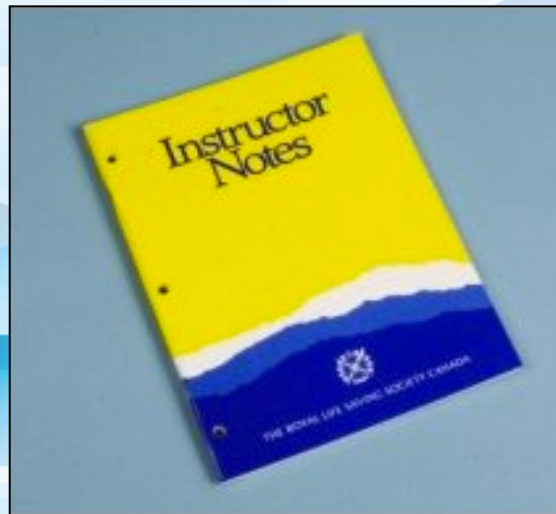


LIFESAVING SOCIETY - MANITOBA BRANCH

# Instructor Notes Supplement



**LIFESAVING SOCIETY®**

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# Instructor Notes Supplement

This *Instructor Notes Supplement* has been created for Lifesaving Society - Manitoba Branch Instructors and Trainers. This supplement adds new information about teaching and learning to your *Instructor Notes* and *Swimming & Lifesaving Instructor Handbook*. We have organized this *Instructor Notes Supplement* according to the Lifesaving Society leadership competencies.

## Table of Contents

We Are The Lifesaving Society	3
Planning	4
Presentation Skills	6
Learner Characteristics	9
Health & Safety	11
Facilitating & Mentoring	12
Ethics & Valuing Diversity	14
Communicating	16

### **INSTRUCTOR NOTES SUPPLEMENT, September 2014 — January 13, 2015 Revision**

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# WE ARE THE LIFESAVING SOCIETY

Welcome to the Lifesaving Society, Canada's Lifeguarding Experts! The Royal Life Saving Society Canada is a full-serve provider of programs, products, and services designed to prevent drowning.



As a Lifesaving Instructor, you are the Society's frontline representative to the public, candidates, parents, and facilities. You are an important part of the Lifesaving Team!

The Lifesaving Society is a national volunteer organization and registered charity composed of 10 provincial/territorial Branches, tens of thousands of individual members, and over 4,000 affiliated swimming pools, waterfronts, schools, and clubs.

We are a leader and partner in the delivery of water safety education throughout Canada and around the world. The Lifesaving Society represents Canada in the International Life Saving Federation and the Commonwealth Royal Life Saving Society, which operates globally in over 40 countries.

## STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

**Motto:** The Lifesaving Society's Latin motto reflects all that we do: *Quemcunque miserum videris hominem scias*. In English: Whomsoever you see in distress, recognize in him a fellow man.

**Mission:** The Royal Life Saving Society Canada strives to eliminate drowning and reduce water-related incidents through public education, research, and training.

**Vision:** Canada has the lowest annual rate of drowning of any country in the world through safe and positive experiences in, on, and around water.

### Values

- We are a drowning prevention and lifesaving organization, and humanitarian principles are our basis.
- Volunteers lead and support our organization.
- We operate with fairness, respect, inclusiveness, trust, and integrity.
- We are a collaborative, innovative, and sustainable organization.

For more information about the Lifesaving Society, visit the Manitoba Branch website.

# PLANNING

Instructors need basic planning skills to effectively deliver the Canadian Lifesaving Program. Use all the Lifesaving Society resources available to you, including the *Award Guides*, the *Canadian Lifesaving Manual*, and the sample lesson plans provided to you. Your lesson plans should be legible and contain enough detail and content to be easily referenced by other instructors.

An effective lesson plan has the following components. Modify the lesson plans provided to you to include all of these elements:

- Formations and timelines for each activity
- As much practice time as possible
- Age- and skill-level appropriate activities for each progression
- Various teaching/facilitating methods and activities
- Time for candidates to set goals and for feedback
- Logical progressions

## UNDERSTANDING AWARD GUIDES

Award Guides are designed to help you plan, teach, and evaluate the awards of the Lifesaving Society's training program. Award Guides are designed for use with the Society's *Instructor Notes*, which presents essential teaching and learning principles. For skill descriptions and technical information, instructors should consult the *Canadian Lifesaving Manual* or *Alert: Lifeguarding in Action*.

