



Experience in Veterinary Communication Education for Practice Success



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OBJECTIVES

- What's contributed to the uptake of communication in veterinary education & practice?
- Why bother?
- How and what communication skills are being taught?
- Where are we headed?
- How do we maintain clinical communication skills throughout a career?

TOP 10!

What are the top 10 reasons for having good communication skills in veterinary practice, and beyond?

Evidence-Complaints

50-82% of *complaints* related to communication problems:

- Client was misinformed

- Consent was not obtained

- Client felt disrespected

- Client felt like opinion did not matter

- Procedure was not explained

College of Veterinarians of Ontario (2010); AVMA-PLIT (2016)



Evidence: Gap between what clients' want & what they are getting

- Veterinarians scored low in:
 - *discovering the clients views & expectations*
 - *exploring the disease and the illness experience*
 - *feelings, ideas, expectations,*
 - *checking for understanding,*
 - *encouraging questions.*
- **Doctor's think they are doing better with clients than clients perceive them to be.**

(Nogueira, Adams, Shaw et al 2018)



Evidence- Anatomy of the Interaction

Data gathering

Primarily closed questions

13 closed questions

2 open ended questions

No open-ended questions in 25% of interviews

6% (2014); 9% (2004)

Empathy

In building relationships with clients

Expression of empathy is infrequent

Empathy statements in only 7% of appointments

(Shaw, Adams, Bonnett 2006)

Evidence-Interruptions

- **Power of the Pause**
- Interruptions in 55% of visits
- 72% of clients did NOT complete their response

- Veterinarians interrupt clients within:
 - 15.3 seconds

Dysart, L, Coe, J, Adams, C 2011

Evidence: “Oh, by the way...”

Not eliciting the clients concerns at the beginning of the appointment increased the odds (4x) of a concern arising during the closing segment of the interview.

