

WHAT IF THERE ARE PROBLEMS?

There are many challenges to interpersonal communication. Gender differences, cultural differences, and role identity are just a few. The most common challenge is that, often, we just do not understand each other. Research has shown that in a typical dyad, the two communication partners can correctly interpret and explain only 25% - 50% of the other's behavior. Interpretation plays a role in virtually every human act. Interpretations are influenced by: degree of involvement with the partner; relational satisfaction; past experiences; assumptions about human behavior; assumptions about the other's background or world view; perceptions about the other person (to name just a few). Evidence shows that judgments say more about our own attitudes than about the other person. Our attitudes impact our communication, sometimes preventing us from understanding the other person's communicative intent. In order to be an effective communication partner, each partner must: learn to see our own behaviors and understand how we come across to others; observe with a discerning mind the behavioral styles of others; and, adjust as necessary!

In every relationship, adjustments need to be made. If, however, the clinical instructor and/or student clinician feel that there are problems that threaten student learning or jeopardize quality of service, the following steps should be taken:

1. The problem(s) should be discussed by the student clinician and the clinical instructor in an effort to clear up any misunderstandings. During the discussions, the student must recognize the clinical instructor's authority; the clinical instructor must take into account the student's needs and skill levels.
2. If the two parties cannot resolve the problem alone, the university clinical coordinator should be contacted right away. The university coordinator may meet alone with the clinical instructor and/or student or meet with both in an attempt to resolve the problem.
3. If the problem cannot be resolved by the three working together, the student may be removed from the placement. This is a rare occurrence and should be avoided if at all possible.