

# Healthcare Communication in the Workplace/pre-LNA Framework For Advanced Intermediate ESOL speakers

A mini-grant project by:  
Barbara DelloRusso, Program Coordinator,  
English for New Americans, Manchester, NH  
September 2016



## Table of Contents

<b>Background.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Basic Framework.....</b>	<b>4 - 5</b>
<b>Determining Placement.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Class Activity Examples.....</b>	<b>6 – 9</b>
<b>Other useful material information.....</b>	<b>9</b>

## **Background**

My past experiences working with ESOL students who were in a Licensed Nursing Assistant (LNA) class or working on-the-job showed that they struggled quite a bit with communication. This prompted me to put together a curriculum to help ESOL students/workers be better prepared for working in the health field. The framework for this curriculum gives students a realistic view of Healthcare Communications in the Workplace and will help them increase their conversational abilities in their on-the-job experiences in a variety of healthcare situations.

This mini-grant will provide a framework for teachers to help students prepare for healthcare conversations, listening and speaking skills, and higher level vocabulary specifically geared towards healthcare settings.

### **Student needs and tailoring framework for other career fields**

This pilot project is for students who are interested in an LNA healthcare positions or they are trying to transition their healthcare background to a job in this country. It will begin to better prepare students for everyday conversation in a hospital, nursing home or other healthcare setting. In addition, it will address higher level vocabulary and listening skills specific to healthcare.

After researching for materials to be used at this level of ESOL for this topic I found very little useful material 'out there.' This framework will help other educators to prepare a class that they can tailor to their student's needs in healthcare communication skills or other specialty fields. (See pg. 9 for useful materials in adapting activities for this class)

- It will give students practice in listening to conversations and using conversation scenarios with patients, families, and staff.
- It will include increasingly difficult vocabulary, as well as looking at words used in the field with more than one meaning (such as the word 'critical').
- It will give students an introduction to the LNA field and may help students decide it's not a career for them.
- Having an LNA (or equivalent in another field) being a part of the class as much as possible. Students are given real life updates of a day in the life of an LNA.
- Vocabulary and conversation skills practiced will also help prepare them for LNA discussions during an actual LNA course.

## Basic Framework

### Overview

- a) This framework can be used for any field specialty – for example: Residential Instructors, basic auto technicians, basic accounting, manufacturing/assembly, basic customer service skills, culinary etc. This framework can be developed by working with someone in the field to produce work related vocabulary, topic scenarios, and typical conversations, in real world contexts.

#### **1) Build on essential healthcare vocabulary used in a typical day – about 12 words per lesson.**

- a) An example of typical vocabulary for this field would be: critical, essential, concern, patient, resident, refuse, confirm, attitude.

- b) Provide examples of connectors in our conversations, such as: “Really?” “Hmmm,” “That’s interesting,” “Tell me about it.” Discuss and practice how to make small talk in the field. Connectors show patients that you are listening and understand what they are saying. (See Activity example, pg. 5)

- c) Build in-class activities and short, easy to understand homework assignments around essential vocabulary. Find the meaning of a word from the context of a sentence provided (they can use their phones or Longman’s Dictionary), or YouTube scenarios.

- d) Incorporate and address words, for example, the word “critical” has a double meaning (See Activity example, pg. 6). The word “address” has a double meaning and a different pronunciation depending on the context.

- e) The next class could begin with a review of the vocabulary on the board, filling in gaps if students didn’t complete homework – or there are new students starting the class. Provide a short quiz using sentences they’ve already worked on in the form of an oral quiz, written quiz, dictation, action scenario, or paper quiz. Depending on your level of students, some students may be at a higher level – others at a lower level – provide a more visual quiz for those that need it during oral dictation.

#### **2) Research YouTube/Healthcare Conversations providing typed text to help students read the scenarios they are hearing. Listen for small talk/connectors.**

- b) Using YouTube scenarios, the instructor should prepare a text for students after they have heard and discussed various scenarios. (This will mean the instructor/assistant has to research appropriate YouTubes, listen and take dictation of the scenario. They will type out what they hear as preparation for the class. (See Activity example, pg. 7).

For each class, prepare one or two increasingly more difficult (2 or 3 minute) scenarios, have students listen to the scenarios without sound, discuss what they saw (gestures and facial expressions), and what they think might be happening in the scenario. Then have them watch the video with sound, and discuss what they heard (Did they hear connectors? New words? What were the patients doing?) Lastly, provide the dictated scenario, listen to the scenario while reading the text. Students can then practice the conversation in pairs or as a group. Encourage students to practice at home. Provide links to the YouTubes on the typed scenario page.

