
Communication Skills Scenario Learning Resource Pack

Contents

Background to Interprofessional Skills.....	1
Communication Skills Scenario as a Technique to Enhance Interprofessional Learning.....	2
Equipment.....	3
Method.....	3
Student Handouts.....	7
References.....	8

This resources was developed by the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) with funding from VetNetLLN and is provided for non-commercial use by other institutions free of charge

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Background to Interprofessional Skills

Within the health care professions, we are becoming increasingly aware that working well interprofessionally may be key for treating patients effectively. The General Medical Council's Tomorrow's Doctors standards (2003) now includes the following in its curricular outcomes

“Working with colleagues:

- a. Know about, understand and respect the roles and expertise of other health and social care professionals.
- b. Be able to demonstrate effective teamworking and leadership skills.
- c. Be willing to lead when faced with uncertainty and change”

Veterinary educators also realize the importance of advancing their students' interprofessional skills, hence the creation of three resources which can be used separately or together as a unit.

We define interprofessional skills as those abilities that allow professionals to work efficiently and effectively in a multi-professional team.

CAIPE (Centre For The Advancement Of Interprofessional Education) in 2002 defined Interprofessional Education (IPE) as

“Occurring when two or more professions learn with, from and about each other to improve collaboration and the quality of care”

Interprofessional skills centre around good communication and an appreciative knowledge of the skills and roles of other professions, this can be seen in Figure 1 below.

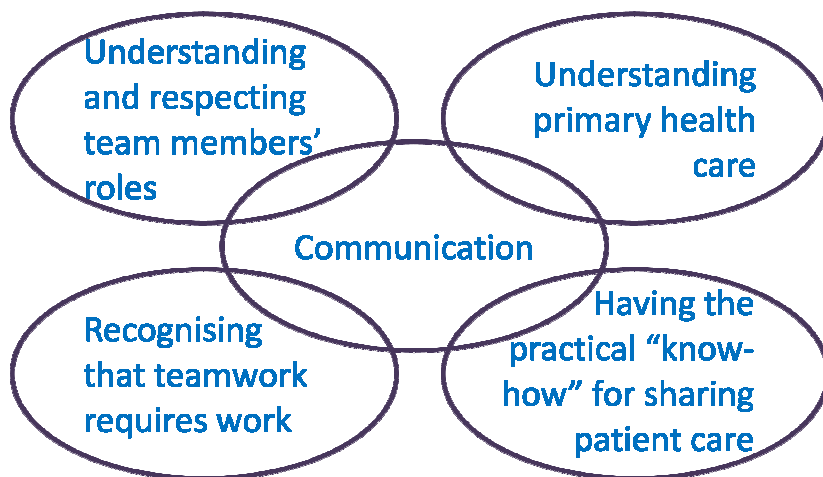


Figure 1: Characteristics of an effective health care team (Sargeant, Loney and Murphy, 2008).

Communication Skills Scenario as a Technique to Enhance Interprofessional Learning

Resource Type: Interprofessional group activity to improve the recognition of, and ability to address, interprofessional issues

Communication skills scenarios are utilised in veterinary education whereby a student acting as the veterinary surgeon, communicates with an actor who is playing the role of a client. Examples of such scenarios can be seen on the National Unit for the Advancement of Veterinary Communication Skills (NUVACS) website: <http://www.nuvacs.co.uk/>.

However, no scenario deals with interprofessional issues, whereby a veterinary surgeon is communicating with a veterinary nurse. This resource aims to fill that niche.

In contrast to the traditional scenario however, the students are not required to act out the scenario in this activity. Instead, they watch videos of real professionals in scenarios. This method was chosen as it does not require students to play a role that may be 'out of character' and they are not comfortable with. It also ensures that the interprofessional issues that this scenario includes are highlighted, rather than just the communication skills aspect.

Equipment

- The 'Suki Scenario' DVD, available on request from the Royal Veterinary College (contact: sbaillie@rvc.ac.uk).
- A computer and projector able to play the DVD.

Method

Summary Session Plan:

Introduction to Interprofessional Education	5 minutes
Introduction by vet/vet nurse videos and activities	10 minutes
Information passing in corridor videos and activities	5 minutes
The confrontation video and activities	20 minutes
Reflection videos and activities	10 minutes

The session should be run with a group of students from both professions. The tasks involved can be carried out independently or in small groups and then discussed in small groups or the whole class, depending on size.

The PowerPoint presentation on the next page can be used to introduce your class to the session. It can be accessed on the Royal Veterinary College's LIVE Centre website, under the activity Professionalism http://www.live.ac.uk/html/activities_professionalism.html.

The notes beside the slides will instruct you how to carry out the session.

