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Teaching and Assessing Communication Skills

One of the features of Primary Health Care (PHC) that makes it different from the medical care model is the emphasis on communication. Many of the parts of PHC simply cannot take place unless the health workers are effective communicators. Examples of situations where communication is necessary include all aspects of health education, encouraging community participation, developing intersectoral cooperation and sharing knowledge about health so that individual people can take more responsibility for looking after themselves. The emphasis on these areas is comparatively new; however medical care has always been more successful where there has been effective communication between the patient and the doctor or nurse. Therefore

Communication skills are essential skills in providing health care

This chapter will discuss how these skills can be taught and assessed. But first the skills themselves will be described.

Figure 12.1 ‘Communication skills are essential skills in providing health care’