



Communicating for Success

BUILDING BLOCK FOR SUCCESS - reusable across all programs

Applies to: Cosmetology, Barbering, Esthetics, and Nail Technology

Suggested time: 2.5 hours (theory, role-play, and practice)

How to use this plan: The lines under "Say" are scripted word for word so every class hears the same information - read them aloud. *Italic in brackets is what you do.* The jade "Teaching move" names the method; the "Students" line is their involvement.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Explain why communication is a core professional skill.
- Carry out an effective client consultation.
- Use active listening and handle an unhappy client professionally.
- Communicate respectfully with coworkers and management.

Materials and Equipment

- SGS chapter slide deck, projector, and whiteboard
- Sample consultation cards and client intake forms
- Role-play scenario cards (client looks and complaint situations)
- Student workbook or chapter handout

Key Terms

communication, client consultation, active listening, open-ended question, reflective listening, contraindication, client expectations, complaint resolution, professional boundaries.

Lesson Sequence

1. Opening Hook - 10 min

Teaching move: *Surprising hook that reframes the skill.*

SAY (read aloud):

Let me tell you the number-one reason clients leave a stylist - and it is not a bad haircut. It is feeling like they were not listened to. You can have all the technical skill in the world, but if you cannot communicate, you will lose clients. The good news? Communication is a skill, and we can learn it. Today we do.

- **Students:** share a time good or bad communication changed how they felt about a service.

2. Communication Basics - 10 min

Teaching move: *Define verbal and nonverbal simply.*

SAY (read aloud):

Communication is simply sharing information so that both people understand. It is verbal - your words and your tone - and nonverbal - your face, your posture, your eye contact. In our chair, the client is often nervous about a big change. Your calm, clear communication is what puts them at ease and builds trust before you



ever start.

- **Students:** name one nonverbal signal that makes a client feel comfortable.

3. The Client Consultation - 25 min

Teaching move: Teach the flow step by step; tie to safety.

SAY (read aloud):

The most important conversation you will have is the consultation, and it happens before every service. Here is the flow. First, greet the client warmly and ask what they have in mind using open-ended questions - 'Tell me about the look you are going for,' not just a yes-or-no question. Second, listen and repeat it back: 'So you want to keep the length but add layers, is that right?' That is active listening, and it prevents mistakes.

Third, analyze the hair or skin and check for any contraindication - a condition that means you should not do the service. Fourth, give your honest professional recommendation, and make sure your picture of the result and theirs match before you begin. Never pick up a tool until you both see the same picture.

- **Students:** write the first two open-ended questions they would ask a new client.

4. Active Listening and Unhappy Clients - 20 min

Teaching move: Tell-show-do with a role-play.

SAY (read aloud):

Even when you do everything right, sometimes a client is unhappy, and how you handle it decides whether you keep them. The steps: stay calm, listen all the way through without defending yourself, repeat back what they are unhappy about so they feel heard, apologize for their experience, and offer a solution.

[Set up a short role-play; you play the unhappy client.] Watch how I want this handled - notice I am not interrupted and not argued with. Then you will practice it.

- **Students:** role-play handling an unhappy client in pairs, then debrief what worked.

5. Communicating With the Team - 15 min

Teaching move: Extend communication to the workplace.

SAY (read aloud):

Communication is not only with clients. You will work alongside coworkers and a manager, and the salon runs on respect. That means being honest, being on time, not gossiping, handling disagreements privately and calmly, and keeping professional boundaries. The professional who lifts the team up is always the one who gets the opportunities.

- **Students:** name one way to show respect to a coworker during a busy day.

6. Activity - Mock Consultation - 15 min

Teaching move: Apply the full skill in pairs.

SAY (read aloud):

Now you run one. *[Pair up and hand out scenario cards.]* One of you is the client with the look on the card, the other is the professional. Run the full consultation: open-ended questions, repeat it back, check for contraindications, and agree on the result. Then switch roles.



- **Students:** perform a full mock consultation, then switch roles.

7. Recap and Closing - 10 min

Teaching move: Recap the flow, then motivate.

SAY (read aloud):

Let's recap. Communication is verbal and nonverbal, and it builds trust. The consultation flow is: ask open-ended questions, repeat it back, check for contraindications, and agree on the result before you start. With an unhappy client: stay calm, listen, repeat, apologize, solve. Do this well, and clients will follow you anywhere.

- **Students:** recite the consultation flow from memory with a partner.

Assessment

- Performance: consultation role-play graded with the SGS consultation rubric.
- Written: quiz on the consultation flow and complaint-resolution steps.
- Verbal: participation in role-plays and discussion.

Assignment

Read Communicating for Success and complete the workbook. Write the consultation flow and the five complaint-resolution steps from memory.

Instructor Notes and Safety

Model a real consultation yourself before students try it.

Tie this directly to the consultation and analysis content in Infection Control and in every service chapter.