevent you from becoming preoccupied during conversation.





Openness during listening begins to fade as a person *selectively listens*. Selective listening is where the listener compromises the listening process by taking an authoritative position or by becoming defensive. CHERPs may be more knowledgeable about health issues than community members. That is the nature of the CHERP's role. However, this authoritative position should not enter into the listening process. Once the CHERP begins to exercise his or her authority, listening on the part of the CHERP becomes closed. Exercising authority while listening closes your mind to other perspectives than the one dictated by your authoritative position. Thus, you become closed to new perspectives that may be offered by the community member. The CHERP should only take the authoritative position when he or she is sending messages, not when listening and trying to understand messages.



Community members may say things that may be perceived as offensive. This may not be intentional, rather, this may be the only way a community member can express himself or herself. The CHERP should constantly strive not to be offended by remarks of a community member. If the CHERP takes offense, the CHERP is likely to become defensive in the remainder of the conversation. On the other hand, if the CHERP says something offensive to the community member, the community member may get defensive. In either case, defensiveness closes your mind to other ideas and perspectives. When you are defensive you focus your energy on defending yourself from further verbal attack or on counterattacking what just has been said. Defensiveness is greatly reduced as the CHERP practices communication skills that use other senses in addition to hearing.



## Slide 34 Vocabulary

**Communication Skills** - Communication is the act of conveying information. This means that information must be sent, received, and understood before the process of communication is complete. On the other hand, communication breaks down when any one of these components is flawed. As a CHERP, you need to be able to convey information, in an understandable manner, as well as receive and understand information that is conveyed to you. Effective CHERPs are able to communicate well with community members as well as with health care professionals.

## Slide 34 Continued

**Active Listening** - Although true listening involves understanding and comprehending the intended message, we use more of our senses than hearing to listen. It is possible to use all of the five senses when listening (hearing, sight, touch, smell, and taste). However, the senses most often used when communicating and listening face-to-face are hearing, sight, and touch.

**Affirmation** is emotional support or encouragement through positive statements to help an individual overcome challenges and negative thoughts.

## Slide 34 continued

**Barriers to Listening** - The communication process can breakdown if the listener becomes preoccupied, listens selectively, or fails to accept emotional messages.

**Clarifying** can take the form of a question or statement. An example of clarifying through a question would be, “Are you saying that...?” An example of clarifying with a statement would be, “So, as I understand it, you are saying....” This type of question or statement opens the way for the community member to better explain and give more information if you have not understood correctly.

## Slide 34 continued

**Confrontation** is a communication technique, when used in a supportive, healthy and respectful way, can be productive and useful to challenge an individual to recognize behaviors, thoughts, or feelings of uncertainty, doubt, or apathy.

**Frame of Reference** is one's perspective; the starting point or the foundation upon which we begin to understand messages sent through communication and interpret the message based on beliefs, values and in terms of personal experiences.

**Openness in communication** is understanding that our ideas are shaped by perception through our personal experience.



## Slide 34 continued

**Paralanguage** is the use of vocal sounds other than words to enhance communication. Different ways to enhance communication through paralanguage include voice qualities such as pitch, tone, forcefulness, and rhythm; as well as vocal characteristics like laughing, crying, yelling and yawning.

**Paraphrasing** is using your own words to summarize what an individual said; **Reiterating** is to repeat back almost word for word what another individual says. Both, paraphrasing and reiterating are communication techniques used to check for a clear message and to promote the understanding of the other person and yourself.



Slide 34 continued

**Probing** is a communication technique through statements or questions to explore more closely and acquire more information. This communication technique offers more information for more complete understanding.

**Reflecting** is to think about, contemplate, consider, and review what an individual communicates. Interpreting is restating in your own words the message, thoughts, and feelings shared by an individual.

# **Types of Communication**

**Nonverbal, Paralanguage, & Verbal Communication**



## Slide 36 Types of Communication

**Paralanguage** is the use of vocal sounds other than words to enhance message communication.

**Nonverbal communication** is using the senses other than speaking to send, receive, and understand messages. Non-verbal messages strengthen, support or deny what is being said.

**Verbal communication** is using speech to communicate. As a CHERP, you will communicate often face-to-face. The people you interact with may not always communicate verbally as well as you do.



