3.5: Types of Communication

Verbal and non-verbal communications are the two main types of communication used by human beings.

Verbal Communication

Verbal communication is associated with spoken words and is vitally important in the healthcare context. Members of the multi-disciplinary healthcare team communicate verbally with one another and with patients as well as family members.

Verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication is not reliant on words. It is sent through the use of one’s body rather than through speech or writing. This kind of communication, called body language, can tell a great deal or can totally the wrong impression. It is worth noting that body language may indicate a different meaning to what is spoken. As approximately 60% of communication is non-verbal, non-verbal skills are essential for effective communication [8]. Often non-verbal messages send stronger signals than verbal messages. Non-verbal communication is made up of:

- Accent
- Bodily contact
- Direction of gaze
- Emotive tone in speech
- Facial and gestural movements
- Physical appearance
- Posture
• Proximity
• Speech errors
• Timing of speech [5, 8, 9, 10].