The Award Guide begins with an at-a-glance overview of the general aim of the award and a list of test items. In test item descriptions, the word "Demonstrate" is used for items in which participants simply demonstrate skill – no rescue situation is required. The word "Perform" is used to indicate that a rescue situation is called for in which the lifesaver is expected to integrate the four elements of water rescue: judgment, knowledge, skill, and fitness.

For each test item, the Award Guide presents a detailed description including the purpose of the item, its evaluation criteria (Must See), and Notes:

**Statements of Purpose:** The Purpose statements identify the objective of each item. Purpose statements define what the item achieves when performed successfully ("to restore normal breathing in a non-breathing victim") or specify why the item is included in the training program ("to develop fitness and stroke endurance in lifesaving emergencies").

**Notes:** The Notes present explanations or limitations of the performance of an item. Suggestions to the instructor and evaluator regarding specific evaluation problems are also offered here. Space is often provided for instructors to write their own additional notes. References guide instructors to the appropriate material in the *Canadian Lifesaving Manual* (CLM) or *Alert: Lifeguarding in Action*.

**Performance Requirements – Must Sees:** Details of the performance, which will achieve the purpose of each item, are found in the "Must See" section. Normally, "Must See" items do not describe skills or performances. Skill descriptions are found in the *Canadian Lifesaving Manual*. In many instances various responses are possible.



The instructor and evaluator can use the “Must See” section as a checklist for success (“fast vertical descent”, “depth attained”, etc.). If a lifesaver performs an item with the necessary knowledge, skill, fitness, and judgment to achieve its stated purpose, then the candidate is probably performing at or above the required standard for the award.

**Evaluation:** In Bronze Star, all items are instructor-evaluated. In Bronze Medallion and Bronze Cross, items marked with an asterisk (\*) are instructor-evaluated. In provinces where examination by an Examiner is compulsory, Examiners may evaluate any or all of these items at their discretion.

The Award Guide concludes with suggested learning activities including games, skill drills, and variations for both. Whatever learning activities the instructor selects, every class should be action-packed, challenging, and fun.

## PLANNING FOR A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Instructors must always plan for safety. See also the **Health & Safety** section. Assess and check your teaching environment every day before your class begins and adjust your plans accordingly. What would you do if the waterfront had high waves? What about if the classroom space is no longer available?

## GOAL SETTING

Goal setting is an important part of the learning process. Setting and reviewing goals frequently allows both the instructor and the candidate to keep their eye on their target. As an instructor, you should regularly set personal goals for your courses and lessons. A personal goal for the course might be to use the *Canadian Lifesaving Manual* more than your previous course. A personal goal for a lesson might be to teach CPR so that all candidates can perform it without referencing their materials.

Candidates, too, should set goals for their performance that focus on their strengths and challenges. Encourage candidates to set action plans. If you have a candidate who has difficulty swimming front crawl, you might suggest they create a plan to come to the pool on their own time with the goal of improving their front crawl. Help candidates set their own goals by regularly providing feedback and asking them to self-evaluate.

Helping candidates set goals and self-evaluate will allow you to better tailor your instruction to their needs. If most of your class requires work on deep end spinal turnovers, for example, you will need to modify your lesson plan to provide additional practice time with that skill.



# PRESENTATION SKILLS

## PRESENTATIONS DELIVERED JUST RIGHT

Material must be well organized in order for candidates to process it effectively.