## **Nonverbal communication**

Nonverbal messages strengthen, support, or deny what is being said. Nonverbal messages are almost always sent at the same time words are spoken. The face and head produce most of our nonverbal messages. Sometimes it is almost impossible to separate the nonverbal messages from the associated verbal message. For example, try to shake your head *no* while you say the word *yes* or vice versa. On the other hand, it is almost automatic to shake your head *no* when you say *no* or shake your head *yes* when you say *yes*.

Other nonverbal messages are sent by body position and movement, which is rightfully called body language. Reread the CHERP listening scenarios (slides 16 through 21) and notice how the nonverbal body language either supports or denies what is being said verbally. Good listeners hear with all of their senses. Similarly, good speakers know how to use nonverbal communication to help communicate their message.



Dress and appearance are another type of body language that should be planned for when interacting with community members or health care professionals. People feel most comfortable communicating with others who are similar. This fact is the major driving force behind the entire concept of community health workers. **When your dress and appearance matches the people you are helping, an immediate bond of trust is formed.** Therefore, if you were to meet with a farmer who wears overalls and boots you would be wise to mirror that image by dressing in something similar. On the other hand, if you are to meet with an accountant at his or her office, more formal attire is appropriate.





Remember that the initial message you want to send while interacting with anybody is, “I am on your level”. This does not mean you are trying to present yourself as somebody you are not. You are not trying to pass yourself off as a farmer to the farmers or pass yourself off as an accountant to the accountants. You are trying to say to the farmer, “I understand where you are coming from.” You are trying to say the same thing to the accountant. This message is easily sent by mirroring people’s dress and appearance.





## **Verbal Communication**

As a CHERP, you will be doing a lot of face-to-face communication with community members and may meet with health care professionals. The people you interact with as a CHERP may not be able to communicate as well as you do. This means that you will need to help these people send, receive, and understand messages. The easiest place to start is with word usage. Community members and others feel stronger when they understand the power of their words, and that you understand the degree of feeling that is in their words. Words matter.







Another important aspect of communication when working as a CHERP, is to use words that match the educational level of the person with whom you are speaking. This is especially important when discussing health issues with community members. Something just as simple as using the words *blood sugar* rather than *blood glucose* can make a big difference in a person's understanding as well as comfort with you.

## Paralanguage

In between verbal and nonverbal communication lies paralanguage. **Paralanguage** is the use of vocal sounds other than words to enhance communication. Different ways to enhance communication through paralanguage include voice qualities such as pitch, tone, forcefulness, and rhythm; as well as vocal characteristics like laughing, crying, yelling and yawning. In addition, emphasizing a word can influence how a message is sent and interpreted. Just as with nonverbal communication and body language, paralanguage messages are sent along with verbal messages while communicating. Return to CHERP scenarios [2](#) and [5](#) to see how emphasizing two different words in the same statement can affect the understanding of the message sent.



# **Verbal Responses**

**Probing, Clarifying, Reiterating and Paraphrasing, Confronting**

A trusting relationship needs to develop with community health workers (CHERPs) and any community member with whom they work. CHERPs can help community members understand that they have the power within themselves to solve problems and make healthy behavior changes. CHERPs can build self-esteem in their community members by constantly sending them messages of affirmation. Repetitive affirming messages are needed throughout any counseling session, presentation, or class. Community members who are struggling with health issues need this outside reinforcement to help them cope with and overcome their problems. Any positive message that can build the community member's self confidence will help. Compliments, praise, respect, pointing out the positive, reassuring, and honoring community member's rights are all ways to affirm the community member. The only caution the CHERP needs to be aware of is that all affirmation messages should be sincere.

## Probing

An effective CHERP is able to obtain information by probing. Asking questions or making statements that require the community member to reveal vital information are the best methods of probing. Inexperienced CHERPs often feel uncomfortable probing into another person's life. Nonetheless, probing is an essential part of successful communication between the CHERP and the community member. As long as the CHERP-community member relationship has trust, and the CHERP uses effective communication skills, probing will not be a problem. **The most common mistake CHERPs make is that they do not obtain enough information before they try to help a community member with his or her problem or request.**

## Clarifying

The CHERP can help the understanding part of communication by getting clarification about messages the community member is sending. Clarifying messages can also be part of the probing process. Clarifying can take the form of a question or statement. An example of clarifying through a question would be, **“Are you saying that...?”** An example of clarifying with a statement would be, **“So, as I understand it, you are saying...”**. This type of question or statement opens the way for the community member to better explain and give more information if you misunderstood the information.