Overall goal of communication skills teaching & learning

Improving communication *in practice* to a professional level of competence

- Behavior = what we do anyway

VS

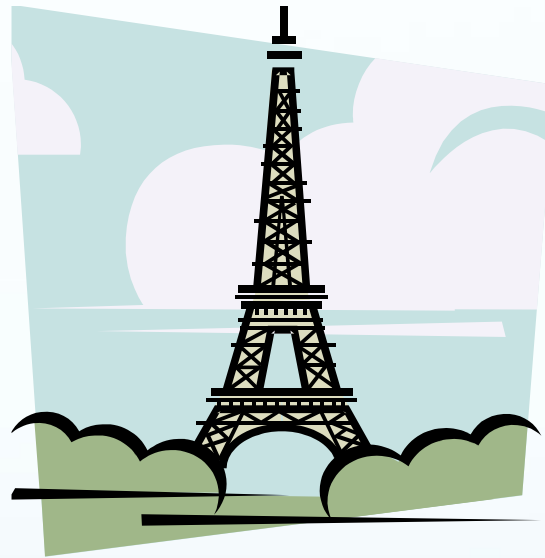
- Professional competence =

 - ↑ awareness & attention

 - ↑ intentionality

 - ↑ ability to reflect on & articulate
and it's evidence based

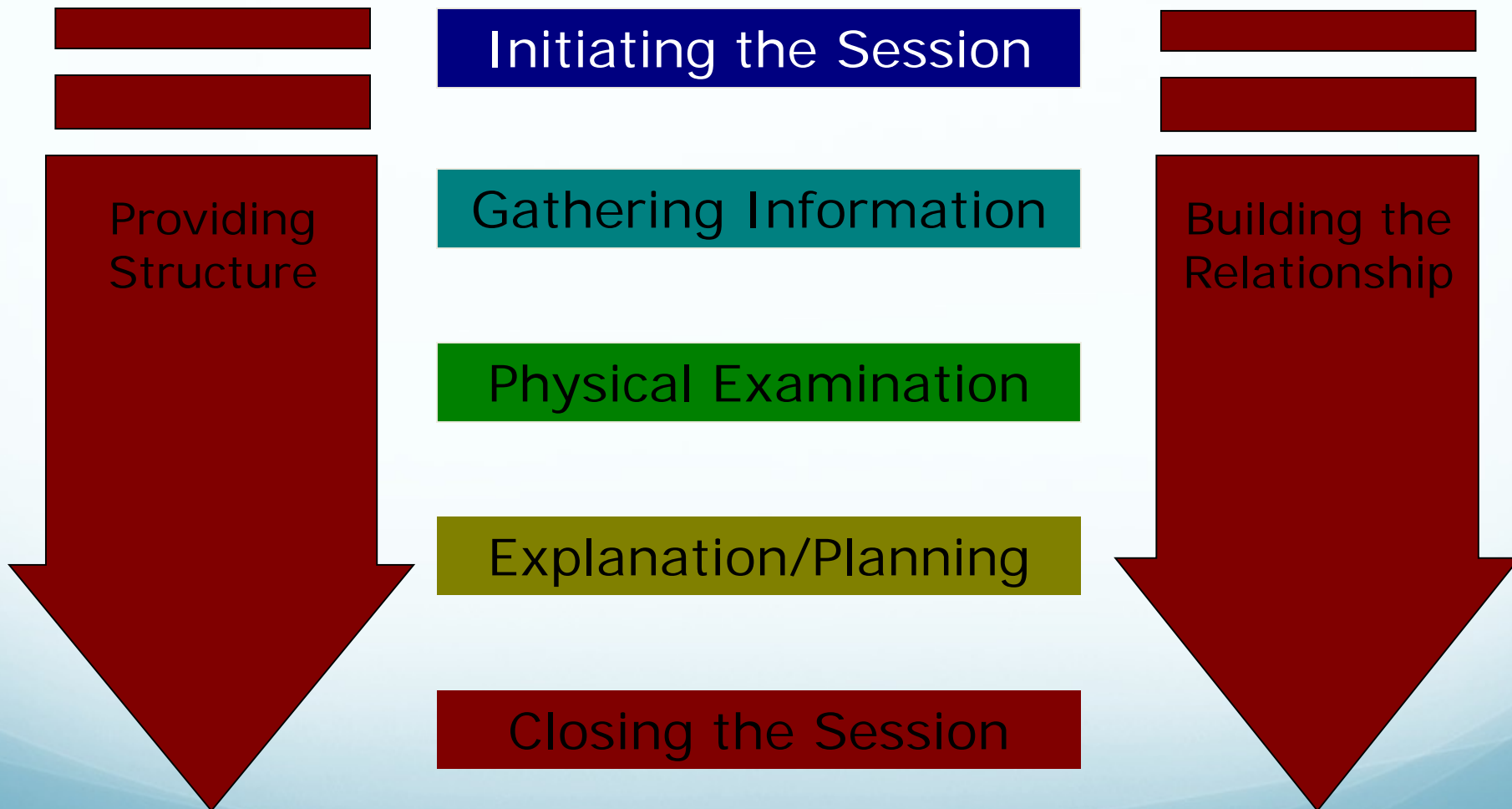
Framework 1



What skills/activities are important during each component of a consultation?



FRAMEWORK: Calgary-Cambridge Guide



Types of Communication Skills

- **Content - what you say**

- **Perceptual skills - what you think or feel**

 - Thought process (problem solving, reasoning)

 - Attitudes, biases, intentions, assumptions

 - Emotions

- **Process skills - how you communicate**

 - How you structure talk

 - How you relate to peers, colleagues, professors, other leaders, clients, patients

 - Nonverbal skills

Adams & Kurtz 2017

Framework 2





Approaches to communication

■ Shot-Put Approach

the well-conceived, well-delivered message is all that matters
emphasis on telling, feedback not in picture