- **Use Logical Progressions:** When constructing a lesson, organize the material in a logical order. For example, an effective instructor would ensure his or her candidates were proficient in lifesaving kicks before introducing tows and carries. Screen candidates' prior knowledge to make sure their abilities are where they should be.
- **Use Simple Steps:** Boil down complex instructions into the simplest steps possible. This is a presentation skill that comes with practice.
- **Be Engaging:** Use real-life examples when applicable. Vary the tone and volume of your voice to show enthusiasm and interest. For example, when you talk about the importance of CPR, your voice should reflect the seriousness of the topic. Sounding bored and disconnected would send the wrong message to your candidates.
- **Consider Candidates' Ages and Levels:** Check that the skills you are teaching are appropriate to the level you are instructing. Match your learning activities with your candidates' age groups. Teaching deep end spinal turnovers to a Bronze Star class, for example, is just as inappropriate as having Rookie Patrols engage in a mock court trial of an unsuccessful rescue.
- **Can Everyone See?:** Take care to demonstrate skills in ways that all candidates can see and hear. Choose effective formations, such as having your candidates stand on pool deck along the edge while you demonstrate a head-up stroke. Consider candidates' sight lines: Swimming away from the wall doesn't allow the candidates to see what's going on. Swimming parallel to the wall, however, does.

If you use a candidate to demonstrate a skill, this means he or she did not benefit from seeing the demonstration. Show it again using another volunteer.

## VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Effective communication stems not only from your voice, but also from your body.

When you are delivering a message to someone, the words you use carry only part of the message. Your non-verbal cues, or body language, also affect how your message is perceived. Telling someone that they have done a great job while frowning and crossing your arms, for example, will send a mixed message and will result in frustration and confusion.

Here are some components of non-verbal communication to consider:

- **Posture:** Maintaining an open posture shows you are positive and receptive. In contrast, crossing your arms and legs shows a closed posture, which says you are not open to hearing ideas, you are not interested, and that you have already made your decisions. Standing at your full height with your shoulders back conveys an image of confidence, whereas turning your shoulders in shows you are scared and timid.

- **Proximity:** Be aware of how close you stand to others while communicating. In North America, comfortable proximity with most people is arms' length away. In more intimate settings, standing closer may be warranted. Standing too far away may be perceived as awkward. Proximity varies from one culture to another.
- **Body Movements:** You can show you are listening attentively by nodding your head. Facing the person you are talking to can also show you are listening. Avoid turning away or beginning to walk away before the other person has finished speaking.
- **Eye Contact:** When listening to someone talk, follow them with your eyes. Maintain eye contact but be careful not to stare. Avoiding eye contact shows you are scared, nervous, or intimidated by the person.
- **Facial Expressions:** Ensure your facial expressions match the words you are speaking. When you are not speaking, attempt to maintain a neutral facial expression. This is especially important when you are conducting an examination. Candidates often look to the examiner for validation of their performance, and they will feel anxiety if they notice their examiner's face shows fear, confusion, or bewilderment.
- **Positioning:** Regularly changing your personal positioning while addressing a group can create interest. As mentioned before, be careful with your positioning when talking with one person or a small group, as too much movement could be seen as an expression of boredom.

You can also use non-verbal communication when instructing in noisy environments. Consider using a hand signal to get candidates' attention when using your voice would be ineffective. When using hand signals, remember to introduce them as soon as possible and to reinforce their practice right away. Hand signals in an instructional setting are ineffective if used infrequently.

## PROFESSIONALISM

When teaching, strive to convey as professional an image as possible, as you are representing not only yourself, but also your facility, and the Lifesaving Society as a national organization. Wear appropriate clothing on pool deck and in classroom settings. Personal grooming and good hygienic practices help convey an image of professionalism, which builds your candidates' confidence in your teaching abilities.

## MANAGING HANDOUTS AND OTHER PRINTED MATERIALS

Instructors are encouraged to use their *Canadian Lifesaving Manual* and other candidate reference materials as much as possible in their courses. From time to time, however, it is necessary to print other Lifesaving Society resources for candidates to use. The *Water Rescue Simulation Cards*, for example, will help candidates create effective water rescue situations.

Only use handouts from approved Lifesaving Society resources, including the Society's websites and all books published by the Society. When in doubt, contact the Branch to ensure the resource is approved.

When managing handouts, distribute them as quickly as possible and in an organized matter. Staple and hole-punch materials in advance. Always make two or three extra copies: One for your course files

and records, one for you to use in class, and one for when a candidates' handout goes missing. Having extras stored in your Instructor Binder helps avoid unnecessary interruptions when candidates realize they have misplaced their handout.





# LEARNER CHARACTERISTICS

Understanding your candidates' learning needs will help you deliver effective instruction. Review the common age characteristics in *Instructor Notes* (p. 5) and think about how each age group will require different a teaching styles.

## MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS

Every instructor will need to address various types of behaviours in candidates that can be disruptive to the class and a challenge for the instructor to deal with. It is important to remember that these challenging behaviours are not always intentional. First, try to determine the reason for the behaviour, for example, is the candidate bored or perhaps they do not even realize that they are being disruptive. Once you determine the reason for the behaviour, how you will address it. It may involve changing your teaching approach to better suit their learning needs, gently asking to candidate to stop the behaviour or giving the class a break or a task to complete so that you are able to pull the candidate aside to discuss the behaviour.

Remember that each candidate is different, and just as you need to adjust your approach to address their learning needs, you may also need to continually adjust your approach in dealing with problem behaviours.

## PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS

You need to find ways for candidates to work within the boundaries of their physical limitation while still meeting the *Must Sees* of the items in the course. There may, however be times that it is simply not possible to make adaptations for all limitations. Please refer to the section on **Ethics and Valuing Diversity**.

## LEARNING DISABILITIES

Once again, you must be able to adapt teaching styles to address potential learning disabilities. While there are type of activities that are appropriate of different age categories, sometimes it is necessary to look ignore those classifications to find activities that will best suit the needs to an individual learner with a learning disability. This could include things such as, using skits, videos or discussion instead of requiring candidates to read information, having set timelines of activities and enforcing them so that activities do not carry on to long, asking candidates what they are having trouble understanding so that a specific solution can be found. By using multiple approaches to deliver a message, it is more likely that an candidate can find a way understand the information.

## MATCHING LANGUAGE TO CANDIDATES' NEEDS

The language that you use with your candidates must be appropriate for the age group being taught. For children, it is important to simplify concepts and break down skills into a short series of manageable steps. Using pictures and demonstrations and other visual references is important. Trying to use descriptions instead of images can be confusing and ineffective in children, as they often do not have enough life experiences to understand the description. Something as simple as describing how egg beaters work, when teaching the eggbeater kick may be ineffective if a child has never seen and eggbeater or looked to see how the beaters spin in opposition. For adolescent and adult learners,



those can immediately paint a clear picture in their mind of how the skill is supposed to look. Also, acronyms or abbreviations can be confusing for all age groups and should be avoided when possible.

## **USING APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES**

Just as changing the type of language used to meet the needs of different age groups is important, so is modifying the types of activities. Activities that involve games, repetitive tasks, and that are controlled and directed tend to be better for younger learners, while lectures, brainstorming, case studies and scenarios are best of adolescent and adult learners as they are more independent learners, enjoy having more responsibility and have more life experiences to draw from to drive critical thinking. Remember that for all age groups it is important to use a variety of techniques and approaches in order to address the various learning styles of the class.

Refer to your *Instructor Notes*, *Swimming & Lifesaving Instructor Handbook* and the **Facilitating & Mentoring** section of this *Supplement* for different facilitation techniques.

# HEALTH & SAFETY

Maintaining a safe learning environment requires planning and vigilance. When teaching, instructors have a responsibility to keep themselves and their candidates safe at all times. Safety is always the number-one priority.

## SAFETY AS PART OF DAY-TO-DAY TEACHING

You must always watch your class. If you must leave the pool deck or classroom for any reason, you should ask a colleague to cover you while you are away. If you must leave the pool deck, ask candidates to get out of the water and wait on deck. Always have a clear line of sight to all of your candidates. Train candidates to let you know if they are leaving pool deck or the classroom to use the bathroom so you are aware of their whereabouts.

Always demonstrate safe techniques for performing skills. Emphasize proper body mechanics for strenuous skills such as removals. If you notice candidates are performing a skill in a manner that could injure them, immediately have them stop and provide corrective feedback.

Similarly, if you notice candidates are not following class or facility rules, identify which rule has not been followed and take immediate corrective action. Stress that candidates are safety role models to their own classes, too.

Being aware of candidates' health issues will also help you maintain a safe learning environment. Ask candidates to share any potential health issues with you on the first day of the course, or earlier. The Society uses a *Candidate Information and Prerequisite Form*, available on the Toolkit, to collect such information. Do not ask candidates to share their health information aloud. Candidates can also meet with you privately to discuss health concerns. Be sure to communicate any allergy concerns to the class as soon as possible without revealing the identity of the person who has the allergy.