## Reiterating and paraphrasing

Another way to help understand messages a community member is sending is to reiterate or paraphrase what the individual has said. Reiterating is repeating almost word for word what the community member has said. Whereas, paraphrasing is summarizing in your own words what the community member has said. Note that both reiterating and paraphrasing can be used as methods for clarifying the message. If the reiterating or paraphrasing statements do not match the message the community member is attempting to convey, further clarification or probing may be necessary. On the next slide, view the examples for reiterating and paraphrasing.

## Slide 49 CHERP Reiterating

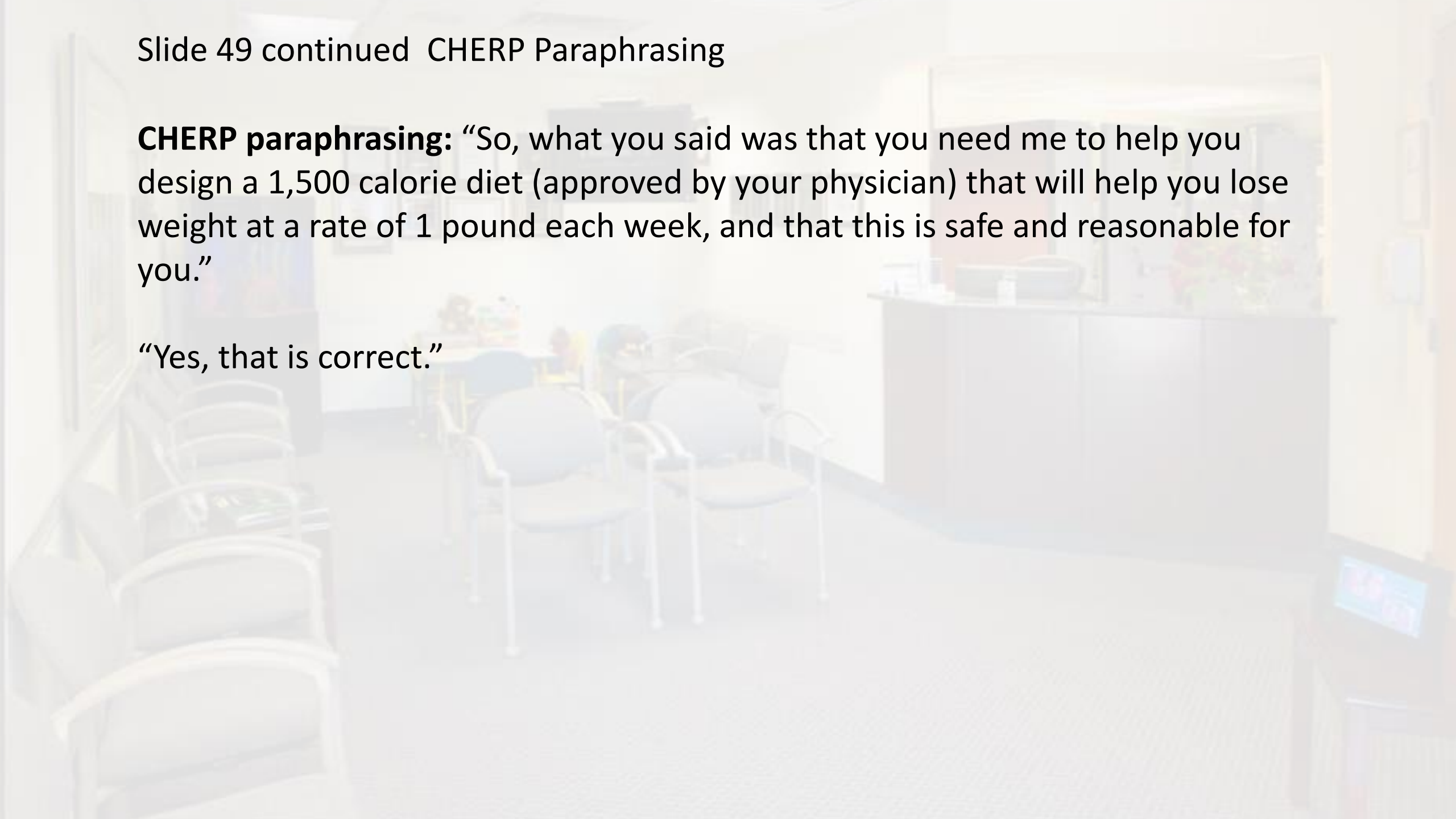
**CHERP reiterating:** “So, you said you have decided that a weight loss of 1 pound each week is safe and reasonable for you. You calculated that cutting your current diet by 500 calories a day will ensure you lose weight at that rate. You estimate that 1,500 calories a day will guarantee that you meet your goal. You want me to help you design this diet and get it approved by your physician, because you cannot do it on your own.”

