

# Core Skills

College of Medicine and Public Health, Flinders University. Flinders Medical Centre.



## Communication Skills

Communication skills include traditional doctor-patient consultation, all communication between doctors and patients outside of the traditional consultation e.g. specific explanation of treatment options and seeking of consent, intraprofessional and interprofessional communications and communication between the medical profession and the public, such as in health education and advocacy.

Demonstrate by listening, sharing and responding, the ability to communicate clearly, sensitively and effectively with patients, their family/carers, doctors and other health professionals

Elicit patients' questions and their views, concerns and preferences, promote rapport, and ensure patients' full understanding of their problem(s) and the role of shared decision making

Able to discuss potentially sensitive and stigmatizing topics/issues, conducting consultations within emotionally laden situations

Demonstrates cultural safety through respect and responsiveness to the cultural context of individuals during consultation

Involve patients in decision-making and planning their treatment, especially communicating risk and benefits of management options

Culturally competent communication, including with an interpreter, with patients, their families and carers, who have a first language other than English

Provide information to patients, and family/carers where relevant, to enable them to make a fully informed choice among various diagnostic, therapeutic and management options

Retrieve, interpret and record information effectively in clinical data systems (both paper and electronic)

Communicate effectively with patients and colleagues by phone conversations, emails, fax, letters and other electronic media

Oral communication skills including oral case presentation, requesting consultations, oral handover using ISBAR, presenting in journal clubs, multidisciplinary, radiology and histopathology meetings

Written communication skills: documentation in the case note, referral letter, discharge summary, investigation request

Communicate effectively in wider roles including health advocacy, teaching, assessing and appraising



## History taking skills

Obtain an accurate, organised, detailed and problem-focused medical history, including family, social, occupational, psychiatric and lifestyle features, from the patient, and other sources.

- Focus on the patient's concerns and what may be causing their symptoms
- Incorporate both the medical and patient perspectives into history taking
- Modify history taking to fit the clinical context especially in medical emergency
- Take a history in more challenging circumstances such as from cognitively impaired patients
- Able to sort relevant from irrelevant information
- Efficiently process information to formulate differential diagnoses



## Examination Skills

Perform a full and accurate physical examination, including a mental state examination, or a problem-focused examination as indicated

Recognise and assess deteriorating and critically unwell patients  
Recognise and describe normal and abnormal findings

Clarify the problem(s) by adapting the examination according to the history obtained and clinical context

Cardiovascular system examination

Respiratory system examination

Abdominal examination including digital rectal examination

Thyroid examination

Examination of lymph nodes and lumps

Musculoskeletal examination

Neurological examination including cranial and peripheral nerves

Skin examination

Breast examination

Penis, scrotum, testes examination

Peripheral vascular system examination

Ear, nose and throat examination including use of an anoscope/otoscope

Eye exam including visual acuity, visual fields, pupillary function, eye movements, optic fundus and disc using, eyelid retraction/eversion and slit lamp examination

Gynaecological examination including bimanual vaginal and speculum examination

Examination of the pregnant woman

Examination of newborns, babies and children including developmental assessment

Mental status examination

Assess suicide risk, violence risk

Assess pain status

## Procedural Skills

Obtain core competencies for the following skills

Administration of injections: IV, IM, SC

Blood glucose monitoring

Vaccinations of infants and children

Venepuncture including blood culture technique

Insertion of intravenous cannula, set up an intravenous infusion

Arterial blood gas sampling Insertion of urinary catheters (male and female)

Insertion of nasogastric tubes

Oxygen administration, nebuliser administration

Recognise an obstructed airway and secure and maintain a clear airway using basic life support (BLS) measures and Guedel airway

Recognise inadequate breathing and effectively artificially ventilate an unconscious patient using a self-inflating resuscitator (e.g. Laerdal bag)

Insert a laryngeal mask airway (LMA) for artificial ventilation

Understand the indications and steps in endotracheal intubation

Urine dipstick, microscopy examination, urine pregnancy test, explain and obtain MSU specimen

Faecal occult blood testing

Undertake a 12 lead ECG

Peak flow meter and bed side

spirometry measurement, inhaler/spacer use

Throat and nasopharyngeal swab

Endocervical & vaginal swab

Urethral swab

Cervical smear

Hand hygiene, infection control, no touch, surgical scrub and gown and aseptic/sterile technique. Universal precautions including use of sharps, safe clean up and disposal

Wound swab, wound dressings, clean and debride a wound

Incision and drainage of abscesses

Use of local anaesthetic

Primary wound closure, using steristrips, tissue adhesive and sutures removal of sutures and staples

