

# UNIT 1: Talking with Clients

Communication between nurses and clients happens all day, every day. At times the communication is formal, such as when a nurse instructs a client how to use a piece of equipment. At other times the topic of communication is informal; for example, the nurse greets the client, they exchange some small talk, and then the nurse moves to the next room.

## Meeting Clients

Most people who work in a health care profession are, of course, involved with clients every day. Some clients spend a lot of time in the hospital. In these cases, the nurses and various doctors and specialists will get to know them well. Other clients are only in the hospital a day or two. Still others are in a hospital as outpatients (their surgery or procedure takes place during the day and they go home the same night). Health care workers need to react appropriately to whatever news the client gives.



## Listening to the Action



### Listening for Language

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Listen to the conversations between health care workers and clients. What phrases do the health care workers use to react to the clients' news?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Dialogue

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### Practicing the Language

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It's been a busy day at Rossmoor Medical Center. The nurse is at the end of her shift, but a new client has been admitted, so she stops by to check on her. Practice the dialogue with a partner.

*Nurse:* Good morning, Mrs. Chan. My name is Evelyn, and I'll be one of the nurses taking care of you here.

*Client:* Nice to meet you. You look really young to be a nurse!

*Nurse:* Really? That's nice to hear. I've been a nurse for three years now.

*Client:* Well, I guess everyone is young compared to me. I'm just 72 years "young."

*Nurse:* Good for you! Well, I see that you are here for a hip replacement.

*Client:* Yes, my orthopedic surgeon will come to see me soon.

*Nurse:* Are you nervous?

*Client:* Not really.

*Nurse:* Will someone from your family be here with you?

*Client:* Yes . . . I think I hear them now.

*Nurse:* Great! Well, my shift is over and I need to leave now, but I'll be back tomorrow at 7:00 AM. Good luck with your surgery.

*Client:* Thanks.

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## **ABC** Vocabulary

### *Medical Specialists*

There are many types of health care workers. Clients generally start by seeing a general practitioner, but then they are referred to a specialist. If you work at a hospital or clinic, you will interact with a variety of specialists.

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### **Matching Types of Specialists**

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Match the type of specialist on the left with the correct area of specialty on the right.

- |                             |                                   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. allergist _____          | a. mental or emotional issues     |
| 2. cardiologist _____       | b. heart diseases                 |
| 3. dermatologist _____      | c. eye injuries or diseases       |
| 4. gastroenterologist _____ | d. children's health issues       |
| 5. hematologist _____       | e. skin diseases                  |
| 6. neurologist _____        | f. allergies                      |
| 7. ophthalmologist _____    | g. foot problems                  |
| 8. orthopedic surgeon _____ | h. musculoskeletal system issues  |
| 9. otolaryngologist _____   | i. blood diseases                 |
| 10. pediatrician _____      | j. nervous system issues          |
| 11. podiatrist _____        | k. stomach problems               |
| 12. psychiatrist _____      | l. ear, nose, and throat problems |

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### **Defining More Specialists**

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Clients may ask you about the area that some specialists work in. In simple language, write what these specialists do. Use a dictionary if you need to. The first one has been done for you as an example.

1. internist: treats diseases of the structures inside a body
2. anesthesiologist: \_\_\_\_\_
3. obstetrician/gynecologist: \_\_\_\_\_
4. pathologist: \_\_\_\_\_
5. plastic surgeon: \_\_\_\_\_
6. urologist: \_\_\_\_\_

## ↔ Communication Strategy

### Verbal Cues

When you are listening to a client talk and you want to show that you are listening, you can use verbal cues. You also need to show the person talking that you are interested. One way to communicate these messages is with a verbal cue as well as with an emotion, such as being happy, sad, or surprised. There are many phrases to use.

#### I'm listening.

**Uh-huh.**

**Mm-hmm.**

**Right.**

**Yes.**

**Go on.**

*Client:* Let me tell you about my pain.

*Nurse:* Uh-huh.

#### I'm happy. (That's good news.)

**That's nice.**

**Great!**

**Congratulations!**

**Good for you!**

*Client:* I walked 50 steps yesterday.

*Nurse:* Congratulations!

#### I'm sad. (That's bad news.)

**That's too bad.**

**Oh, no!**

**That's terrible/awful.**

**I'm sorry to hear that.**

*Client:* My children won't be able to visit me before the operation.