“Yes, that is right.”

## Slide 49 continued CHERP Paraphrasing

**CHERP paraphrasing:** “So, what you said was that you need me to help you design a 1,500 calorie diet (approved by your physician) that will help you lose weight at a rate of 1 pound each week, and that this is safe and reasonable for you.”

“Yes, that is correct.”



## Reflecting and interpreting

Reiterating and paraphrasing basically give back to the community member the message he or she sent to you in more or less his or her own words. Reflecting and interpreting are different from reiterating and paraphrasing in that reflecting and interpreting give the message back to the community member in your words or your interpretation of his or her words.

## Slide 52 CHERP Reflecting & Interpreting

Remember, reflecting and interpreting clarifies the message the community member is sending. The CHERP listens to the message, and then reflects their understanding of the content of the message by using their own words to explain what they believe was said. Read the following example where the CHERP reflects and interprets the community member's message.

CHERP reflecting and interpreting: "So, the plan then is for us to design a 1,500 calorie weight loss diet, because you predict this will be an effective and safe way for you to meet your goal."

"Yes, that is correct. I would like your help designing a 1,500 calorie weight loss diet."

## Confrontation

Most of the time when people think of confrontation they think of something negative and inappropriate. However, when working with people who are struggling with health behavior issues, confrontation can be a useful tool to help them become aware of behaviors, thoughts, and feelings. Confrontation can be used when a person's thinking is distorted, when a person's decision to change is not yet firm, or when a person has not been able to follow through with a commitment. The following examples illustrate each of these uses for confrontation.



## Slide 54 Confrontation

Confrontation can be a useful tool to help them become aware of behaviors, thoughts, and feelings that they have not noticed.

**Patient John:** “I will never be able to follow this diabetes diet. It has been 8 weeks now and I have been a complete failure.”

**CHERP confrontation for distorted thinking:** “John, you will be able to follow this diabetes diet. You just have some issues that are difficult to overcome. You may feel like a failure now, but that’s only because you had a bad week this week. Look at your progress chart we designed 8 weeks ago. You have performed well during 5 of the 8 weeks. I would not call that a complete failure.”

## Slide 55 Confrontation 2

Let's look at another example of constructive confrontation.

**Patient Sam:** "I don't know if I can stop smoking. The plan we mapped out seems logical, but I just don't know if I will be successful. I have tried to quit smoking several times and still have the habit."

**CHERP confrontation for not having a firm decision to change:** I know it seems like a difficult thing to do, Sam. You admit that your plan to stop smoking is logical, but now you are wavering on your decision. I think you are just afraid of another failed attempt. Regardless of any small setbacks along the way, I know you can eventually quit smoking. I say this because there are many other obstacles in your life that you already overcame."

## Components of Communication

The most difficult time to communicate with someone is when there are strong *emotions* involved. Most of us would like to avoid emotional discussions and often go to great lengths to avoid emotional confrontations. Many of the people CHERPs work with are emotional or become emotional during a face-to-face meeting. Although the CHERP cannot avoid emotional talks, the CHERP can prevent emotional talks from becoming hurtful and unmanageable. The best way to deal with the uneasiness of emotional discussions is to set up the communication process before the discussion begins. In order to do this, you need to understand how the components of communication interact during the communication process.