When using rescue equipment and resuscitation manikins, follow guidelines for disinfection. The Lifesaving Society has guidelines for disinfecting ACTAR manikins, available on the Toolkit.

## DEALING WITH EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Emergencies happen despite the best precautions. A candidate may slip and fall, for example, resulting in an injury. The chlorine gas tank may spring a leak or a fire may begin somewhere in the facility at which you are teaching. Or perhaps one of your candidates goes missing during break or transition times. Being prepared to handle an emergency helps you successfully cope when one occurs.

If you haven't already received one, ask your supervisor for an orientation to your facility's emergency and evacuation plans. This is especially important when you are teaching at a facility that you don't normally work at.

At the beginning of the course, show candidates the emergency exits and evacuation routes and designate a location to meet as a group should you find yourself separated from your class. Encourage candidates to inform you immediately if they become injured or see someone in your class become injured. During an emergency, be sure all of your candidates are safe.

# FACILITATING & MENTORING

Instructors can create a positive learning environment by successfully facilitating a group and serving as a role model and mentor for candidates. Facilitation involves leading candidates through meaningful activities and is a learner-centred approach. Effective facilitation builds an environment of trust where candidates are more willing to take risks in their learning.

## CREATING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Instructors have a profound impact on creating positive learning environments. Some activities and behaviours instructors should take note of are the following:

- **Encourage students to support each other** - This builds a climate of respect and trust.
- **Actively solicit feedback from candidates and respond appropriately** - This shows you care what they think. Accept all feedback as is, then evaluate it to see what you can use to improve your teaching skills.
- **Run short team-building activities** - Sometimes known as *icebreakers*, these short activities may seem silly but help candidates feel at ease with one another. Choose team-building activities that are low risk (for example partner interviews, share your aquatic stories, etc.).
- **Keep conversations with other personnel relevant to the task at hand or program** - Candidates will become bored if you use class time to catch up with your fellow instructors on pool deck. Teaching time is not social time with other staff.
- **Listen to candidates** - There are very few illegitimate concerns.
- **Use the names of all candidates** - Consider giving candidates name tags or name tents at the start of the course. Use their names whenever possible the first few classes, so you remember them. The more you use their names, the easier you will remember them.
- **Manage situations in a timely manner** - Follow-up as soon as possible.
- **Model an openness to feedback and support fellow learners** - Show that you too enjoy receiving feedback and using it to shape your practice.

## SELECTING FACILITATION METHODS & FORMATIONS

Certain facilitation methods are better suited to certain activities than others. Similarly, the same formation will not work for every activity you do. Review the formations in *Instructor Notes* (pp. 19-20) for some options. Also see **Presentation Skills** in this *Supplement*.

### TEAM-BUILDING ACTIVITIES AND ENERGIZERS

As mentioned above, plan for short team-building activities at the start of the course. Use low risk activities like partner interviews so candidates can begin to feel at ease with one another. Also plan a variety of energizers. You will notice sometimes the energy level in your class will begin to dip. An energizer can help revitalize the class. Energizers are short activities designed to boost interest and energy. Short 5-7 minute breaks or energizers every hour will help candidates stay on task.

## TEACHING METHODS

Selecting a suitable teaching method will also build a positive learning environment.

- **Demonstrate - Discuss - Do:** The “classic” Lifesaving Society teaching method. Show the skill, talk about each component, and then have candidates practice it.
- **Lecture:** A structured presentation by the instructor to explain theoretical concepts. This type of presentation can be with or without candidate interaction and may or may not incorporate visual aids (e.g. using a PowerPoint).
- **Brainstorming:** An organized activity where candidates use their creativity to generate spontaneous ideas and proposals.
- **Case study / problem solving:** A problem is presented in order to propose solutions to deduce rules or principles applicable to similar situations. The problem can be real or fictional, but must be reasonable. It may be in writing or on video.
- **Discovery:** A process of discovery involving the candidate in the observation or testing of concepts, rules or techniques. The instructor determines the context and task to complete.
- **Game:** An artificial activity that does not seek to reproduce reality (as opposed to simulation). The game has rules and a goal that motivates the candidate.
- **Simulation and scenarios:** A simplified representation of reality that allows the candidate to exercise judgment. The simulation has the advantage of providing immediate feedback to the candidate as the situation evolves according to his actions.
- **Teamwork:** A group of candidates must complete a specific task within a given time.
- **Repetitive exercises:** The repetition of gestures or skills in order for candidates to “record” information. The ultimate purpose is to achieve an automatic performance.

