



Personal Assistance Services

for Individuals with Serious Psychiatric Disabilities

Skill Training Curriculum: Connecting Trainee Workbook

Louisiana CPASS Program
Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals
Office of Mental Health

Prepared by
Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Boston University
Rehabilitation Research and Training Center
National Institute of Disability Rehabilitation Research
Center for Mental Health Services/SAMHSA

Acknowledgments

The curriculum to train Personal Assistants has two elements: a competency or skill development component and a didactic or knowledge development component. The skill development components include Connecting, Coaching, Collaborating, and Managing Crises. The knowledge development component is a web-based curriculum entitled *Personal Assistance Services for Individuals with Serious Psychiatric Disabilities*.

This Connecting module is based on the work of colleagues at the Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Boston University. The material is derived and based upon the following:

- Cohen, M. R., Farkas, M. D., & Cohen, B. F. (1986). Coaching the client. *Psychiatric rehabilitation training technology: Functional assessment*. Boston: Boston University, Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation.
- Cohen, M. R., Nemec, P. B., & Farkas, M. D. (2000). Connecting for rehabilitation. *Psychiatric rehabilitation training technology: Rehabilitation readiness*. Boston: Boston University, Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation.
- Cohen, M. R., Nemec, P. B., Farkas, M. D., & Forbess, R. (1988). Connecting with clients. *Psychiatric rehabilitation training technology: Case management*. Boston: Boston University, Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation.

The writing team included: Cheryl Gagne, Christine Gayler, Donna Wilbur, the Steering Committee of Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, PAS Project, Ann Darling Kenyon, and Marianne Farkas.

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Curriculum Outline

Connecting

- Listening
- Demonstrating Understanding

Coaching

- Giving Directions
- Encouraging
- Giving Feedback

Collaborating

- Defining Goals
- Disagreeing
- Resolving Conflict

Managing Crises

- Developing a Crisis Plan
- Assessing Critical Information
- Implementing an Action Plan

What is Connecting?

Connecting is developing a relationship with another person.

Why do Personal Assistants need to learn to Connect?

Connecting strengthens the bond between the Personal Assistant and the person he or she is working with.

How do Personal Assistants Connect?

Connecting skills include:

- Listening
- Demonstrating Understanding

When do Personal Assistants use Connecting skills?

Personal Assistants use Connecting skills each and every time they meet with a person they are assisting.

Connecting Example

Barry, a Personal Assistant, is working with Joe to help him prepare for a trip to the grocery store. Joe is feeling nervous about going to the store.

Joe: I don't think we should go out today. It's supposed to be cold. I don't think it's a good idea to go out.

Barry: You feel worried that it's too cold to go shopping today. I just came from outdoors, and it's quite comfortable.

Joe: I just don't like to go to the Publix Market. My brother used to work there, and the guys there sometimes look at me funny. I have a bad feeling when I walk into that store. But I really need groceries. Maybe you could pick up a few things for me, and I could stay here.

Barry: You really don't want to go into the Publix but you really need groceries, so you'd like me to go.

Joe: The guys there used to make fun of me. They would call me names and push me, and my brother would just stand there and let them do it.

Barry: You feel bad when you think about those times.

Joe: Yes I do. I don't want to go! When I lived in the group home, we used to go to a different market every Friday night. It was okay going in a big group and going to a place where nobody knew me.

Barry: So for you, the problem is going to this specific market because the people there may know you. You may not mind going to another grocery store where you don't know anyone.

Joe: Right.

What is Listening?

Listening is grasping all the cues conveyed by another person.

Why do Personal Assistants need to learn to Listen?

Listening helps the Personal Assistant to hear the other person's point of view.

How do Personal Assistants Listen?

Listening skills include:

- Preparing
- Attending
- Recalling

When do Personal Assistants Listen?

Personal Assistants Listen when they want to understand the message that another person is conveying.

Listening Exercise #1

Listen carefully to the statement read by the trainer. Focus on the trainer's words and his or her verbal and non-verbal cues.

- Prepare
- Attend
- Recall

In the space below, jot down some notes as you Listen.

Words:

Cues:

- Verbal

- Non-Verbal

Listening Exercise #2

Listen carefully to the statement read by the trainer. Focus on the trainer's words and his or her verbal and non-verbal cues.