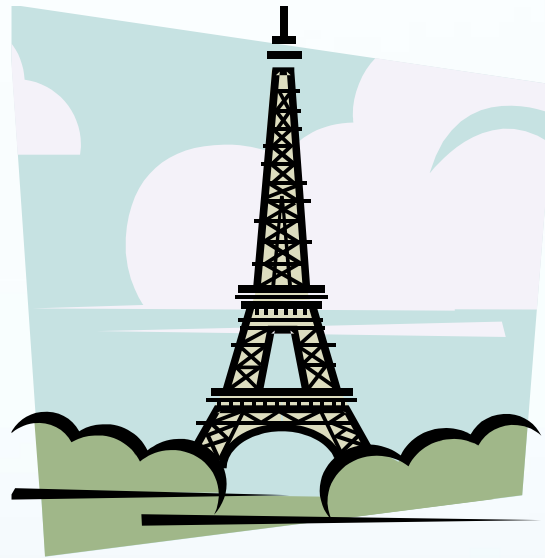
■ Frisbee Approach

2 central concepts

- confirmation = to recognize, acknowledge or endorse another
- mutually understood common ground

emphasis on interaction, feedback, relationship

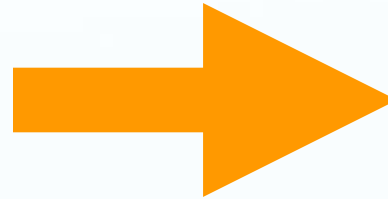
Framework 3





Paradigm Shift

**Veterinarian-
centered**



**Relationship-
centered**



Relationship-Centered Care

Interactions between the entire veterinary team and the client are characterized by collaboration between partners resulting in the creation of a joint venture dedicated to the health of the animal.

Does Relationship Centered Communication take more time?

Veterinary-client-patient visits that were narrowly biomedical were significantly longer (11.98 minutes) than relationship centered or bio-lifestyle-social communication oriented appointments (10.43 minutes).

(Shaw, Adams, Bonnett, 2014)

Evidence-Adherence

Adherence to dentistry & surgery recommendations

N=350

83 interactions, 30% adhered

1. Adhering clients were more satisfied
2. Interactions resulting in adherence had higher scores for RCC than those leading to non-adherence

(Kanji N, Coe J, Adams, C, Shaw, J 2012)

Veterinarian Satisfaction:

Build a Relationship

Veterinarians who used communication skills that build relationship including empathy, greater amount of conversation, were more satisfied.

Veterinarian satisfaction was positively associated with the quality of the vet/client/patient relationship, positive talk, high self-esteem and more balanced interactions with clients

(Shaw, Adams, Bonnett 2012)

Building a Relationship

Kinnison et al. (2014) showed the importance of teams in veterinary practice noting that understanding how to work collaboratively and inter-professionally improved team performance patient outcomes and practice success

Pollard-Williams (2014) show that empathy toward animals declines within years 1-5 of being in practice and that workplace negativity was strongly correlated with this decline

Special Report

The role of veterinary team effectiveness in job satisfaction and burnout in companion animal veterinary clinics

Irene C. Moore, DVM, MSc; Jason B. Coe, DVM, PhD; Cindy L. Adams, MSW, PhD;
Peter D. Conlon, DVM, PhD; Jan M. Sargeant, DVM, PhD

So, what does this have to do with teaching communication in veterinary school and beyond?

Can't have one without the other...

Biomedical Tasks



Find it



Fix it

Can't have one without the other....

73 skills
organized
around an
expanded
framework

Communication Tasks



What does it take to teach/learn communication skills?



What it takes to learn communication skills?

