



COMMUNICATING WITH MANAGEMENT

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK

April 22-25, 2024 | Canmore, AB

Land Acknowledgement

United Nurses of Alberta respectfully acknowledges that the land on which we are privileged to gather is the traditional territory of diverse Indigenous peoples and encompasses Treaties 6, 7 and 8, parts of Treaties 4 and 10, and the homes, travelling routes, and meeting grounds of many whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our service and advocacy as members of the nursing profession. These include Cree, Dene, Inuit, Iroquois, Metis, and many other Indigenous peoples. Our recognition of this land is a small but important part of our responsibility in reconciliation and an expression of our gratitude to those on whose territory we reside or are visiting.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Activity – Setting the Stage.....	3
Expectations / Standards for Communication	4
Communication with Management: Best Practices.....	8
Activity – Overcoming Challenges.....	12

ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

Learning Objectives

At the end of this workshop, participants should be able to:

- > Understand a Local leader's role in communicating with managers with a particular focus on what it means to work collaboratively with management.
- > Recognize management communication strategies and develop effective strategies to respond to management.
- > Develop skills in coaching and modeling effective communication strategies.

Workshop Offerings

Each participant will attend 3 workshops over the course of the Labour School.

- > Truth & Reconciliation:
The Blanket Exercise
- > Inclusive Workplaces /
Inclusive Communities
- > Mental Health, Addictions,
& Return to Work
- > Giving Meaning to the Squiggles
on a Piece of Paper, AKA Scheduling
- > Does It Really Say That?:
Contract Interpretation
- > Communicating with Management

ACTIVITY – SETTING THE STAGE

1. As a UNA Local leader/representative, in what situations have you had to communicate with management?

2. When you have had to communicate with management as a UNA Local leader/representative:
 - a. What has gone well?

- b. What challenges have you experienced?

EXPECTATIONS / STANDARDS FOR COMMUNICATION

As regulated professionals, members of a union, and employees of health care organizations, expectations and standards for communication in the workplace between employees and managers are set and guided by collective agreement language, practice standards, code of ethics, and employer values, code of conduct, and policies and procedures.

Collective Agreement

Preamble

WHEREAS the parties acknowledge that the primary purpose of the Employer and Employees is to work together to provide and improve quality patient/resident/client care and believe that this purpose can be achieved most readily if harmonious relationships exist between the Employer and the Employees;

AND WHEREAS . . . the parties shall endeavour to find resolution to issues of mutual concern in a manner which is fair and reasonable and consistent with the terms of this Collective Agreement;

Article 4: Management Rights

4.02 The Employer will exercise its rights in a manner which is professional, fair and reasonable in the circumstances, and in accordance with the Collective Agreement.

Article 32: Dispute Resolution Process

32.01 Purpose

The parties agree that the purpose of the Dispute Resolution Process is to:

- (a) encourage open, face-to-face dialogue between the people affected by a dispute;
- (b) achieve timely and equitable resolutions to identified issues as close to the source as possible;
- (c) contribute to and support a positive, harmonious work environment and Employee and manager job satisfaction;
- (d) recognize and respect the roles, interests and accountabilities of all involved;
- (e) minimize the time and costs involved in resolving disputes; and achieve solutions that are consistent with the terms of this Collective Agreement.

32.07 Initial Problem-Solving Stage

- (a) Employees and managers, with or without representation, shall first attempt to resolve any dispute through discussion with the person(s) with whom there is a dispute.
- (b) The parties agree to share information relevant to the dispute with one another on a without prejudice basis.
- (c) The discussion should include an open, respectful exchange of the interests of the persons directly affected by the dispute, an exploration of potential options to resolve the dispute and mutually acceptable solutions. All discussions at this stage are on a without prejudice and without precedent basis.
- (d) If the dispute is not resolved satisfactorily, it may then become a grievance and be advanced to the formal dispute resolution stage.

Article 34: Occupational Health and Safety

- 34.02 (d) If an issue arises regarding occupational health or safety, the Employee or the Local shall first seek to resolve the issue through discussion with the applicable immediate supervisor in an excluded management position. If the issue is not resolved satisfactorily, it may then be forwarded in writing to the Committee.