- Prepare
- Attend
- Recall

In the space below, jot down some notes as you Listen.

Words:

Cues:

- Verbal

- Non-Verbal

Demonstrating Understanding Introduction

What is Demonstrating Understanding?

Demonstrating Understanding is capturing in words what another person is thinking or feeling.

Why do Personal Assistants need to learn how to Demonstrate Understanding?

Demonstrating Understanding communicates that the Personal Assistant is Listening to the person's point of view.

How do Personal Assistants Demonstrate Understanding?

Demonstrating Understanding skills include:

- Paraphrasing
- Responding to Feeling

When do Personal Assistants Demonstrate Understanding?

Personal Assistants Demonstrate Understanding when they want to convey that they comprehend another person's point of view.

Demonstrating Understanding Example

Mary had been living with her sister for over 20 years. Since her sister died three years ago, she has become more and more disorganized in her home and is having trouble finding things. Julie is Mary's personal assistant. They're meeting for the first time to discuss how Julie may best support Mary with managing at home.

Mary: I never knew they'd give me someone like you to help me with stuff at home. I didn't let my doctor or nurse know how bad things have gotten around here since my sister died because I thought they'd make me go to a home.

Julie: You felt afraid to ask for help because you didn't want to be forced to go to a nursing home.

Mary: Right. But since Claire died, it's been hard for me to manage. She was the one who did most of the organizing around her. I did a lot of cleaning and stuff. Don't get me wrong. I wasn't lazy or anything. Claire was just kind of the boss, and she told me where stuff belonged and how to fix things.

Julie: It sounds like your sister did a lot of the management while you did a lot of the work.

Mary: Yeah. That's it! I didn't mind. Claire was kind of bossy. I sure do miss her though. She always knew how to do things.

Julie: You really miss having her guidance.

Mary: I sure do. You can see what a mess this place is. It just got away from me. I plan to pick up, put things away but now it's so bad I don't know where to begin.

Julie: You feel overwhelmed because there is so much to do it's hard to know where to start.

Mary: I know that's right. I lost my medication bottle the other day, and I couldn't call the pharmacy for a refill because I didn't have the number. It was so frustrating not being able to find the darn thing. And I need my heart medication. My doctor was very clear about that. So that's when I called Sara (her nurse) and told her about the problem.

Julie: You asked for the help you needed when you saw that it could affect your health.

Paraphrasing Description

What is Paraphrasing?

Paraphrasing is summarizing the content of a person's message.

Characteristics of a Paraphrase

- Fresh
- Brief
- Accurate

Common formats for Paraphrasing

- "Sounds like _____"
- "Seems as if _____"
- "You're saying that _____"

Paraphrase Examples

Example 1

Statement: I wasn't thinking about how hard it was going to be to work, go to school, and take care of my family. I didn't realize how much time I would need for studying. I'm taking three courses, and I have so much reading to do each week that I am up every night until after midnight just trying to stay on top of it. It's only the fourth week of classes, and I don't know how I can make it.

Paraphrase: School is much more demanding than you had ever anticipated.

Example 2

Statement: I'm going home for Thanksgiving. I look forward to seeing everyone, but I worry about getting drawn into old conflicts with my sister.

Paraphrase: You have mixed feelings about going home for the holiday.

Example 3

Statement: My boss is watching me like a hawk. She is so ready to catch me making a mistake. She doesn't like me, and I'm sure that she wants to fire me.

Paraphrase: You're really worried about losing your job.

Paraphrase Exercise #1

Directions: Read each statement and paraphrase A, B, and C. Select the best paraphrase for each statement.

Statement 1—Friend talking to another friend:

I'm tired of my sister. She never wants to do anything with me. She only calls me if she wants me to watch her kids.

Paraphrase A: You should just say "no" next time she calls you.

Paraphrase B: You think she uses you for babysitting.

Paraphrase C: My sister is just the same. She never calls me or invites me to dinner, even when she is having a lot of people over for a dinner party.

Statement 2—Boss speaking to worker:

You need to check in with me before you print the final document. You just wasted a lot of time printing and copying a document that had some errors on it.