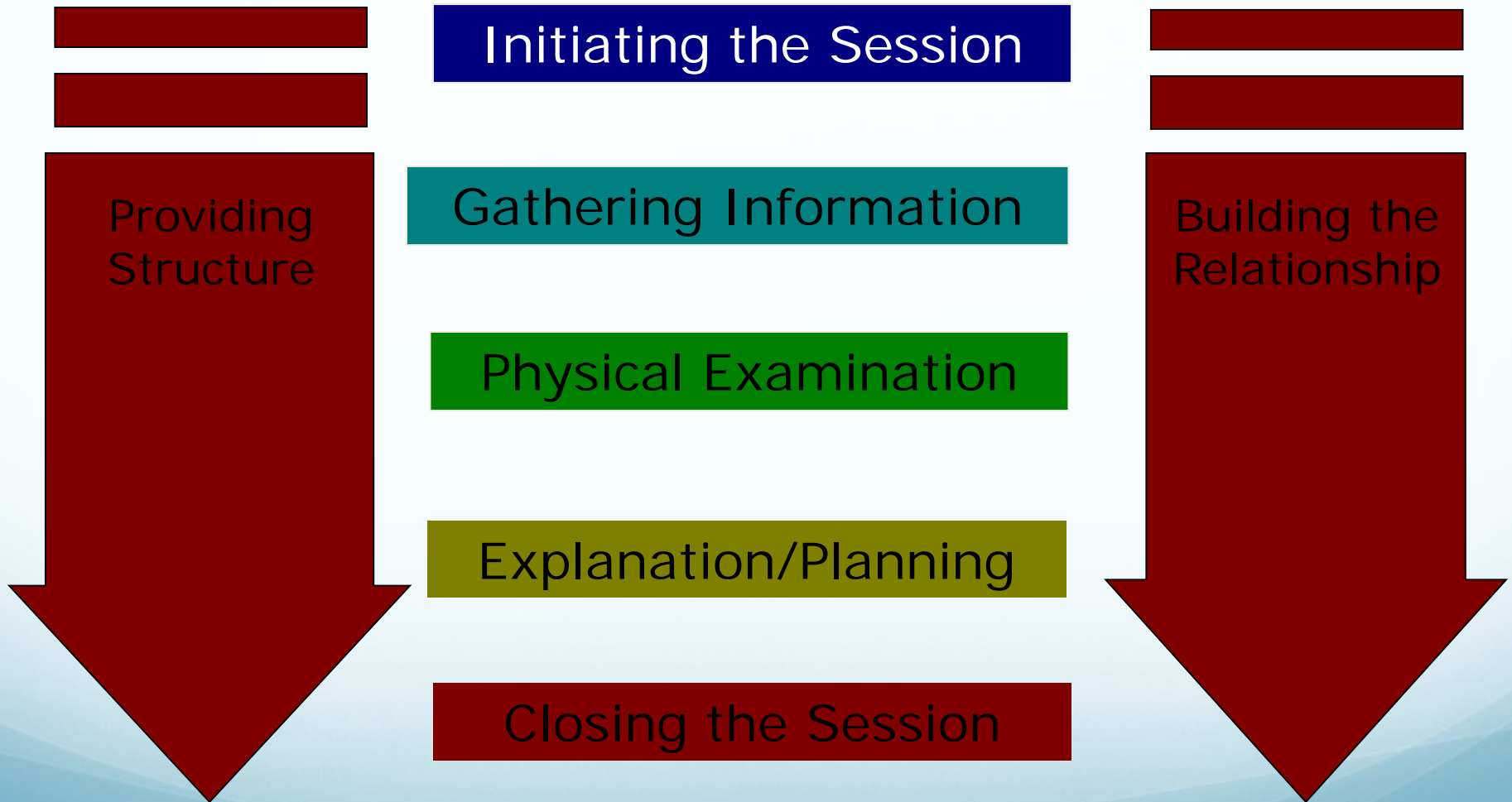
Knowledge does not translate directly into performance