Skin biopsy and simple skin lesion excision

Application of slings: triangular, collar and cuff

Bandaging

Lower limb plastering and splintage (precautions and after care)

Upper limb plastering and splintage

Eye drop/ointment administration, fluorescein staining, eye bandage application/padding

Normal vaginal delivery

Observe and understand the following procedures:

Abdominal paracentesis

Joint aspiration and injection

Lumbar puncture

Thoracontesis

Prescribe, check and administer blood products

Reduction of joint dislocation

CPAP administration

Suprapubic catheterisation and catheter exchange

Remove corneal foreign body, eye irrigation

External auditory canal irrigation, ear wick insertion

Epistaxis management, anterior rhinoscopy and anterior nasal pack insertion



## Clinical Reasoning and Management Skills

Clinical reasoning incorporates the skills and processes from initial inquiry and data gathering and through ongoing critical analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, to gather and use relevant information and evidence to translate a patient's presentations into a coherent diagnostic formulation or diagnosis and management plan.

### Common Clinical Presentations

The common clinical presentations that students should see and be familiar with:

Abdominal pain

Abdominal swelling or mass

Abnormal vaginal bleeding

Abnormal Pap smear

Aphasia / Dysphasia (Receptive, expressive, articulation)

Anorexia

Anxiety and panic

Back pain

Balance or gait disorder

Behavioural problem (adult and child)

Bone pain

Burns and scalds

Chest pain

Claudication

Collapse (conscious and unconscious)

Confusion and/or disorientation

Constipation

Cough

Delirium

Developmental delay in child

Diarrhoea (acute and chronic)

Dizziness

Dyspepsia

Ear pain and/or discharge

Epistaxis

Eye- Vision loss (acute and chronic)

Eye- Red eye

Eye- Painful eye

Faecal incontinence

Fall (recurrent falls)

Fatigue

Fever

Goitre

Groin swelling or pain

Haematemesis

Haematuria

Haemoptysis

Headache

Hearing Impairment

Cardiac arrest

Indigestion/Reflux

Irritable infant

Itch (generalised and local)

Jaundice

Joint pain (generalised and local)

Joint swelling or red, hot, painful joints

Lacerations and abrasions

Limb pain Loss or altered conscious state

Lump – Breast, neck and other sites

Lymphadenopathy (generalised and local)

Melaena

Mood disorders

Movement disorders

Myalgia

Nausea and vomiting

Neck pain

Neurological dysfunction or deficit (motor)

Neurological dysfunction or deficit (sensory)

Obesity

Pallor

Pelvic pain

Peripheral oedema

Pruritus

Psychotic episode

Rash

Rectal bleeding

Scrotal swelling or pain

Seizure

Shock

Shortness of breath, dyspnoea

Skin infection or infestation

Skin lesions

Snoring

Speech disorder

Suicide (including drug overdose)

Swallowing difficulty / Dysphagia

Syncope

Throat – Pain, mass

Tinnitus

Trauma

Tremor

Ulceration (specify site)

Upper airway obstruction

Upper or lower limb fracture

### Urinary Symptom

- Dysuria and frequency

- Incontinence

- Voiding difficulties

- Nocturia

- Oliguria and anuria

- Polyuria

- Proteinuria

Vertigo

Visual Disturbance

Weakness

Weight change

Wheeze



### Care Planning Skills

Integrate and interpret findings from the history and examination, to arrive at an initial assessment including a relevant differential diagnosis

Discriminate between possible differential diagnoses, justify the decisions taken and describe the processes for evaluating these

Make clinical judgements and decisions based on the available evidence. Identify and justify relevant management options alone or in conjunction with multi-disciplinary colleagues including the formulation of an appropriate management plan

Integrate prevention, early detection, health maintenance and chronic condition management where relevant into clinical practice

Demonstrate a patient-centred approach using strategies to support patient management and self-care

Explain the pathogenesis of common and critical diseases and how these manifest as symptoms and signs

Explain the scientific basis of medical investigations for common and critical conditions.



### Diagnostic Skills

Select and justify common investigations, with regard to the pathological basis of disease, utility, safety and cost effectiveness, and interpret the following common investigation results

- Plain chest and abdominal X-ray
- Basic CT scan (head, chest, abdomen and pelvic)
- Ultrasound associated with common medical: surgical, obstetric, gynaecological conditions
- ECG
- Understand the basic echocardiogram report
- ABGs
- Pulmonary function tests
- Interpret common investigations including full blood count and blood film, coagulation study, iron study, biochemistry, liver function tests and thyroid function tests
- Interpret common microbiology, immunology, and histopathology results



### Medical Emergencies Skills

Recognise and assess deteriorating and critically unwell patients who require immediate care. Perform common emergency and life support procedures, including caring for the unconscious patient and performing CPR.