Paraphrase A: It's no big deal. The document is all printed now, and it's perfect.

Paraphrase B: You want me to check in with you before printing the final document. I just wasted a lot of time printing and copying a document that had some errors on it.

Paraphrase C: So in the future you want me to check with you before I print the final document. It should save time in the long run.

Statement 3—Mother speaking to adult son

You should call your grandmother. She loves to hear from you. She talks about you all the time, and she always mentions that she hasn't heard from you for a long time.

Paraphrase A: You think I should call Nana more often because she likes it when I call.

Paraphrase B: I think you should mind your own business. My relationship with Nana is my business.

Paraphrase C: What's Nana's phone number?

Statement 4—Friend talking to another friend

I've been worried about you. You haven't returned any of my phone calls in weeks. I haven't seen you. You're acting strange lately, like not showing up at Nelson's party when you said you were going to go.

Paraphrase A: You've been worried. I haven't returned any phone calls in weeks. I've been acting strange, and I didn't show up at Nelson's party when I said I would be going.

Paraphrase B: You've been concerned because I've been out of touch lately.

Paraphrase C: I'm so sorry I worried you. I haven't been feeling well. I haven't felt like talking to anybody lately. I'm really sorry.

Statement 5—Strangers talking at a party

I've known Roger for years. We were in the same fraternity in college. He's a really great guy, and we've just stayed in touch over the years.

Paraphrase A: You don't look like someone who's been in a fraternity.

Paraphrase B: So you guys go back to your college days.

Paraphrase C: Yeah, well I've known Roger since high school.

Paraphrase Exercise #2

- Directions: Read each statement and write a paraphrase. Ensure that your paraphrases are:
- Brief
 - Fresh
 - Accurate

Statement 1—Friend talking to you

I'm worried about my son. He never has any money. Every time I see him, he asks me for money, and he works! I don't know what he's doing with his money. I don't like his new friends very much. He never sees his friends from school anymore, just a new group from his work who are older and wilder, I think. He's nineteen, so there's not much I can do, but I don't like it at all.

Paraphrase:

Statement 2—Acquaintance at a social gathering

My cousin is running to serve on the school committee. He's always been active in politics, even when we were in school, he was involved. I was more in the shadows, kind of a behind-the-scenes sort of person. I'm going to work for his election, but I can't imagine speaking to a crowd.

Paraphrase:

Statement 3—Acquaintance at a social gathering

You never know. My sister was healthy one day and struck dead of a heart attack the next. She had no health problems that we knew of. She took great care of herself too, ate well, and exercised. Pity, she left a big family who miss her so much.

Paraphrase:

Statement 4—Close friend

I'm so depressed. Here I am 35 years old, and I've never held a real job. I thought I would be married with kids and a house by now, and I can't even get a job that pays above minimum wage.

Paraphrase:

Paraphrase Exercise #3

Directions: Read each statement made to you by someone you are helping. Write a paraphrased response to each.

Statement 1

My doctor doesn't listen to me. I've told him that the medication isn't working well. I am having a lot of trouble with voices and frustration. He says I have to help myself, because the medication won't do everything.

Paraphrase:

Statement 2

I don't know what to do. I have so much to do, and I have no energy. I just want to sleep for a month.

Paraphrase:

Statement 3

My mother is on my back. She's angry with me. She says I'm an alcoholic just like my father just because I got really drunk Friday night.

Paraphrase:

Paraphrase Exercise #4

Directions: Read each statement made to you by someone you are assisting. Write a paraphrase in response to each statement.

Statement 1

I don't have anyone. I was alone all weekend. I can't stand to spend so much time alone. My sister never returned my phone calls all weekend. She says she's tired of me calling and complaining about my life, but my life is awful.

Paraphrase:

Statement 2

My psychiatrist won't listen to me. I tried telling him that I can't stand this medication. It makes me drool, and I've gained 40 pounds. He says that those are minor problems compared to psychosis.

Paraphrase:

Statement 3

I've been dating my girlfriend for 3 years. She would like to get married, but I am feeling really unsure about it. I don't know if I am ready to get married. I've been thinking about traveling across the United States with my friend from high school. She thinks I should keep my job and save my money toward buying a house, but I don't know.