**Table 1: Components of Communication**

Content	Character	Process
What will I say? What will he or she say? How will I respond? What is my next remark? Have I made all my points? Have I contradicted myself?	Who is communicating The speaking skills we have Use of gestures Introduction Exaggeration Nonverbal message	How will we communicate? Purpose of our communication Expectations Ulterior motives Agendas Who controls the process

Remember, without all three components working together in proper balance, communication is reduced to just talk, or even worse, reduced to an argument or an unpleasant situation.

Most of our time spent communicating is devoted to only one of the three components, content. We usually enter into a conversation with a plan of what we want to say, how we want to say it, how we want to defend our position, how we will deal with opposing arguments, and so forth. Then when the other person starts talking, we stop listening and begin to mentally prepare our next words. Since a vast majority of our time is spent building content for an emotional conversation, our emotional selves often come out of the conversation unsettled, because we really did not communicate. If the CHERP is spending time on content while the community member is talking, the CHERP will not be listening with the skills we have previously presented. The result is that the community member goes away from the conversation feeling that he or she was not understood and possibly that the issue was not resolved.

The character of our communication usually enters subconsciously by what gestures, intonations, and nonverbal messages we use to support our content. Sometimes we consciously spend time developing the character for our communications. This is particularly apparent when we have time to prepare our content ahead of time, like when preparing for a speech or when giving a lesson. Politicians spend a lot of time developing character of a speech they are to present publically, because they want to ensure their character supports their content during the delivery.



The last component of communication, the process, is usually ignored. Process always exists in our communications, but the process is generally ignored or predetermined. In many situations, having the communication process predetermined is not detrimental and may be beneficial. When you enter a lecture hall at a college or university, it is understood and predetermined that the professor will give information to the students in a lecture-style format and that the response of the students is limited to discussion relevant to the topic at hand. This process works well, given there is common understanding and agreement as to how the lecture hall communication will occur. However, what usually gets us into trouble is when the communication process is ignored or predetermined without the consent of both communicating parties. Next review the following scenario involving Dave, a person who missed curfew.

Slide 61 This story is an example of how communication errors can occur without process planning.

**Mother:** “Honey, I need to talk to you about Dave coming in after curfew last night. It was not his fault.”

**Father:** “How could it not be his fault? The high school dance ended at 12:00 a.m. He was to be in by 12:30 a.m. He did not come in until 2:00 a.m. The car is here. It is not scratched, so I assume there was no accident. Hence, he should have been home on time.”

**Mother:** “I waited up for him, and think you should hear his side of the story.”

**Father:** “OK, I will go have a talk with him.”

## Slide 61 Continued

**Father:** “Dave, we need to have a talk about last night.”

**Dave:** “I know. Things did not turn out as I expected.”

**Father:** “You’ve got that right! We have had this discussion before about curfew. You are 17 years old and need to learn responsibility. You are hereby grounded for the next two weeks and will receive no allowance for a week. Any questions?”