Basic life support	Management of acute respiratory failure
Advanced life support	Management of acute abdomen
Management of acute asthma	Management of large GI bleeding
Management of acute myocardial infarction (STEMI and NSTEMI)	Management of shock
Management of acute pulmonary oedema	Management of hypoglycaemia
Management of arrhythmias (rapid atrial fibrillation, heart block, supraventricular tachycardia, ventricular tachycardia & fibrillation)	Management of sepsis
Management of anaphylaxis	The principles of acute poisoning management
Management of convulsion	Management of acute psychosis and of self-harm
	Understand the principles of the management of obstetric emergencies and newborn resuscitation



### Prescribing Skills

Prescribe medications safely, effectively and economically using objective evidence

Safely administer other therapeutic agents including fluid, electrolytes, blood products and selected inhalational agents

Knowledge of pharmacology of commonly prescribed medications and safe therapeutic practice in the selection, monitoring and application of drug therapy

Prescription writing in ambulatory care or general practice

Prescription writing in hospital practice including national hospital drug chart

Discharge medications

Drug level monitoring

Prescribing regulations & drug subsidy schemes

Prescribing scheduled drugs



### Professionalism and Teamwork Skills

#### Professionalism

Place the needs and safety of patients at the centre of the care process

Demonstrate safety skills including infection control, blood product safety, adverse event reporting and effective clinical handover

Accept responsibility to protect and advance the health and wellbeing of individuals, communities and populations

Provide care to all patients according to "Good Medical Practice: A Code of Conduct for Doctors in Australia"

Demonstrate professional values including commitment to high quality clinical standards, compassion, empathy, confidentiality and respect for all patients. Exhibit professional conduct that conforms with registration authority standards

Demonstrate the qualities of integrity, honesty, leadership and partnership to patients, the profession and society and act to ensure safe patient care

Describe the principles and practice of professionalism and leadership in health care

Demonstrate awareness of factors that affect doctors' health and wellbeing, including fatigue, stress management and infection control, to mitigate health risks of professional practice

Recognise your own health needs, when to consult and follow advice of a health professional and identify risks posed to patients by your own health

Identify the boundaries that define professional and therapeutic relationships and demonstrate respect for these in clinical practice

Demonstrate awareness of and explain the options available when personal values or beliefs may influence patient care, including the obligation to refer to another practitioner

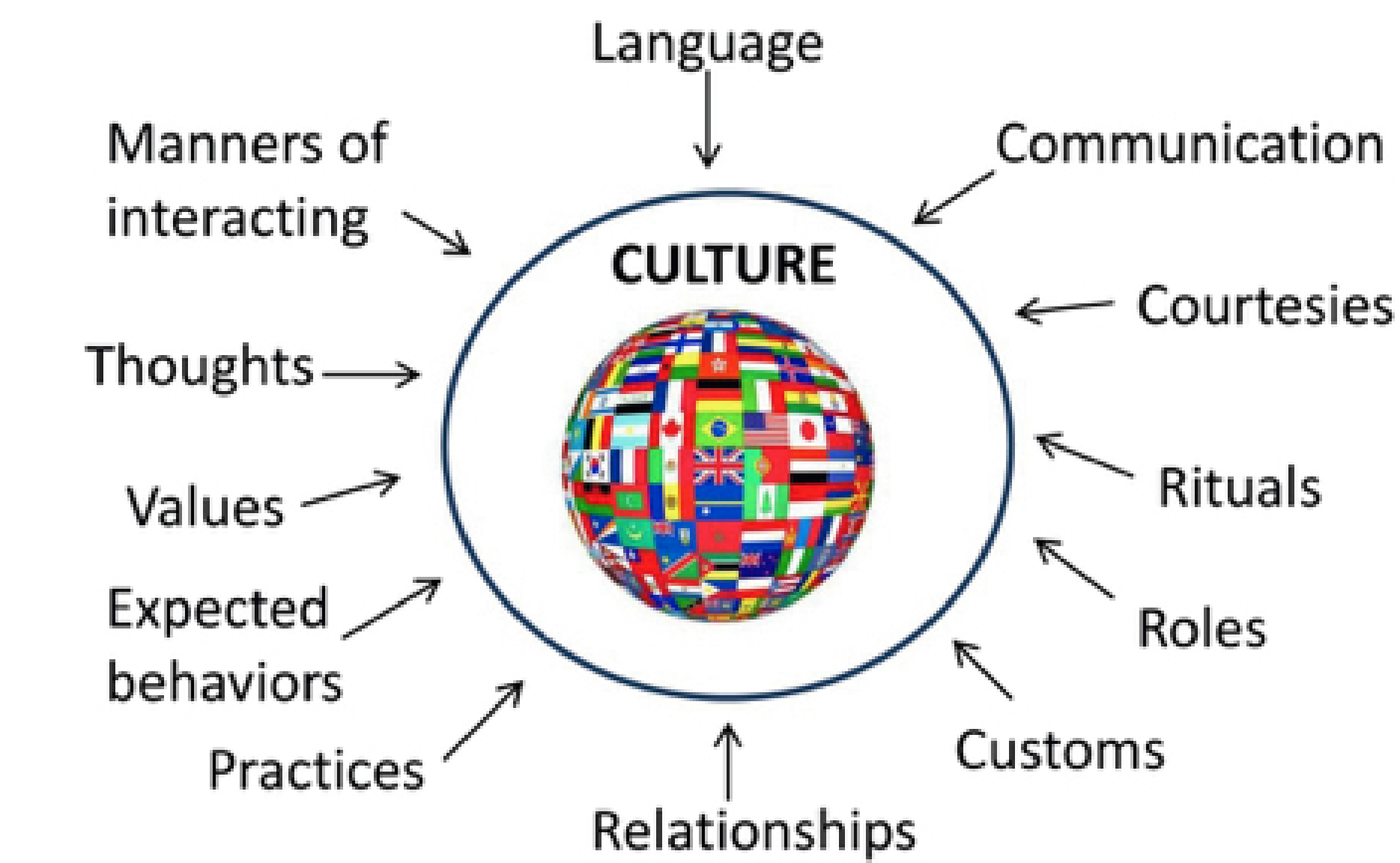
Understand the nature of teams and teamwork