Paraphrase:

Responding to Feeling Description

What is Responding to Feeling?

Responding to feeling is naming the emotion expressed by another person.

Naming the Emotion

Naming the Emotion is labeling the category and intensity of the person's feeling.

- Category is the type of feeling.
- Intensity is the strength of the feeling.

Common formats for Responding to Feeling

- "You feel _____"
- "You feel _____ because _____"

Feeling Word Chart

Intensity	Happy	Sad	Angry	Scared	Confused	Strong	Weak
High	Excited Elated Overjoyed • • •	Hopeless Depressed Devastated • • •	Furious Seething Enraged • • •	Terrified Threatened Afraid • • •	Bewildered Trapped Troubled • • •	Potent Powerful Super • • •	Vulnerable Impotent Overwhelmed • • •
Medium	Cheerful Up Good • • •	Upset Distressed Sorry • • •	Agitated Frustrated Irritated • • •	Edgy Insecure Uneasy • • •	Disorganized Mixed-up Awkward • • •	Energetic Confident Capable • • •	Incapable Helpless Insecure • • •
Low	Glad Content Satisfied • • •	Down Low Bad • • •	Uptight Dismayed Annoyed • • •	Timid Unsure Nervous • • •	Bothered Uncomfortable Undecided • • •	Sure Secure Solid • • •	Shaky Unsure Bored • • •

From: Carkhuff, R. (2000). *The art of helping, VIII*. Amherst, MA: Human Resource Development Press.

Responding to Feeling Exercise #1

Directions: Read the statement and each of the responses. Select the response that best captures the person's feeling.

1. Ever since Claire died I am so unsure of the right thing to do. I don't know whether to cook a meal or eat out, stock up on can goods, or get by with what I have. Each decision feels so difficult.
 - ☐ You feel so sad because your sister died and now you're all alone.
 - ☐ You feel overwhelmed because you have to manage so many things on your own these days.
 - ☐ You feel stupid because you don't know how to decide what to do.

2. I don't know what to do. I've tried to lose weight all my life. Now I'm over 300 pounds, and I have diabetes. My mother died of a heart attack when she was 45 years old.
 - ☐ You feel fat.
 - ☐ You feel worried because your health is at risk.
 - ☐ You feel hopeless.

Responding to Feeling Exercise #2

Directions: Read the statement. Write a response that captures the person's feeling. Use the format:

- "You feel _____"
- "You feel _____ because _____"

1. I don't have anyone. I was alone all weekend. I can't stand to spend so much time alone. My sister never returned my phone calls all weekend. She says she's tired of me calling and complaining about my life, but my life is awful.
2. My psychiatrist won't listen to me. I tried telling him that I can't stand this medication. It makes me drool, and I've gained 40 pounds. He says that those are minor problems compared to psychosis."
3. I've been dating my girlfriend for 3 years. She would like to get married, but I am feeling really unsure about it. I don't know if I am ready to get married. I've been thinking about traveling across the United States with my friend from high school. She thinks I should keep my job and save my money toward buying a house, but I don't know.

Demonstrating Understanding Exercise

Directions: Read each statement. Write a response that captures the meaning of what the person is saying, either a paraphrase or response to feeling.

Statement 1

I hate my boss! He's so mean to me. He always wants me to do something like yesterday, you know what I mean? Man, I'm thinking about quitting!

Statement 2

My mother is on my back. She's angry with me. She says I'm an alcoholic just like my father just because I got really drunk Friday night.

Statement 3

I never lived on my own before. I am not sure how it will be to wake up in the middle of the night and know that there is no one else in the house.

Statement 4

My sister doesn't want me to visit on the holidays. She has her other family come to her house on Christmas and Thanksgiving. She says that it's too much for her to take care of me and everyone else at the same time.

Connecting Exercise

In this exercise, you will practice the skills of Listening and Demonstrating Understanding. Each person will have the opportunity to play the role of the “interviewer” before switching with his/her partner to play the role of the “interviewee.” It is the “interviewer” who is practicing these interpersonal skills. The interviewee can just talk and talk and talk!