*Nurse:* Oh, no.

#### I'm surprised.

**Really?**

**You're kidding!**

**Wow!**

*Client:* All 10 of my children were born in this hospital.

*Nurse:* You're kidding! Wow!



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## Dialogue Completion

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Write an appropriate verbal cue for these statements. The first one has been done for you as an example.

1. Well, this is how it started. Last week. . . .

Uh-huh.

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2. I need to get better. Next month I'm getting married.
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3. I lost my hospital I.D. card.
- 

4. I have a story about what happened last night.
- 

5. You look like a movie star!
- 

6. I think my sister is very sick.
- 

7. I'm so happy. I don't feel any pain in my shoulder.
- 

8. I'm the mayor, you know.
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## Dialogue Practice

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Read and practice the dialogues with a partner.

1. *Nurse's Aide:* (sees client eating) Did you listen to what the doctor said?

*Client:* About what?

*Nurse's Aide:* You are not supposed to eat candy bars and things like that.

*Client:* Really?

*Nurse's Aide:* Yes, really. You need to give those back to your family.

*Client:* That's too bad. They are so good!

2. *Client:* Did you hear my news?

*Nurse:* No. What is it?

*Client:* My cancer is gone! I'm going to be discharged!

*Nurse:* Wow! That's nice.

*Client:* Can you come to a party my family is having on Saturday for me?

*Nurse:* Sure . . . No, wait. I have to work at that time.

*Client:* Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

## Discussion

Work with a small group. Take turns choosing a topic from the list and talking about it for as long as you can. Practice giving verbal cues when your classmates are talking.

1. your favorite food
2. an ideal place to live
3. a difficult subject in school
4. your favorite hobby
5. your favorite movie

## ↔ Communication Strategy

### Self-Introductions

In the health care field, you meet people every day. Most of the time you are not introduced by someone else. You need to use a self-introduction. After greeting someone, it is important to give your name and explain why you are there.

*Nurse:* Good morning, Mr. Reynolds. My name's Sunny, and I'm going to be your nurse today.

*Client:* Nice to meet you. Please call me Sam.

After someone greets you and introduces her/himself to you, it is important to respond (answer) appropriately. Here are some common responses to introductions.

#### Formal

**I'm very pleased/happy/glad to meet you.**

**It's very nice to meet you.**

**It's a pleasure to meet you.**

**It's my pleasure to meet you.**

**Hello.**

#### Informal

**Pleased/Happy/Glad to meet you.**

**Nice to meet you.**

**My pleasure.**

**Hi.**

*Doctor:* Hello. I'm Dr. Robbins, and I'll be examining you today.

*Client:* Hello, Doctor. I'm very pleased to meet you. You come highly recommended by my friends.

*Doctor:* That's nice to hear. It's a pleasure to meet you too, Sarah.

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### Dialogue Completion

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Complete the dialogues with appropriate phrases. Use your own names.

- Supervisor:* I'm \_\_\_\_\_ (name). I'll be your supervisor.  
*New nurse:* \_\_\_\_\_  
*Supervisor:* \_\_\_\_\_, too.
- Nurse:* Hello, \_\_\_\_\_ (name). I'm your nurse on this shift. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ (name).  
*Client:* \_\_\_\_\_  
*Nurse:* \_\_\_\_\_
- Nurse's Aide 1:* Hi. I'm \_\_\_\_\_ (name). I'm one of the nurse's aides here. You must be new?  
*Nurse's Aide 2:* Yes, it's my first day. I'm \_\_\_\_\_ (name).  
*Nurse's Aide 1:* \_\_\_\_\_  
*Nurse's Aide 2:* \_\_\_\_\_
- Client:* Good morning. Are you the doctor?  
*Nurse:* No, I'm your nurse. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ (name). How are you today?  
*Client:* A little tired. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ (name), by the way.  
*Nurse:* I'm very happy to meet you, \_\_\_\_\_ (name).  
*Client:* \_\_\_\_\_



### Pronunciation: Intonation in Yes-No Questions

A question that can be answered with *yes* or *no* is called a yes-no question. These questions normally begin with a form of the *be* verb, *to do*, *to have*, or a modal (*Can*, *Will*, *Should*, etc.). Listen to your instructor read the yes-no questions. Does the intonation (the “pitch” of the voice) go up (↗) or down (↘)?