## HOW TO PICK?

When planning learning activities, you must consider the scale of the challenge to achieve and the candidates’ ability to meet that challenge. That will help you decide which teaching method is best to use. For example, if you choose to do a lecture on CPR but candidates already know how to perform it, candidates will become bored. On the other hand, if you choose to do a case study where you examine if CPR was performed properly in a video demonstration but the candidates have never learned it, the candidates will become discouraged.

Instructors have to find the appropriate challenge zone for their candidates, where the learning activities are challenging enough for what the candidates know.



# ETHICS & VALUING DIVERSITY

## DIVERSITY

In Canada, we recognize that it is our population's differences that add to the *joie de vivre* of Canadian life. The candidates we train hold samples of those differences and we need to create an environment conducive to learning by creating a positive space that promotes both acceptance and a respect of all forms of diversity.

Human diversity refers to the differences among people. These differences are to be valued and appreciated as they lend themselves to unique contributions to our collective conversations. There are many dimensions of diversity, including:

- race
- colour
- age
- sexual orientation
- family status
- lifestyles (urban and rural)
- occupation
- national or ethnic origin
- religious beliefs
- gender
- marital status
- language
- economic status
- physical and mental abilities

Using the list above (and perhaps with the addition of some more of your own), take a moment and consider your own dimensions of diversity. Now, consider the diversity dimensions of your friends. You may find that you and your friends have multiple dimensions in common. In general, we feel more comfortable with people who have similar diversity dimensions as ourselves as it is easier to trust those who share the same dimensions. When we encounter people who hold dimensions different from our own we need to recognize and challenge the assumptions we hold about their values, beliefs and behaviours based on preexisting stereotypes to prevent discrimination and/or harassment.

To clarify what is meant by discrimination, the *Canadian Human Rights Act* tells us that discrimination is the prevention or hindrance of an individual from having "an opportunity equal with other individuals to make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have" (Government of Canada, 2012). Discrimination based on the dimensions of diversity is not permitted under the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

The Society is also committed to providing an environment free of harassment, where harassment is defined as engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known unwelcome. The Society believes all individuals should be treated with respect and dignity and that each person has the right to participate in an environment free of harassment.

As an instructor, we need to be cognizant of and promote instructor-candidate and candidate-candidate relations that foster a safe inclusive space for our students that promise support and opportunities to participate in order to be successful. We as instructors must model inclusive behaviour and manage our space to construct inclusive lessons.

There are potential barriers to our inclusive class. For example, the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* categorizes barriers as physical, architectural, information or communication, attitudinal, or policies or practices. While some barriers may be more transparent (physical and architectural), we need to be

very critical of information or communication, attitudinal, or policies or practices that create non-visible barriers.

Ask yourself the following questions about your own instructional practice:

- Do you teach materials making assumptions about a common cultural background (information or communication)?
- Do you make assumptions about candidate ability based on stereotypes (attitudinal)?
- Are you adhering to your own practices or techniques when evaluating candidates rather than referring back to the Must Sees (policies or practices)?

These are all questions to consider, and as thoughtful instructors we need to reflect on our teaching practices on a regular basis.

Now that you have reflected on your instructing, remember that the facility may have, and the candidates in your class may bring their own obstacles to having an inclusive class. Read through the following scenarios and reflect on how you, as the instructor, would respond:

1. Consider the layout of the facility. Identify barriers that must be overcome to generate an inclusive class.
2. A group of female candidates exclude a single male candidate when group practice time is allotted in a National Lifeguard course. You hear the group make derogatory comments to themselves about the appearance of the male candidate.
3. A Bronze Cross candidate with phocomelia (congenital disorder causing a malformation of limbs) is unable to perform any of the traditional spinal rollovers (Modified Body, Vice Grip, Canadian Roll) but is able to immobilize the cervical spine of the victim for the performance of the skill item.
4. While teaching a group you notice that one candidate seems reluctant to share ideas with the rest of the class.