Directions:

1. Meet with a partner to discuss a future goal (career, family, health, fun, etc.).
2. One person will be the “interviewer” and the other will be the “interviewee.”
3. The interviewer will ask an open-ended question to start the dialogue, and then demonstrate understanding to what the interviewee says.
4. The interviewer tries to use as many paraphrases and responses to feeling as possible. The interviewer should ask no more than one question during the interview.
5. The interviewer uses the checklist on the next page to assess how he or she did during the interview.
6. When told, partners will switch roles and the interviewer becomes the interviewee.

Connecting Checklist

Directions: Read the description of each Connecting skill. Using the scale provided, rate your current use of each skill. Add comments where you wish.

Scale

1 = I use the skill as well and as often as needed

2 = I use the skill, but maybe not as often or as well as I need to use it.

3 = I am uncertain about how or when to use the skill

Skill Description	Rating	Comments
Listening		
• Preparing		
• Attending		
• Recalling		
Paraphrasing		
• Fresh		
• Brief		
• Accurate		
Responding to Feeling		
• Labeling the category		
• Labeling the intensity		

Personal Assistant Services

1. What is a Personal Assistance Service?

2. What is the role of a Personal Assistant?

3. What are the tasks of a Personal Assistant?

4. What are the critical skills that a Personal Assistant performs?

Recovery and Rehabilitation

1. What is the recovery vision?

2. What is the goal of recovery?

3. What is the mission of psychiatric rehabilitation?

4. What are the primary rehabilitation interventions?

Connecting

1. What is Connecting?

2. Why is it important for a Personal Assistant to connect with the person that they are working with?

3. Two Connecting skills are Listening and Demonstrating Understanding:

- Listening—Listening involves three steps: 1) Preparing, 2) Attending, and 3) Recalling. Briefly describe what a Personal Assistant would do when they are Preparing, Attending, and Recalling:

- Demonstrating Understanding—There are two skills in Demonstrating Understanding:
1) Paraphrasing and 2) Responding to Feeling

Assume that you the person's Personal Assistant. Read the following statement:

I never new they'd give me someone like you to help me with stuff at home. I didn't let my doctor or nurse know how bad things have gotten around here since my sister died because I thought they'd make be go to a home.

Write down how you would paraphrase what they have shared with you:

You can see what a mess this place is. It just got away from me. I plan to pick up and put things away, but now it's so bad I don't know where to begin.

Write down your response to the feelings the person has expressed:

4. When do Personal Assistants use Connecting skills?

Coaching

1. What is Coaching?

2. What are the benefits of Coaching?

3. There are three Coaching skills: 1) Giving Directions, 2) Encouraging, and 3) Giving Feedback:

- Giving Directions—Two types of directions are: 1) Orientations and 2) Instructions
What is the difference between the two?

- Encouraging—There are three techniques for encouraging: 1) Praising Efforts, 2) Praising Accomplishments, and 3) Modifying Directions

Create a brief example of one of the techniques for the skill of washing clothes.

Training Pretest/Posttest

- Giving Feedback

What are the characteristics of good feedback?

4. When do Personal Assistants coach a person?

Collaborating

1. What is Collaborating?

2. Why is it important that Personal Assistants collaborate with the person that they are working with?

3. Collaborating skills include Defining Common Goals, Disagreeing, and Resolving Conflict:

- Defining Common Goals—Briefly describe how to define common goals?

- Disagreeing—Write down what you might say in Disagreeing with the following statement:

My case manager said that you had to clean my kitchen when you're here today. She told me that it was your job to do the housework and that we shouldn't be spending time goofing around. She wants you to do your work when you're here.

- Resolving Conflict—What is the difference between a disagreement and a conflict?

4. When do Personal Assistants use Collaborating skills?

Managing Crises

1. What is Managing Crises?

2. Why is it important for Personal Assistants to be able to manage crises?

3. The skills of Managing Crises include:

- Developing a Crisis Plan—Briefly describe how a Personal Assistant would develop a crisis plan with a person they are working with:

Training Pretest/Posttest

- Assessing Critical Situations—What are some examples of critical situations a Personal Assistant may need to assess?

- Implementing an Emergency Response—As well as the actions laid out in a person's crisis plan, what else influences how a Personal Assistant responds during an emergency?

4. When does a Personal Assistant begin to manage crises?