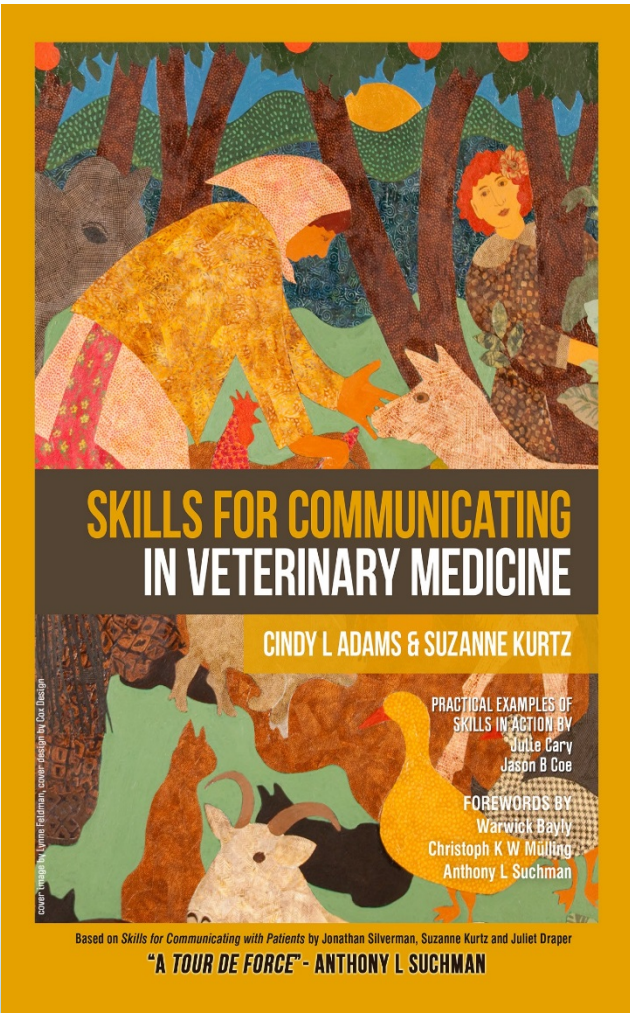
Essentials needed to learn skills, change behavior:

- Systematic delineation & definition of skills
- Observation
- Well-intentioned, detailed, descriptive feedback
- Practice and rehearsal of skills
- Planned reiteration and deepening of skills

Small group or one-on-one format

FRAMEWORK FOR Professional Interactions





Adams CL and Kurtz S (2017)

Skills for Communicating in Veterinary Medicine

*Otmoor Publishing, Oxford &
Dewpoint Publishing, New York*



What does it take to enhance communication?

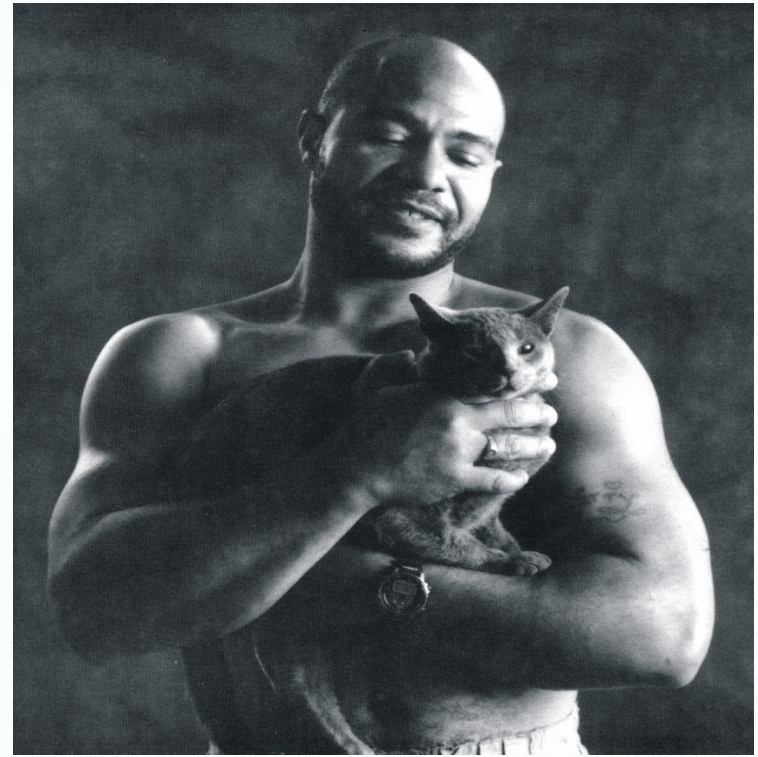
- Simulated clients
- Practice-based scenarios
- Skills-based coaching
- Feedback