Article 36: Professional Responsibility

- 36.01 (f) Where an issue is specific to one (1) unit or program, the Employee or Local shall discuss the issue with the most immediate supervisor in an excluded management position before the matter is discussed at the Committee.

College of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CRNA) Practice Standards

CRNA Standard 3.7

Communicates effectively and respectfully with clients, essential care partners and other members of the health-care team to enhance client care and safety outcomes;

CRNA Standard 3.8

Advocates for safe, competent and ethical nursing care and contributes to establishing practice environments that have the organizational and human support systems, and the necessary resource allocations;

College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Alberta (CRPNA) Code of Ethics & Standards of Psychiatric Nursing Practice

The Code of Ethics: Principles

4. Integrity – duty to act with honesty and integrity

A Registered Psychiatric Nurse:

Conducts one's self in a manner that reflects honesty, trustworthiness, reliability, impartiality, and diligence.

Standard 4: Leading and Managing Quality Psychiatric Nursing Care in Collaboration with Interdisciplinary Health Care Teams

2. Plays an active and equal role in the interdisciplinary team, collaborating and communicating effectively with a range of health care disciplines.
6. Exhibits leadership by demonstrating an ability to guide, support and motivate individuals and interact confidently with other members of the interdisciplinary team.

Canadian Nurses Association Code of Ethics

Part I. Nursing Values and Ethical Responsibilities

A. Providing Safe, Compassionate, Competent and Ethical Care

1. Nurses have a responsibility to conduct themselves according to the ethical responsibilities outlined in this document and in practice standards in what they do and how they interact with persons receiving care and other members of the health-care team.
4. Nurses question, intervene, report and address unsafe, non-compassionate, unethical or incompetent practice or conditions that interfere with their ability to provide safe, compassionate, competent and ethical care; and they support those who do the same
7. When resources are not available to provide appropriate or safe care, nurses collaborate with others to adjust priorities and minimize harm. Nurses keep persons receiving care informed about potential and actual plans regarding the delivery of care. They inform employers about potential threats to the safety and quality of health care.
14. When differences among members of the health-care team affect care, nurses seek constructive and collaborative approaches to resolving them and commit to conflict resolution and a person-centred approach to care.

Employer Code of Conduct, Values, Policies & Procedures

Just Culture

AHS definition of Just Culture: “A just culture is an environment where everyone feels safe, encouraged, and enabled to discuss quality and safety concerns.”

The AHS Guiding Principles document item #6 states: “Individuals will feel enabled, empowered and supported to openly discuss and report what occurred.”

AHS Values (CARES)

Our five values – compassion, accountability, respect, excellence and safety – are at the heart of everything that we do. They inspire, empower and guide how we work together with patients, clients, families and each other.

AHS Our Competencies

AHS uses nine “Competencies” to outline how to put the AHS Values into action. One of these is Communicate Effectively - Seek others’ opinions and perspectives

Example: “I listen and ask questions to understand what the other person is saying.”

COMMUNICATION WITH MANAGEMENT: BEST PRACTICES

Prepare for the Conversation

Taking the time necessary to prepare for a conversation that may be difficult will not only build your confidence but will help you communicate more effectively and efficiently with management.

It may help to write out and practice answers to the following questions:

- > What is the purpose of the conversation or the issue/problem you are hoping to address?
- > What are the facts of the situation? Try to identify the facts as if you were a neutral observer. It is okay to bring written notes or a summary of what you want to discuss during your conversation.
- > What are you hoping to achieve with the conversation? In other words, what does resolution look like? Be prepared to state what you are hoping for or recommending in a clear and concise manner.
- > What questions do you have for the manager? These questions should come from a place of trying to understand the manager/employer perspective as opposed to using the questions to make a point or accusation.
- > What are your fears/worst case scenarios? How will you plan to address those if they come up?

Have the Conversation

Set the tone and approach.

- > Open the conversation with a collaborative and respectful tone about what you are wanting to discuss.

Start by sharing the facts.

