# STUDENT HANDOUT 1 Unfolding Case Study: Caring for Peter Schultz Communication Techniques

**DIRECTIONS**: Read the following conversation between Peter and his wife, Eve. Make a list of the communication techniques that Eve uses to connect with Peter during the conversation and then prepare to share your findings with the larger group.

*I found Peter sitting alone on the loveseat just around the corner from the nurses’ station, so I sat down beside him. A couple of HCAs were passing us once in a while as they tended to their duties. Peter didn’t speak and neither did I for quite some time. Then he said, “Do you think you could arrange a wedding for some time in the fall?”*

*“Oh, who is getting married?”*

*“I am.”*

*“Who are you going to marry?”*

*“The girl next door.”*

*“Really? What is her name?”*

*“I don’t remember.”*

*“Is it Jenny?”*

*“Yes, that’s her name.”*

*Aha! Jenny lived across the road from Peter when he was a kid. “You can’t marry her. She is already married.”*

*He gave me a look of incredulity, but said nothing. A few minutes of silence. Then he said, “Well, do you think you can arrange a wedding for some time in the fall?”*

*“Peter, how old are you?”*

*“I am 15 in about half a year.”*

*“I really think you are too young to get married. A girl might be able to handle it, but it’s really much too young for a man to marry.”*

*“I’d really like your opinion, though. Do you think she would make a good farmer’s wife?”*

*“Yes, I do. I’m sure she would make an excellent farmer’s wife. She has lived on a farm all her life, and I’m sure she knows exactly how to be a good farmer’s wife, but I still feel you are both too young to be getting married.”*

*More silence. “Well, I’d like you to try to arrange a wedding for the fall.”*

*“But, Peter, do you have a farm?”*

*“No, I don’t.”*

*“Well, how can you think of getting married if you don’t have a farm? You would have to live with your parents. That wouldn’t be fair to Jenny.”*

*He thought that over for a while. “You’re right. I guess I’d better concentrate on getting a farm first.”*

*Who did Peter think I was as he asked for my opinion? Could it have been his mother or perhaps his elder sister? Soon the snack cart came along. We each enjoyed a cup of coffee and a cookie. I kissed him goodbye and went home smiling, because Jenny was still not married when Peter married me.*

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# STUDENT HANDOUT 2 Problem-Solving Exercise: Resolving Conflicts

**DIRECTIONS**: Consider the following problem/dilemma:

*Maria and Jason, both in their early 30s, have been living together for less than a year. They have a lot in common and enjoy each other’s company – going to hockey games and movies together, skiing in the mountains in the winter and hiking in the summer. They share responsibilities around the apartment, and each contributes equally to the costs.*

*A conflict has arisen, however, that is causing considerable strife in their relationship. Jason has a small group of friends that he has socialized with since high school. Maria* *has made it clear that she does not want to socialize with these friends. Jason is devoted to his friends and enjoys the comfortable camaraderie he experiences when he is with them.*

*Both Maria and Jason thought their relationship could blossom into a long-term commitment, even marriage. This conflict is causing them both to reconsider.*

1. Define the Conflict
   * Facts:
     + What is the relevant information here? How could Maria get more information on the rewards that Jason gets from these friends? How can Jason discover exactly what Maria doesn’t like about these friends?
   * Feelings:
     + How might Maria feel when Jason goes out with his buddies?
     + How might Jason feel when Maria refuses to spend time with his buddies?
   * Negative outcome:
     + How might this relationship deteriorate if Jason continues to spend time with his buddies?
     + How might the relationship deteriorate if Maria continues to comment negatively about these friends?
   * Positive benefits:
     + What opportunities might be gained if Jason continues to see these friends without Maria?
     + What is the best thing that could happen?

Is there further information you need to adequately understand this problem? If so, what is it and where would you get this information?

1. Examine Possible Solutions
   * Based on your discussion, consider as many possible solutions as you can to this conflict. Try to think of obvious and not-so-obvious alternatives. For each one, consider the positive and negative outcomes – for both Maria and Jason.

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| **Options** | **Positive Consequences** | **Negative Consequences** |
|  |  |  |

1. Based on your analysis, what is the best choice for Maria and Jason now? Some questions to consider: Is this a win-win solution (do both partners gain) or, alternately, are the losses shared? Is the solution worth the costs to each person and/or to their relationship? Are the costs and rewards evenly distributed between both partners? Might other solutions be more effective?
2. Evaluate the Solution: What questions would you want to ask to find out if the solution was, in fact, successful?
3. Self-reflection: Was this a new way for you to come to a decision in a conflict situation? How did it feel to you? What did you learn from the process?