### **3) What do client's gestures and facial expressions mean? How can we be more assertive?**

**Learning how to interrupt if you have important information. Research YouTubes!**

- a) Use pictures and YouTubes about these topics in your field. What is appropriate and effective conversation in your field? How do you interrupt doctors, nurses and other staff if there are issues or needs that have to be addressed at a higher level. Students must learn it's o.k. to say 'I don't understand' when given directions or information about a patient, or about what they need to do.

### **4) Appropriate scenarios used for this class were between the LNA and the patient, the LNA and staff, and the LNA and family members.**

a) My assistant/LNA helped with writing down typical types of encounters/conversations she has on a daily basis. I took that information and put it into a form that students can read along with. The scenarios were broken down by the person speaking. Initially keep these scenarios very short. Increase number of sentences as you get to know your students. (See other Activity examples, pgs. 6 - 8).

**Example:** LNA: Hi, my name is Andy, I'll be your LNA today. We're going to.....today.

Patient: Whatever your client might respond - good or bad....

- b) For the purpose of this Healthcare framework, we developed various conversations between an LNA and a patient, an LNA and staff encounters, and an LNA and the patient's family.
- c) Along with YouTubes, we modeled conversations. Students then practiced conversations, in pairs, groups, and individually (props can be used such as; a johnny, a blanket, a thermometer, a hospital tray, old glasses, or a stack of books, etc.)

### **5) Incorporate current local newspaper articles about nursing home/hospital issues, etc.**

a) Students were assigned one newspaper article for homework every week. Students were asked to underline unfamiliar words and phrases. We read the articles in the next class. The articles, provoked discussion and helped them to learn idioms and strange words in the field. We were able to have some ethical discussions at a basic level. We also learned about local/community issues.

If there are incorrect pronunciations in the reading, I encourage students not to correct their peers. I repeat the word correctly in general conversation after the reading is done and talk about the word along with other unfamiliar words and idioms in the article. Example from an article read: My students didn't understand the name of a town mentioned that was in Florida. That started a conversation about Florida and the word snowbirds, etc. This particular article also mentioned the word "precious" being used by an Alzheimer's patient for his wife. When the article said it was a "pet name" – they thought it was for a pet.

### **6) Are your students prepared for a career in this field?**

a) When my LNA aide attended class I asked her "How was your day? She told it like it was. The students appreciated that – laughed – and maybe they were completely surprised in some cases. Many vocabulary words we had studied came up in this general conversation.

One student who came to every class learned that she did not want to become an LNA. I think this happens in many careers/fields – but especially for our ESL population. They are offered training and students think, "Oh, I can get this training paid for and I can get a job" but maybe they don't have any idea that they will have to "touch people." "I didn't know you had to do that!" Examples: "So there was a huge mess in the hospital room – who cleans it up? How is it cleaned up? When is housekeeping called? What do you do until they can get there?" **Make it real.**

## Determining Placement

I was able to use the Job Corps test provided by a WIOA partner. It allowed me to evaluate what the student knows generally. It's not career specific. I felt that what I could offer would work with Intermediate or Advanced Intermediate students at the CASAS level. I needed more information that could place students at approximately the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, or 8<sup>th</sup> grade level. As you develop your curriculum the test results will help you to design short easy to understand conversations. The Job Corps test has 2 sections: Reading and Math. I also had the student write whatever they could on "why they were interested in this class." I gave them an hour (or 1.5 hours) to do all 3 pieces. I had everything from a detailed page of writing to several lines. They were acceptable if they were understandable and made sense. If they needed a bit more time – I allowed it. (Contact WIOA personnel at NH Works for more information on this test).

---

## Class Activity Examples

### First Class Activity

- 1) Have students interview a partner: Name? Where are they from? Why are they taking this class? Have each student introduce their partner to the class. Put information on the board.
- 2) Discuss what the Health Communications class will be about and refer or emphasize student information on the board.
- 3) Draw students into the conversation if they are working in the field or why they are interested in the class.
- 4) Have students name 3 or more tasks they think an LNA performs. Put on board. Discuss.  
1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_

---

Verbal Cues/Connectors in Conversations ("Really?" "Hmmm," "That's interesting, tell me about it." Connectors show that you are listening to a patient.

- 5) Patient: I think my sister is very sick.  
LNA response? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Patient: I have a story about what happened last night.  
  