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LIVE LIFELONG INDEPENDENT LEARNING EDUCATION

VET NET LLN

This resource was developed by LIVE, RVC with funding from VetNetLLN

Interprofessional Skills
'Communication Skills Scenario'

Vets **Nurses**

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Introduction to Interprofessional Education (IPE)

- Interprofessional skills are those abilities that enable us to work with people from other professions within the veterinary practice, in order to achieve common goals such as improving the health of patients
- 'Other professions' = vet surgeons and vet nurses
- In order to work well together, the professions should know about each other's roles, abilities, priorities etc.
- IPE is increasingly being used in human medicine, but not yet in veterinary



Although in practice vets and veterinary nurses will work with other professions (receptionists/practice managers for example) in this case, the resources concentrate on the most frequent interaction i.e. that between the vet and the nurse. The production of these resources was one of the first attempts to use IPE in veterinary education, whereby veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses actually train together.

Suki Case Study - 1

- Video: VS explains her opinions on the Suki case
 - Summarise her opinion of Suki
 - Summarise her opinion of other people
- Video: VN explains her opinions on the Suki case
 - Summarise her opinion of Suki
 - Summarise her opinion of other people



Steps:

1. Play the veterinary surgeon's introduction. Ask the students individually, or in small interprofessional groups to note down the vet's opinion of Suki and other people (which in this case is the owner). Students report back to the class.

They should pick up the following:
Suki is a 16 y/o cat

She is very ill, including renal failure
The vet thinks the best thing is euthanasia

This is not possible at the moment due to the owner's wishes
Opinion of the owner – stubborn, needs to change his mind

2. Play the veterinary nurse's introduction. Ask the students individually, or in small interprofessional groups to note down the nurse's opinion of Suki and other people (which in this case is the vet). Students report back to the class.

They should pick up the following:

Suki is a friendly cat

She is very ill and the nurse thinks euthanasia is the only option

Opinion of the vet – does not seem terribly concerned over Suki, does not spend enough time with her

Suki Case Study - 2

- Video: Information passing in corridors
 - Do these two clips provide you with any more information about the relationship between the VS and the VN, or the VS/VN and Suki?



Steps:

1. Play the two short clips of information passing in corridors.
2. Ask the students if they learnt anything new, or had any ideas confirmed by these clips. They should see that the vet does not seem keen on meeting with the nurse. They should see that the nurse is very keen to talk to the vet.

Suki Case Study - 3

★ *Though you may have ended up taking a side in this disagreement, remember that both sides were equally wrong!!* ★

- Video: The confrontation
 - What went wrong?
 - Did either of them get their point across?
 - Do the professions appear to have different responsibilities?
 - Can you put yourself in the other profession's shoes?
 - What do you know about the legal requirements surrounding euthanasia?
 - How would you handle this differently?

The note at the top of the slide aims to stop the students from thinking this was all one person's fault.

Through the discussions that follow they should see that both sides have a portion of the blame for the confrontation.

Steps:

1. Play the confrontation video
2. Ask the students whether they thought it was a successful discussion and to examine why not.

Reasons may include:

- Communication skills – the nurse was rather forceful and the vet rather defensive
 - A lack of initial communication – the vet had not previously told the nurse about the owner's religious views
 - The nurse had not expressed her concerns to the vet prior to this explosion of feelings
3. Interprofessional issues that should be highlighted are as follows:
- Consider why the member of one profession is in a different position to the other e.g. professional responsibilities (and what these are)
 - Consider each other's position in this case i.e. try to 'put yourself in the other person's shoes'
 - Euthanasia: Whose decision is it? What is the legal position e.g. can / under what circumstances can a vet perform euthanasia without owner's consent?
 - If you were to be presented with a similar case in practice how you would communicate / discuss your views and concerns? What are the best / most appropriate ways to speak to, or

discuss the issues with, the member of the other profession in this case?

Suki Case Study - 4

- Video: VS and VN in their homes
 - Do their thoughts about the confrontation match yours?
 - Can you summarise the **communication** issues?
 - Can you summarise the **interprofessional** issues?



Steps:

1. Play the videos of the veterinary surgeon and veterinary nurse in their homes.
2. Consider if the comments the class have come up with in regard to interprofessional issues are mirrored in the reflective thoughts of the professionals.

For example: They hadn't considered each other's point of view, the interprofessional issues or communicated well with each other.

They suggest sitting down together to clear the air and discuss how to work together in the future

A handout for students to note down their thoughts on the questions while watching the videos, and in groups afterwards, can be found on the website:

http://www.live.ac.uk/html/activities_professionalism.html.

Suki Case Study

Introduction Videos

Summarise Sarah, the veterinary surgeon's i) opinion of Suki's current situation and ii) position in relation to other people i.e. the client and the nurse Nicki

Summarise Nicki, the veterinary nurse's i) opinion of Suki's current situation and ii) position in relation to other people i.e. the vet Sarah and the client

Information Passing in Corridors Videos

Write down any new or confirmed pieces of information about the relationship between the veterinary surgeon and the veterinary nurse, or the veterinary surgeon/nurse and Suki

References

CAIPE. 2002. Defining IPE. <http://www.caipe.org.uk/about-us/defining-ipe> Accessed 23rd February 2010.

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