# STUDENT HANDOUT 3 Practising Assertive Communication

**DIRECTIONS**: With a partner, practise using assertive communication. Alternate so each student has an opportunity to practise in the HCA role. Debrief after each scenario.

**Student 1 (Team leader):***“Hi                       . I’m going on my lunch break now. Janice will cover this team as team leader while I’m on my break, but she is really busy, so you can go ahead and change Mr. Grey’s IV bag when it’s empty. The new one is on the bedside table all ready to go.”*

**Student 2 (HCA):**You know this is not in your defined role as an HCA. What will you say to the team leader?

**Student 1 (Client’s daughter):***“We are so appreciative of what you do for our father. Please accept this bottle of wine as a thank you from our family.”*

**Student 2 (HCA):**You know you are not allowed to accept gifts from clients. What will you say?

**Student 1 (HCA student on clinical in a complex care facility):***“Excuse me, could you help me to transfer Mrs. Valinski? I know that the policy is to always have two people when using the ceiling lift.”*

**Student 2 (HCA at a complex care facility – acting as a mentor):***“Just do it on your own. We don’t have time to have two of us use the lifts. This is the real world.”*

**Student 1 (HCA student on clinical in a complex care facility):**How would you respond?

**Debrief Questions**

* How comfortable were you saying “no” to the request?
* Did you use assertive vs. aggressive communication?
* Consider what you might say if the other party (i.e., team leader, client’s daughter or HCA) said to “just do it anyway?”  
  What are possible outcomes of not using assertive communication in these situations (e.g., risk to client and personal safety, etc.)?

# STUDENT HANDOUT 4 Communication Skills: Role Play Activity

**DIRECTIONS**: Read the scenarios you have been assigned. The student taking the role of the HCA should first take a few minutes to identify three communication skills that they will apply to the scenario. Then then act out the scenario, with the student in the role of the HCA using the communication skills they selected. The student acting as the observer should make notes about the perceived effectiveness of the communication skills that were used during the interaction. After each role play, take a few minutes to complete the debrief discussion questions.

***Scenario 1***

*You are an HCA working for a home support agency. You have been asked to visit Mr. Ansah, a 72-year-old client with diabetes. When you arrive at his home, you notice that he has several candy wrappers at his bedside. You understand you must report this to your supervisor, and when you mention this, Mr. Ansah becomes upset and shakes his cane at you.*

***Scenario 2***

*You are an HCA working in a complex care home and have been assigned to care for Mrs. Chan, a 90-year-old woman who has just moved into the care home. Mrs. Chan emigrated from China and has been living in Canada for 10 years. When you enter her room, she is crying because she misses her daughter, who is no longer able to care for her at home.*

***Scenario 3***

*You are an HCA working in acute care. Today has been a challenging day for you; you are nearing the end of your shift and are feeling tired and impatient. Before you leave, the team leader asks you to check on Mr. Khatri. When you enter the client’s room, his daughter starts to complain about the care her father received from you that day.*

***Scenario 4***

*You have recently been hired as an HCA in assisted living. Lately, you have noticed that one of the staff members, Jan, seems to be avoiding eye contact with you. One afternoon, when you greet her, Jan does not respond and walks away. A week later, another staff member tells you that Jan has been talking about you in the break room. How should you approach Jan about this situation?*

***Scenario 5***

*You are an HCA student who has recently started your practicum placement in assisted living. It is flu season and two of the staff members have called in sick. You are helping Mr. Soong get ready for bed, and while he is in the bathroom, the LPN enters the room. “I’m swamped!” she says, setting down Mr. Soong’s medication. “Can you come and report back to me after Mr. Soong takes this Tylenol?” How will you respond to the LPN?*

***Scenario 6***

*Today is the first day of your clinical placement in multi-level/complex care and you are assigned to shadow Carlos, one of the HCAs. While you are assisting with the morning routine, Carlos asks you to help him with the mechanical lift. You politely explain to Carlos that you are not permitted to assist with lifts until your instructor has signed you off. Carlos sighs loudly, and says, “I’ve worked with your instructor before. Whenever she brings students here, everything takes twice as long!”*

**Debrief Discussion (after each role play)**:

After each role play has been completed, the group should discuss the following:

1. What important information was provided about the client and situation?
2. What three communications skills were applied and why were they chosen for this client/situation?
3. What did the observer/recorder notice about the communication strategies that were used?
4. What worked or didn’t work with the approach that was taken?
5. Were there any other approaches that could have been used?