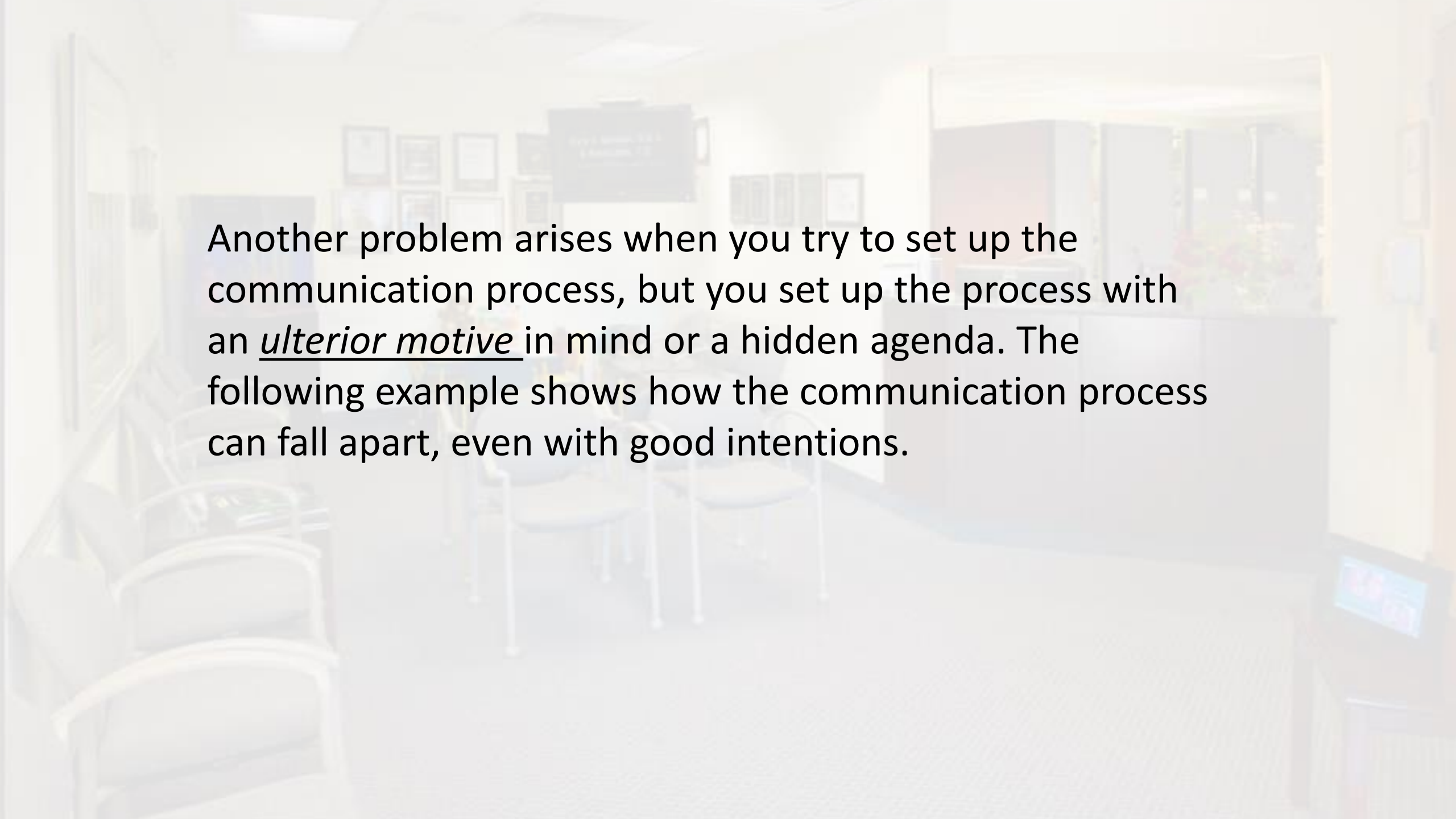
**Dave:** “No.”

## Slide 61 Continued

**Mother:** “So, how did your talk with Dave go?”

**Father:** “It went well. Now he understands his responsibility.”

You can see several problems with communication in this family. Dave's mother did not set up the process for her communication with Dave's father. She did not tell him what she expected from him in their conversation. Hence, Dave's father was not receptive to gaining information about the circumstances around Dave's curfew, because his father was not set up to receive such information. Then, Dave's discussion with his father followed their usual manner of communication. Father took control while Dave sat there and listened. Although the process was understood, it was not a healthy one. They had a father-to-son talk, but the components of communication were ignored.



Another problem arises when you try to set up the communication process, but you set up the process with an ulterior motive in mind or a hidden agenda. The following example shows how the communication process can fall apart, even with good intentions.



## Slide 64 Good Intentions

As Melinda ages, she has struggled to maintain a healthy weight. She is very sensitive about the subject and can be defensive about her weight even when Sam believes he is supporting her. The following example is a conversation between Melinda and Sam as they talk about the touchy subject.

## Slide 64 Continued

**Melinda:** “We need to talk about a problem we are having, Sam.”

**Sam:** “Oh yeah? What’s that?”

**Melinda:** “You know.”

**Sam:** “Yes, I know, your weight.”

**Melinda:** “Please don’t act that way Sam. Every time this comes up you get into a defensive mood and then I get hurt, and it leads to an argument.”

**Sam:** “OK. Let’s talk.”

## Slide 64 Continued

**Melinda:** “I just need to express myself first, Sam. Please let me say a few things without being interrupted. I have so many emotions about the challenges I have with my weight. I want to try to explain how I feel to you so that you will hopefully understand.”

**Melinda:** “Please don’t get defensive if I say something that upsets you. Right now, I just need you to listen without coming back with an argument. I really need to tell you how I’ve been feeling, but it’s so emotional I will not be ready for a response from you right away. Maybe later tonight I will be ready for your feedback. OK?”

