

## COMMUNICATION

Communication is the linchpin of the social work profession. It is the vehicle that is used to empower clients or communities, to advocate for social change, and to maintain the integrity of an organization. It is the premise of the work of the profession in that communication is key to fostering understanding of self and others.

All levels of human communication are involved in the work of a social worker. One must know how to compose articulate and cohesive case notes and reports. A social worker must possess keen presentation skills, whether used in presenting a case, in explaining to a family or community a proposed intervention, or in delivering testimony. Social workers need to be cognizant of the messages, positive and negative, sent through body language, eye contact, and other nonverbal forms of communication. Computer technology and audiovisual skills are also a necessary component of a social worker's communication abilities.

To be an effective communicator also means interacting with client systems or communities in a non-judgmental manner. In the many roles that a social worker fulfills, a client or community can be biased by a spoken or unspoken message and social workers must possess an awareness of both positive and negative. The non-judgmental stance is vital in honing the social worker's skills in attending and listening.

### Foundation Level:

*Knowledge:* Possesses an understanding of the basic components of good composition, including grammar and sentence structure; elements of effective public speaking, including presentation without notes, how to capture the attention of an audience; basic computer skills.

*Values:* Understanding of the power of written and verbal communication; awareness and respect for non-judgmental communication.

*Skills:* Composes clear and logical papers and statements, with attention to structure and tone; utilizes basic grammar and composition skills; listening skills; effective presentation skills, including awareness of time limits, cultural sensitivity, creativity, and voice modulation; audio visual skills; is able to use a computer and navigate through basic software programs.

### Advanced Level:

*Knowledge:* Is familiar with the components of a case record and its necessary data; knowledgeable of a client report and its typical content; and possesses the ability to discern the difference between the two; understands the value of collaboration; is familiar with search engines and other research avenues on the internet.

*Values:* Understands the appropriateness of expressing professional opinions; is comfortable with the need to communicate with people at different levels.

*Skills:* Possesses listening skills and is able to demonstrate understanding of the power of silence; able to document case records and reports; deliver testimony, communicate effectively as a team member; can facilitate a conversation as a negotiator; client interview skills; able to use advanced computer applications such as presentation software, spreadsheets, graphing programs and database management.