As a final note, remember, the Society's programs welcome and encourage everyone to participate in learning the skills taught in the Society's programs. It is important to recognize that to obtain certification, all candidates are evaluated against unmodified "Must Sees" for the safety of both the candidate and others.



# COMMUNICATING

An effective instructor is a master of communication. He or she can clearly and concisely share a message and accurately read and understand others' responses. See **Presentation Skills** for more information about verbal and non-verbal communication.

## GIVING FEEDBACK

When giving feedback, instructors should relate feedback directly to the *Must Sees*. The feedback should be objective and tell candidates how to improve or describe what they are doing correctly. Short, simple directions will ensure the candidate understands the feedback. Telling a candidate "Good job!" will not help him or her see what was good about her performance. Specifics are key.

If a candidate's verbal or non-verbal communication indicates they may be confused, try a different approach. Always ask candidates if they understand, and then have them try the skill or rescue again to put the feedback into practice. Feedback serves no purpose if it cannot be used right away.

Vary your approach by using these methods of feedback:

- **Verbal:** Describe with words what was right or what needs improvement.
- **Visual:** Show the candidate what has was right or what needs improvement. This may involve doing a demonstration in water or on land or by using pictures or mental images. "Picture the arc of a rainbow - Bend your arm like that when you bring it out of the water."
- **Tactile/Kinaesthetic:** Help the candidate understand the feedback by using his or her body. You may tell him to "drag your thumbs up along your side until you feel them in your armpit" or you may actually physically move his or her body. Before using a hands-on approach, be sure to ask your candidate for permission.

## ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

Instructors require exceptional communication skills. To be an effective instructor, not only must you have great speaking and presentation skills (see **Presentation Skills**) but you must also be an excellent listener.

Active listening involves listening first and acknowledging what you hear before expressing your experience or point of view, even if you don't agree with what you're hearing. Active listening helps a person feel important and deserving of help no matter how trivial the problem may appear.

### FOUR BASIC LISTENING SKILLS

#### Reflecting (Feeling)

- Tell the speaker what you sense or perceive are their feelings
- Reflecting acknowledges and validates the speaker's feelings and lets the speaker know that their feelings are normal and understandable
- Don't be afraid to reflect negative feelings (i.e. anger, fear, hate)
- Avoid one-upmanship (i.e. "that's nothing compared to what I went through")
- Examples: *It sounds like that frightened you. You seem to be feeling angry towards that person.*



### Paraphrasing (Repeating)

- Periodically put the speaker's message into your own words and say it back to him or her
- Allows you to confirm that you understand what the speaker is saying
- Gives the speaker an opportunity to correct any misunderstanding
- Lets the speaker know that you are listening
- Examples: *May I interrupt for a moment? I just want to make sure I'm following you. When you first spoke you said...and then this happened, and then so-and-so did such-and-such, and you felt...and now you want...have I got it right?*

### Open-Ended Questions (Expanding)

- Gives the speaker an opportunity to elaborate, in his or her own way, on key points
- Helps the listener explore the speaker's experience and perceptions
- Encourages the speaker to step back and look at the bigger picture
- Allows the listener to get the big picture in order to better assess the overall situation
- Examples: *What lead up to this? ...and then what happened?*

### Clarifying (Meaning)

- Request further information concerning the factual circumstances
- Clarify what the speaker means by the words or phrases used
- Helps to ensure that you understand the meaning of what the speaker is saying
- Attempts to avoid confusion or misunderstanding
- Examples: *When you say...what do you mean by that?*

## BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

Consider the following barriers to communication. When these behaviours start appearing, effective communication is no longer possible.

**Advising:** Being an advice giver or, "I'm telling you..."

**Sparring:** Picking a fight or pushing buttons

**Being Right:** Avoid being defensive. It's not who is right/wrong - seek understanding

**Derailing:** Obstructing progress or changing the subject

**Placating:** Pacifying, appeasing - "calm down!"

**Comparing:** "That's not what you just said..."

**Mind Reading:** Jumping to conclusions before the person has finished speaking

**Filtering:** Hearing what you want to hear

**Dreaming:** Disengaging from the speaker or discussion - stay focused.