- > When you start the conversation, state the facts first, not the story. If you start off in your conversation telling the person the story (which can sometimes be based on assumptions), there's a good chance you will never get to the facts.
- > Facts are least controversial. They are the details that happened.
- > Avoid vague statements or generalizations.

Tell the story.

- > This is where you can share your perspective regarding the facts, as you understand them.
- > This is also where you can describe the perceived impact the issue has had on you or your members.

State what you want – emphasize the interests behind your position.

- > Clearly and concisely identify what you would like to see moving forward or what would be needed to resolve the issue.
- > Emphasize the interests behind your position, wherever possible. A position is our stance on an issue. We generally have to outline our position when it comes to issues regarding collective agreement interpretation.
- > However, it may be helpful to emphasize the interest (or needs) underlying the position we are taking, even if it relates to a collective agreement position we hold.
- > For example, UNA's position regarding the Employer needing to provide a written response to a PRC is that it is required under the Collective Agreement. An interest that will be met by this position is that it will help the Employee feel supported if the Manager provides a written response clearly outlining what actions are being taken to address the issue.

Ask for the manager's perspective.

- > Ask the manager for their perspective and listen to understand. Ask questions and dig deeper. Don't interrupt or argue.
- > The point of the conversation is not to prove you are right but to understand each other's perspective and to try and resolve the situation. If you go into the discussion telling the other person they are wrong and don't listen to their perspective, it's likely not going to turn out well.
- > You could ask open ended and probing statements/questions such as:
 - I'm interested in hearing your perspective on this matter.
 - What are your thoughts?
 - How do you see it?
 - What's your perspective?
 - Do you see it differently? If yes, how?
 - What are your concerns?

Focus on common goals.

- > Identify the interests or solutions you might have in common, as this can help you move forward together.
- > Actively listening to understand will help you do this.

Other key skills/strategies:

- > **Use “I” Statements.** “I” statements help you own and take responsibility for your views about a situation without presuming to speak for others or assume they hold the same views. They help us own our part of the interaction and to share what we want as opposed to focusing on the other person and what they are not doing. For example: “I would really appreciate your assistance” rather than “You are not helpful.”
- > **Model the behaviour we want/expect to receive back.** Demonstrating respectful, collaborative, and open verbal and non-verbal communication will set the tone for the discussion and will help foster respectful and collaborative relationships.
- > **Harness the power of positive reinforcement.** Acknowledge and recognize desired behaviours and actions. When management offers an olive branch or approaches a situation in a respectful, open, and collaborative manner, make a point of acknowledging or recognizing it.
- > **Be tough on the problem but easy on the person.** Try to avoid criticizing or blaming individuals in a discussion by focusing your attention and discussion on the issue or problem you are trying to address.

Close the Conversation

- > Thank the manager for the discussion.
- > Summarize the main points of the discussion and any agreed upon **action items, next steps, and timelines** (for when you should check back in or should expect something to be implemented).
- > Summarize **what remains unresolved or outstanding** and try to come to a joint understanding or agreement on how to move forward.
- > Send a **summary email** to have a record. This also provides management an opportunity to correct any misunderstandings. For example: “Hi manager, thank you so much for meeting with me today about x concern. Here is a summary of our conversation including our agreed upon action items, next steps, and timelines. Please let me know if there is something I missed or needs to be changed.”

Important to Remember

Collaboration isn't capitulation.

- > You can still be collaborative and respectful even if there is disagreement, you are unable to come to a resolution, or you decide to advance an issue to the next step in a dispute resolution process. It's important to be honest and transparent about our positions/interests and our next steps if we are unable to come to agreement or resolution.

Safety is paramount.

- > If the conversation becomes disrespectful, threatening, or abusive in anyway, it's okay to remove yourself from the conversation to keep yourself safe.

UNA is here to support you.

- > If you need further guidance on how to approach a difficult conversation with a manager or need assistance in having that conversation, reach out to your LRO, PRC Advisor, or OHS Advisor for support.

ACTIVITY – OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

What are the common challenges you anticipate or have faced in communicating with management?

COMMON CHALLENGES	STRATEGY



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