Describe and respect the roles and expertise of other health care professionals, and demonstrate ability to learn and work effectively as a member of an inter-professional team or other professional group

Self-evaluate your own professional practice; demonstrate lifelong learning behaviours and fundamental skills. Adapt to new technologies and systems

Recognise own limitations as a medical student and ask for help when needed

Identify personal behaviours important for patient safety and quality and involve other professionals as needed to contribute to patient care



### Cultural Competency Skills

Explain factors that contribute to the health, illness, disease and success of treatment of populations, including issues relating to health inequities and inequalities, diversity of cultural, spiritual and community values, and socio-economic and physical environment factors

Understand and describe the factors that contribute to the health and wellbeing of different peoples notably Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and/or Māori, including history, spirituality and relationship to land, diversity of cultures and communities, epidemiology, social and political determinants of health and health experiences

Describe health and illness models across diverse cultures

Demonstrate effective and culturally competent communication and care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and/or Māori

Understand and practice the principles of cultural safety

### Medicolegal and Ethic Skills

Explain factors that contribute to the health, illness, disease and success of treatment of populations, including issues relating to health inequities and inequalities, diversity of cultural, spiritual and community values, and socio-economic and physical environment factors. Describes the social, economic, geographical, and political factors that affect health care system design and delivery.

Communicate effectively in wider roles including health advocacy, teaching, assessing and appraising.

Describe the attributes of the national systems of health care including those that pertain to the health care of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and/or Maori.

Explain the main principles of ethical practice and apply these to scenarios in clinical practice. Communicate effectively about ethical issues with patients, family and other health care professionals.

Describe and apply the fundamental legal responsibilities of health professionals especially those relating to ability to complete relevant certificates and documents, informed consent, duty of care to patients and colleagues, privacy, confidentiality, mandatory reporting and notification. Demonstrate awareness of financial and other conflicts of interest. Describe situations that override the duty of confidentiality, including mandatory reporting and notifiable diseases. Explain the challenges of balancing available limited resources with safe quality health care for patients.



### Health Care System

Describe a systems approach to improving the quality and safety of health care

Understand and describe the roles and relationships between health agencies and services, and explain the principles of efficient and equitable allocation of finite resources, to meet individual, community and national health needs

Describe the attributes of national systems of health care including those that pertain to the health care of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and/or Maori

Demonstrate and understanding of global health issues and determinants of health and disease including their relevance to health care delivery in Australia and New Zealand and the broader Western Pacific region

Describes how public health approaches can be used to evaluate and manage community health

Describes the structure and function of the Australian health care system

Describes the social, economic, geographical, and political factors that affect health care system design and delivery

Explains the challenges of balancing available limited resources with safe quality health care for patients

Understands the health system sufficiently to advocate for patient needs, including patients from rural and remote communities

Analyses how continuity of care within the health systems affects the quality of patient care and health outcomes

Describes health system mechanisms for ensuring patient safety and quality