Simulated & Real Clients

Trained
Real cases





Patients (real & simulated)

Coach

- Partner with you to achieve success
- Encourage you to perform at a higher level
- Who are they?
- Faculty
- AHT's
- Practitioners
- Industry partners



Small group members

- Provide specific, concrete feedback
- Suggest different approaches to try



Setting the Stage

Case Interactions



Routine wellness visit: Canine

Student Instructions

You are a first year student shadowing the practice owner at your local veterinary clinic. The veterinarian is finishing up with another appointment and has asked you to meet with his next client, to gather information regarding the reason for the visit.

Using the skills of the C C G, have a conversation with the client in order to gather the information that you think the veterinarian will need.

You have 15 minutes to complete your task

Active coaching techniques:

Time-out

- Seek advice or direction

- Provide an alternative approach

Rewind

- Return to a certain point in the interview

- Try a different approach

Client Voice

- 1 question “what are you thinking/feeling”

Goals of Effective Communication

Ensuring increased

Accuracy

Efficiency

Supportiveness

Enhanced satisfaction

Improved outcomes

Collaboration & partnership



Mentorship in Practice: What and How?

- Practices can adapt what's being done in vet med curricula for the practice setting
- Need mentoring in practice to move communication to a professional level of competence
- Evidence-based frameworks can and should be used to achieve essential outcomes in practice
- Skills and approaches can be adapted for use with all members of the practice team

Mentoring, Feedback, Communication CE or on-site training is critical for practice success

- **Coaching and Feedback: Enhancing Communication Teaching and Learning in Veterinary Practice Settings**
- **Cindy L. Adams n Suzanne Kurtz, JVME 2012**
- ABSTRACT
- Communication is a critical clinical skill closely linked to clinical reasoning, medical problem solving, and significant outcomes of care such as accuracy, efficiency, supportiveness, adherence to treatment plans, and client and veterinarian satisfaction. More than 40 years of research on communication and communication education in human medicine and, more recently, in veterinary medicine provide a substantive rationale for formal communication teaching in veterinary education. As a result, veterinary schools are beginning to invest in communication training. However, if communication training is to result in development of veterinary communication skills to a professional level of competence, there must be follow-through with effective communication modeling and coaching in practice settings. The purpose of this article is to move the communication modeling and coaching done in the “real world” of clinical practice to the next level. The development of skills for communication coaching and feedback is demanding. We begin by comparing communication coaching with what is required for teaching other clinical skills in practice settings. Examining both, what it takes to teach others (whether DVM students or veterinarians in practice for several years) and what it takes to enhance one’s own communication skills and capacities, we consider the why, what, and how of communication coaching. We describe the use of teaching instruments to structure this work and give particular attention to how to engage in feedback sessions, since these elements are so critical in communication teaching and learning. We consider the preconditions necessary to initiate and sustain communication skills training in practice, including the need for a safe and supportive environment within which to implement communication coaching and feedback. Finally we discuss the challenges and opportunities unique to coaching and to building and delivering communication skills training in practice settings.
- Key words: communication skills, veterinary medicine, primary-care practice, coaching, feedback, Calgary-Cambridge Guide

Mentorship in Practice: What and How?

Preconditions are necessary:

- Supportive work environment
- Hiring practices that screen for relational competence
- Time to coach and be coached
- Ways to record/observe interactions
- Training for the coaches

Summary

- Evidence is helping to move communication from being a minority sport to a mainstream activity
- There are evidenced based methods for teaching communication and changing behavior
- Veterinary education must integrate communication throughout the curriculum
- Communication coaching at the practice level is doable and critical



Improving Animal & Practice Health: Veterinary Communication Summit

Banff Centre in Banff, Alberta
April 26 - 28, 2019

PLUS

Communication Skills that Work

April 25, 2019
University of Calgary, Alberta

www.iccvm.com