Until now, things seem to be going well. Melinda has prepared the *content* of what she has to say, although she is not sure just how it will be perceived. She has set the stage for how she wants the *character* of the communication to be, and she has done a great job at setting up the *process*. She told Sam just what she expects from the communication process, what she wants from him, how she plans to communicate, what she needs, and what she will not allow into the communication process, if accepted by Sam.

## Slide 66 Sam & Melinda Part 2

Let's pick back up where we left Sam and Melinda.

**Sam:** "OK. I think I can handle this. I would like some time to ponder what you say and then respond later. Go ahead and start Melinda."

**Melinda:** "I don't like it when you make comments about my weight. I feel like you are always criticizing me. I know I am overweight, and it concerns you, but I hate it when you blame me for being overweight and act like it would be easy for me to lose weight, like I am lazy or something."

## Slide 66 Continued Sam & Melinda Part 2

**Sam:** “I never said anything about your weight! Oh, hold on, I am sorry. We agreed that I would not respond right now. Please continue.”

**Melinda:** “Thank you. As I was saying, I want you to be more understanding about my weight. I want you to make me feel pretty, even though I am overweight. I want you to appreciate me for who I am.”

**Sam:** “Are you done?”

**Melinda:** “Yes. Thank you for listening.”



Melinda feels much better. She thinks that she had a tremendous emotional release. Sam, on the other hand, is frustrated. Although he kept his promise to keep quiet and let Melinda express herself, he is steaming inside. So, what went wrong?





Melinda set up the communication process properly, but did not follow through with her expressed intent. She said she was going to express her emotions, but she didn't. Although the words "emotions" and "feel" came up, and she may have even shown signs of emotion in her face, she did not verbalize her emotions. For example, the statement I feel like you are always criticizing me is not an expression of an emotion. It is a criticism of Sam's behavior. Melinda followed a different agenda from what she set up (i.e. process). She had an ***ulterior motive***. Can you guess what it was?



Melinda wanted to change the way Sam related to her weight. She should have told Sam that she wanted to talk to him and tell him some ways that she would like him to change the way he related to her weight. Then if he agreed to enter into the conversation, he would have been prepared for what he received. In contrast, he was prepared for an expression of emotions and instead, got an agenda for him to change his behavior. No wonder he went away angry. Melinda, on the other hand, had some emotional release; but it was not complete because she really did not address her true emotions. The following example shows how she could have expressed herself emotionally.



**Melinda:** “When you make sarcastic remarks about my weight I feel belittled. If you suggest that I am lazy because I have not been able to lose weight, I feel shameful. On the other hand, when you tell me I am pretty or tell me I look awesome in my dress, I feel appreciated and loved. I am conscious about my body weight and think I may be disappointing to you in a romantic way because of it. This makes me feel inadequate and insecure. Maybe you can give me your thoughts on this later, but not right now. I am too emotional to really listen to what you might have to say. Can we talk tomorrow night about it?”





Under the new scenario, Melinda expressed emotions. She kept to her agenda. Sam still may be hurt a bit, and he can express these feelings tomorrow night; but, as it is, he can only validate Melinda's emotions right now. So, in the new scenario, the touchy subject was diffused before it exploded. Whereas, in the first dialogue, Sam was put in a position to defend himself from Melinda's accusations. This could have ended in a heated discussion.




Did you recognize the real issue surrounding Melinda's weight? **The real issue was that she felt unappreciated, inadequate, and insecure.** Melinda needed to feel appreciated, adequate, and secure in her relationship with Sam, especially the romantic part of their relationship.





## In summary:

This unit discussed how the communication process of sending, receiving, and understanding messages is one of the most important skills of a community health worker. Remember **communication involves all five senses (sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing)**. An effective CHERP understands how the senses are used to transmit and receive messages through various types of communication. In addition, this unit discussed the importance of using the components of communication, which includes content, character, and process. With practice, a CHERP can become an effective communicator when working with community members and health care professionals.

You have come to the end of this lesson. To advance to the next activity please click on the **Green Arrow** ► below at the bottom right of the screen or use the  button to navigate within the course. Click on  at the top right to take you back to the course outline.