

Some clients may have speech disorders. Encourage clients to express themselves in any way possible. Continue to talk to the client and encourage others to do so also. Some clients with speech disorders also have trouble understanding the spoken word. Remember the client is an adult and treat him with respect. Box 4.5 lists guidelines for communicating with clients who have speech disorders.

Box 4.5: Communicating with a client with a speech disorder

- Watch the client for gestures or body movements that he may use for communication
- Be patient. Do not speak for the client. You may want to help him with words that are troublesome.
- Ask questions requiring a yes or no answer
- Use short, simple sentences, and use the same words each time when you give directions
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Use nonverbal cues, gestures, facial expressions, or pictures to augment spoken communication
- Follow service plan and instructions from the speech therapist to use alternative communication tools such as communication boards or picture books

Remember, to be helpful you must learn to communicate with your clients. If you have difficulty, try to determine the cause of the lack of communication. Review the information in this lesson often to keep yourself aware of the basic principles. Your effective communication skills are extremely valuable to both you and others.

**Chapter Review**

1. What is the difference between verbal and nonverbal communication?
2. What is the difference between hearing and listening?
3. What factors promote effective communication?
4. What are barriers that prevent effective communication?
5. What is the correct way to answer the telephone in a client's home?
6. What methods of communication can be used with clients who have difficulty communicating?