LNA response? \_\_\_\_\_

## Patient Pain Level

Let's talk about some of the reasons patients may be in pain. Check for understanding. Work with a partner to answer the patient's question.

**Patient:** I'm in a lot of pain – I need more medication!

*LNA possible answers:*

The *order* for medicine from the doctor may not be in yet

The pharmacy may not have *dropped* it off yet.

The patient may be in the *middle of a dose* and *not due* for medication – for maybe several more hours.

---

**In last week's YouTube "The Angry Patient who was in Pain" (see pg. 8)– what did the LNA do wrong? Choose one.**

\_\_\_\_\_ She was very helpful to the patient.

\_\_\_\_\_ She was kind and considerate.

\_\_\_\_\_ She thought only about her schedule and didn't care about the patient's pain.

---

**Vocabulary Review** What does it mean? (There may be more than one right answer) :

Choose from:

risk, talk, tasks, hurt, move, verify, find truth, decline, accept, give

Ambulate \_\_\_\_\_

Jeopardize \_\_\_\_\_

Refuse \_\_\_\_\_

Confirm \_\_\_\_\_

**Short Conversation to practice with your partner, (instructor models tone of conversation)**

**Scenario 1**

**LNA:** Hi, Mrs. Johnson, my name is Jennifer. I'll be your nurse today.

How are you today?

**Patient:** Oh, I'm terrible, I'm in so much pain, my leg is killing me!

**LNA:** Oh no!, I'm sorry to hear that. On a scale from 1 to 10, 10 being the worst, what is your pain level?

**Patient:** Oh it's a 10...

**LNA:** OK, let me get your nurse and see if you can have more medication.

In the meantime, can I get you an icepack or a heat pack?

---

**The Angry Cranky Patient (this can be Googled)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1sXDGrjtQyQ>

**Watch/Listen/Practice**

- a) Show the YouTube first with no sound. Students can discuss what they saw and what they think this scene was about.
- b) Show the clip with sound.
- c) Have the students listen to the clip with the text.
- f) Discuss in class. What could the LNA do differently?
- d) Practice reading as a group or in partners
- e) Optional: Students can volunteer to do the scene in front of the class

**Homework:** Listen, read out loud and review at home.

**SCENE 2 The Wrong Way (put into text form for student)**

LNA: Yes, Mrs. Jones, What can I do for you?

Mrs. Jones (the very angry cranky patient): Finally! I'm in so much pain, and that nurse did nothing for me. All night long, I swear, either she was either watching TV or taking a nap.

LNA: Well - I can assure you she wasn't doing that. What can I do for you?



Mrs. Jones: Um, how about giving me some pain medications? She told me to try breathing exercises. This is real pain here. We're talking 9 out of 10.

LNA (with an attitude): I'm sure it's 9 out of 10. Um, we've already given you.

Mrs. Jones: I assure you ... I believe you – If you want - I could grab your arm to see how much pain I'm in.

LNA: No that won't be necessary. Um, you've already gotten the maximum amount of meds.

Mrs. Jones: Can you call a doctor? He's your boss right? In so many words. Why don't you call him?

Mrs. Jones: I need some cough medicine too.

LNA: Well, that's not on your orders. I'll see what I can do about that. But you've gotten all the pain medicine.....

Mrs. Jones: What's the point of the nurse? If you're not going to do anything for me? Why don't you just go watch TV with the other nurse?

LNA: I've given you all the pain medications you can get. Alright? Maybe you could calm down?

Mrs. Jones: Oh, are you holding it over me...if I calm down? I'm want to talk to your boss. I'm going to tell her that you are holding medicine from me.

LNA: Ah, there is no medicine to give you to hold. You've already gotten it all.

Mrs. Jones: Why don't you go and call the doctor – I'd like to see the nurse manager please.

LNA: No problem.

---

### **Acknowledgement/Reference Materials**

Parts of the *Healthcare Communication in the Workplace Curriculum* were developed with the help of Jennifer Mckillop, an LNA colleague in the field.

References: Several materials referenced below were used to adapt some activities used for the purpose of this pilot project. They were adapted to an Advanced Intermediate ESOL level.

*Talk Like a Nurse: Communication Skills Workbook Paperback*, by Ph.D. Susan Dandridge Boshier, 2014.

*Take Care, Communicating in English with U.S. Health Care Workers*, Nina Ito, Christopher Mefford, 2011.

*English for the Nursing Assistant, Communications on the Job.* [www.cnaenglish.org](http://www.cnaenglish.org)  
2011 Sacramento County Office of Education