1. Is it raining?
2. Wasn't he discharged on Tuesday?
3. Should I include that in her chart?
4. Will you have dinner with me?
5. Does she have plans to become an RN?

Rule: In American English, yes-no questions usually end in rising intonation (↗).

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## Rising Intonation

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Ask the yes-no questions using rising intonation. Take turns asking and answering.

1. Are you busy today?
2. Does your family send you email?
3. Did you study English before you moved to the U.S.?
4. Can you speak a third language?
5. Is anyone in your family a nurse?
6. Will you come to class tomorrow?
7. Would you like to learn about muscle diseases?
8. Have there been any surprises for you in the health care field?
9. Do you know how to provide wound care?
10. Were you nervous on your first day in the hospital?

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## Writing Questions

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Write four yes-no questions, and then ask them to a partner.

1. Do you \_\_\_\_\_?
2. Are you \_\_\_\_\_?
3. Can you \_\_\_\_\_?
4. Will you \_\_\_\_\_?

## Review

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### Dialogue Review

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Review the dialogue on page 3. As you read, follow the directions. Then compare your marks with a partner.

- Underline the **Medical Specialist** term.
- Circle the **Verbal Cues**.
- Box the **Self-Introduction** and responses.

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### Role Plays: Meeting Clients

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Work with a partner. Read each situation, and develop dialogues to perform for the class.

1. A specialist introduces himself/herself to a new client in a hospital bed.
2. A nurse listens to a new client's good news and then reacts.
3. An elderly client starts to tell a nurse a long story about the past. The nurse has time to listen and gives verbal cues.
4. A nursing student introduces himself/herself to a client.
5. A client tells a nurse about a lot of new foot pain and asks the nurse what kind of specialist takes care of feet.
6. A nurse introduces himself/herself to a new client and then asks the client two or three yes-no questions.
7. A client tells a nurse's aide about having a lot of bad luck recently and gives examples. The nurse's aide reacts.

## Interacting with Clients

Some clients say that hospitals can be interesting places for two or three days, but that after that it's boring to have to stay in a hospital room. Health care workers' interactions with clients (e.g., using small talk and follow-up questions) may make the days a little more interesting.



## Listening to the Action



### Listening for Language

Listen to the conversations between health care workers and clients. What follow-up questions do the health care workers ask?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## ↕ Dialogue

### Practicing the Language

A nurse is helping a client fill out a form. While she does this, they have a conversation. Practice the dialogue with a partner.

*Nurse:* Hello, Mr. Dross. I'm here to help you fill out this form for your health insurance company.

*Client:* Hi. Thanks. My printing's not so good these days.

*Nurse:* O.K. What is your middle initial?

*Client:* "X." My middle name is Xavier.

*Nurse:* Well, that's an interesting name. Now, what's your address, and zip code?

*Client:* 1320 Elmwood Street. That's in Riverside. The zip code is 92505.

*Nurse:* All right. What's your date of birth?

*Client:* June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1947.

*Nurse:* Oh, my father was born on June 1<sup>st</sup>, too. It's a small world! O.K. Now they need to know what medications you're taking. We can get that from your chart. How about substance use? I know that you smoke. How often do you smoke?

*Client:* I can't smoke in here. In the real world, I smoke about a pack a week—not much.

*Nurse:* O.K., well, we can fill out the rest of the form based on your chart. We'll submit the form as soon as possible.

*Client:* Thanks.

# Vocabulary

## *Filling Out Forms*

It's part of life to have to fill out forms. People who need medical attention must fill out forms with their personal information and health history. Health professionals must sometimes help them with the forms or even fill out the forms for them.

## *A Note about Names*

In the United States, first names and middle names are chosen at birth by parents. Last names are usually the same as the father's last name. When a woman marries she usually replaces her own last name with that of her husband. Some women in the United States choose to keep their own last name or just add their husband's name after a hyphen, for example: *Mary Deeds-Anderson*.

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## Recognizing Information on Forms

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Categorize each item by the type of information it is. Compare your answers with a partner.

