

## Component 16- Professionalism/Customer Service in the Health Environment

### Unit 9- Personal Communications and Professionalism

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## Objectives

- Describe appropriate use of personal communication devices in the healthcare workplace
- Discuss the impact of inappropriate use of personal communication devices in the healthcare workplace
- Identify the differences between personal and professional communications

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2

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## Definitions

- Business Communications
- Personal Communications
- Text Messaging and Email
- Social Media
- Internet Use
- Communication Devices
  - Work-supplied
  - Personal

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Version 2.0/Spring 2011

3

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## Definitions

### Business Communications

- Any communication, regardless of device, that is necessary for the execution of your professional responsibilities

### Personal Communications

- Any communication, regardless of device, with friends, family or others that is not related to the execution of your professional responsibilities

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Version 2.0/Spring 2011

4

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## Definitions

### Text Messaging and Email

- Short text communications sent from one communication device to another for either professional or personal purposes

### Social Media

- Web-based technologies for social interaction and communication, including video, images, text and sound
- User-generated content

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5

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## Definitions

### Internet Use

- The use of computers and other communication devices for accessing Web-based information, resources and tools for either professional or personal purposes

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6

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## Definitions

### Communication Devices

- Devices which are used to relay information through a particular channel (phones, computer email, pagers) from a sender to a receiver

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7

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## Business Communications

- Communications that occur as you execute your professional responsibilities
- Professional in tone, content and demeanor
- Clear, concise and respectful

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8

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## Business Communications

- Includes communications that take place outside the workplace, if they are job related
- Includes verbal (face-to-face and phone), written and electronic communications
- Should not be intimidating, inappropriate or emotional

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9

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### Personal Communications During Work Hours

- Excessive use of any devices for personal communications will interfere with your productivity
- Can also be distracting and annoying to others in your workplace, negatively impacting their productivity
- A reasonable standard is one to two personal communications per day

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### Personal Communications During Work Hours

- Should only occur during lunch or breaks
- Be sure to make family and friends aware of and respect your organization's policy
- Includes the use of social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, cell phones, email, text messaging and Internet use

Component 16/Unit 9 Health IT Workforce Curriculum 11  
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### Text Messaging and Email

- May be used for professional communications, as directed by your organization
- Should not be used during meetings or when speaking to a colleague either face-to-face or on the phone

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## Text Messaging and Email

- Text messaging
  - Write in clear and concise manner
  - Use commonly accepted abbreviations and notations only when necessary
- Email messages
  - Do NOT use text-message abbreviations or notations
  - Write in a professional, clear and concise manner
- Avoid the use of emoticons

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13

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## Social Media

- Can be a wonderful way to stay connected to family and friends
- Not appropriate to use social media in the professional setting, unless directed by your organization for work purposes
- Some organizations have fired employees who
  - Made inappropriate personal postings that were generally accessible
  - Made negative comments about their workplace
  - Were active on social media sites when off work due to illness

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Version 2.0/Spring 2011

14

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## Internet Use

- May be a common means of communication in your workplace
- Should always be used in an informed and responsible way, according to your organization's policy
- What you say and do online will reflect positively or negatively on your organization and you

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15

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## Internet Use

- Uploading and downloading of materials should be done in accordance with organizational policies, intellectual property rights and copyright laws
- Should not be used for non-work related purposes during the work day
- Inappropriate use can result in disciplinary action, loss of your job or legal action against you

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16

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## Communication Devices

- Includes telephones, fax machines, copiers, personal computers, cell phones, Blackberries, smart phones, iPads, and personal digital assistants
- Also includes pen and paper

Should never be used while driving!

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Version 2.0/Spring 2011

17

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## Work-Supplied Communication Devices

- Are the property of your organization
- They are supplied to you for the purposes of executing your professional responsibilities
- May be monitored to ensure they are used within acceptable guidelines
- There should be no expectation of privacy regarding their use or content

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18

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**Work-Supplied  
Communication Devices**

- Should not be used for personal communications, except in emergencies
- Should not be used to communicate with anyone in an unprofessional manner
- Inappropriate use could result in disciplinary action or losing your job

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**Special Concerns in Healthcare**

- Healthcare organizations have concerns about communication devices that other organizations don't share
- It is the responsibility of every professional in the healthcare environment to be aware of these concerns and to comply with guidelines and policies

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**Camera/Video Phones**

- Should not be used in the workplace
- Could violate the privacy of patients as well as other employees
- Inappropriate use can increase risk to your organization
- May be expressly forbidden by your organization's policies

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## Electromagnetic Interference (EMI)

- Definition
  - A disturbance affecting an electrical device due to an electromagnetic emitting external device
- Can obstruct or interfere with the normal functioning of a electrical device, such as a pacemaker, insulin pump or patient monitor
- Cell phones, pagers and other devices can cause EMI

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22

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## Electromagnetic Interference (EMI)

- Hospitals and clinics must protect patients who have implanted devices or who are using other medical devices from EMI
- Cell phones and some other communication devices must be turned off in sensitive patient areas
- Be aware of signage and policies about where cell phones and devices should be turned off in your organization

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23

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## Summary

- Communication is a critical component of your professional responsibilities
- How well you communicate and in what manner will reflect on you as a professional
- Remember, excessive personal communication during the work day is considered unprofessional

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24

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## Summary

- Read your organization's policy on the use of communication devices, Internet, social media, or any other means, and be sure to follow it
- Compliance will enhance your professionalism
- Be aware that violations can have serious consequences

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Version 2.0/Spring 2011

25

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