- |                              |                         |                                 |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| apartment or house number    | first name              | signature                       |
| business (work) phone number | gender (sex)            | social security number (S.S.N.) |
| cell (mobile) phone number   | home phone number       | state                           |
| city                         | last name (family name) | street                          |
| current medications          | medical conditions      | substance use                   |
| date of birth (D.O.B.)       | middle initial          | zip code                        |
| email address                | occupation              |                                 |

Name Information	Address Information	Contact Information	Personal Information	Medical History Information
	<i>apartment or house number</i>			



## Matching Information

Match the information items on the left with the category on the right.

- |                                  |                        |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. González _____                | a. city                |
| 2. 6/11/1989 _____               | b. zip code            |
| 3. 4114 Broadway _____           | c. state               |
| 4. Long Beach _____              | d. last name           |
| 5. California _____              | e. date of birth (DOB) |
| 6. Rodrigo _____                 | f. telephone number    |
| 7. 90806 _____                   | g. signature           |
| 8. (562) 888-4999 _____          | h. address             |
| 9. <i>Rodrigo González</i> _____ | i. first name          |

## ↔ Communication Strategy

### Non-Verbal Communication (Facial Expressions)

When talking to a client, health care workers should be conscious of their facial expressions, including their eye contact. Facial expressions contribute to the meaning of what is said.

#### Emotions from Facial Expressions

disapproval/anger/disgust  
disinterest  
fear  
happiness  
interest  
pain  
sadness  
surprise/shock

#### Eye Contact

avoided  
direct  
inconsistent  
indirect  
prolonged



## ↔ Communication Strategy

### Greetings

A greeting is a friendly way to begin a conversation. In the health care field, it is normal for health care professionals to greet colleagues and clients the first time they see them at the beginning of a shift.

#### Formal

Good day.

Greetings!

Good morning/afternoon/evening.

Hello.

#### Informal

Hey!

Hi!

How's it going?

What's up?

*Nurse 1:* Hi, Abby. How's it going?

*Nurse 2:* Hey, Faith. We have a busy day ahead of us!

### Greetings

Identify whether each greeting is formal or informal. Circle the answer. Then write a response for each greeting.

1. Hi, Ivan. I heard you got a promotion last week. formal / informal

\_\_\_\_\_.

2. Good morning, Mrs. Fultz. Did you sleep well? formal / informal

\_\_\_\_\_.

3. Hello, Dr. Milton. How are you today? formal / informal

\_\_\_\_\_.

4. How's it going, José? What's new? formal / informal

\_\_\_\_\_.

## Communication Strategy

### Small Talk and Follow-Up Questions

Natural conversations have a flow. They start with a topic and expand (get longer and more interesting). One way to expand a conversation is with more questions. Follow-up questions are the second, third, and other questions that you ask about one topic. It is good to ask follow-up questions during small talk with clients, during discussions in a class, or when you are getting to know someone better.

You can use yes-no questions or you can use general information questions using *Who*, *What*, *When*, *Where*, *Why*, or *How* (*Wh*- questions).

#### Yes-No Questions

*“My son was here yesterday to visit me.”*

- Is he your only child?
- Are you happy that he came?
- Do you like to have visitors?
- Does he have children?
- Can you tell me about him?
- Will he come again?

#### Wh- Questions

*“I am from Manila.”*

- Who else from your family is in the United States?
- What is the weather like in Manila?
- When did you leave there?
- Where is Manila?
- Why did you want to leave Manila?
- How is life different in the Philippines?

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### Sentence Completion

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Complete the sentences with an appropriate question word.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ they your son’s children or your daughter’s children?
2. \_\_\_\_\_ she want to move here to be with you?
3. \_\_\_\_\_ you mind telling me the story?
4. \_\_\_\_\_ kind of food does he like?
5. \_\_\_\_\_ did your daughter move away?

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## Dialogue Completion

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Read the dialogues, and add two follow-up questions.

1. A: Are you from a big city?

B: No, I'm not.

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2. A: What are you going to do after you're discharged?

B: I'm going to relax.

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3. A: What happened?

B: I lost my glasses!

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## Dialogue Practice

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Compare your answers with a partner. Then practice each of your dialogues, asking and answering questions.

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## Following Up

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Ask your partner these questions. Listen to the answer. Then ask a follow-up question, listen to the answer, and ask another follow-up question.

**Partner A**

1. How many people are in your family?
2. Where have you traveled?
3. Can you play any sports?
4. What is your favorite food?

**Partner B**

1. Where is your favorite place to travel?
2. How long have you been in the United States?
3. What kind of music do you like?
4. Do you like spicy food?

## Pronunciation: Intonation in *Wh*- Questions

*Wh*- questions require longer answers. They always start with a question word. *Wh*- questions can be affirmative or negative. Listen to your instructor read the *wh*- questions. Does the intonation (the “pitch” of the voice) go up (↗) or down (↘)?

1. Where was the accident?
2. When can you sign the form?
3. Which book do you want your wife to bring from home?
4. Why was the cafeteria empty this evening?
5. Who came to visit?

Rule: In American English, *wh*- questions usually end in falling intonation (↘).

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### Falling Intonation

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Ask the *wh*- questions using falling intonation. Take turns asking and answering.

1. How did you sleep last night?
2. Who taught you how to give an injection?
3. When did you have your surgery?
4. Why are you always so happy?
5. How many nurses are going to take care of me today?
6. Which area of the hospital is the most interesting?
7. What time is it?
8. Where is a good place to put this photo of my family?
9. Whose work station is the farthest?
10. When is dinner time?

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## Writing Questions

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Write four *wh*- questions, and then ask them to a partner.

1. What \_\_\_\_\_?
2. When \_\_\_\_\_?
3. Where \_\_\_\_\_?
4. Who \_\_\_\_\_?

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## Small Talk

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Read the yes-no question, answer *yes*, and then write a follow-up *wh*- question with a partner. The first one has been done for you as an example.

1. Do you watch TV? (↗) *What's your favorite show?* (↘) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Does he greet you every morning? (↗) \_\_\_\_\_?
3. Is your son married? (↗) \_\_\_\_\_?
4. Do you have a middle initial? (↗) \_\_\_\_\_?
5. Should we bring more bandages? (↗) \_\_\_\_\_?
6. Is she addicted to any substance? (↗) \_\_\_\_\_?
7. Can you name the specialty you are most interested in right now? (↗) \_\_\_\_\_?
8. Do you want juice with your meal? (↗) \_\_\_\_\_?
9. Have you met your specialist? (↗) \_\_\_\_\_?

## Review

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### Dialogue Review

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Review the dialogue on page 11. As you read, follow the directions. Then compare your marks with a partner.

- Underline the **Filling Out Forms** terms.
- Circle the **Small Talk Comments**.
- Box the **Greetings**.

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### Role Plays: Interacting with Clients

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Work with a partner. Read each situation, and develop dialogues to perform for the class.

1. A nursing assistant greets the supervisor at the beginning of a shift and makes small talk.
2. A client doesn't talk much, but shows facial expressions of disinterest, sadness, fear, and pain while a nurse is talking.
3. An allergist greets a client, introduces him/herself, and asks questions and follow-up questions about the client's allergies.
4. A nurse learns that one client is a professional singer. The nurse makes small talk and asks follow-up questions.
5. One nurse greets another nurse who has just returned from a two-week vacation.
6. A nurse is helping a client fill out a form. The nurse asks about the client's current medications, substance use, and medical conditions.
7. A client avoids eye contact and does not use small talk with a nurse's aide who is trying to fill out a form.

## End-of-Unit Discussion

### Sharing

Discuss the questions with a small group.

1. Which are easier for you—verbal cues (in response to something you hear) or non-verbal cues?
2. If you are making small talk with someone, what are your favorite topics?
3. What are some challenges you might have when you help clients fill out forms?
4. Do you think it is necessary to introduce yourself to each client? What if you are only going to be in a client's room for a short time?

## Culture Point: Smiling

Read this story. Discuss it in small groups and as a class.

Nurse Gabrielle was teaching a client how to give himself injections of Vitamin B12. The client, Mr. Vong, was not doing a very good job. He seemed to be too nervous to learn. Gabrielle saw that he was smiling. She thought that he was not concentrating enough and didn't really want to learn. Their conversation follows.

*Gabrielle:* Mr. Vong. You need to be serious. It's very important for you to learn how to give yourself these injections.

*Mr. Vong:* I'm sorry, Ma'am (smiling).

*Gabrielle:* Maybe you need to try it with a different nurse.

Why was Gabrielle so frustrated with Mr. Vong?