

# Developing Intercultural Competence



## Background

The Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) exists to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the public, and is responsible for the registration and quality standards of all nurses and midwives in the UK. They ensure that nurses and midwives have up-to-date skills and knowledge and have processes in place to investigate any allegations made against nurses and midwives practising in the UK.

The EU and International team are responsible for influencing policy at an international level and aligning UK policy to European directives. They meet and liaise with Members of Parliament, Members of the European Commission and government officials on EU and international affairs such as EU policy issues. They also regularly attend large conferences and face-to-face meetings with European counterparts.

In early 2009, the NMC's Learning and Development Manager invited Communicaid to design a training solution that would enable this team to communicate more effectively and be more influential when working with European counterparts.

The NMC also wanted to make the training available for the International Registration team. This team is responsible for processing applications from around the world from individuals who want to register with the NMC as nurses in order to gain employment in the UK. They are sometimes required to inform prospective nurses, mainly by telephone or email, that their application has been denied or that they have failed to meet the criteria. Feedback suggested that Bulgarian and Romanian nurses were found to be particularly difficult to communicate with when given a negative response.

## Training Objectives

- To increase awareness of key cultural drivers when communicating or negotiating with nurses from other cultures
- To create more empathy between NMC staff and nurses from other cultures
- To expand the EU and International team's existing repertoire of influencing skills for a European context

- To provide practical communication skills to enable nurses and midwives to convey negative messages with more cultural sensitivity whether by email, telephone or face-to-face

## Challenges

The main challenges were seen as:

- Creating a training solution that would meet the needs of two distinctive job roles
- Designing a series of integrated training modules that could also stand alone
- Providing the appropriate balance between general principles of intercultural communication and knowledge of specific cultural groups
- Providing delegates with tangible skills to enable them to build rapport quickly with people from a wide range of cultural backgrounds



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## Training Approach

We agreed on a modular approach to enable delegates with different roles and requirements to attend the elements of the training relevant for their particular context. Two trainers were selected who were able to draw on their first hand experience as well as their expertise in the intercultural field. The core trainer had a background in health as well as many years' experience delivering intercultural training and coaching. The second trainer was a Bulgarian national with significant international experience enabling her to see her own nationality from an objective perspective.

## Proposed Solutions

The following interactive half day modules were designed:

- Developing Intercultural Competence
- Virtual Communication across Cultures: Telephone and Email
- Negotiating, Influencing and Networking across Cultures
- Understanding Bulgarian and Romanian Cultures

Case studies, role plays and other practical activities were incorporated throughout the sessions to ensure that learning was continually linked back to its application to the NMC's role and the work of its employees.

## Results

Delegates responded extremely positively to these sessions and appreciated receiving an expert response to their individual questions and challenges. They felt that the training would have an immediate impact on their daily job roles, particularly as the trainers had really understood the NMC context and tailored their materials accordingly. As a result, further programmes are being scheduled for the autumn.

## Client Feedback

"The team from Communicaid was extremely accommodating and provided a tailored solution that met the needs of different teams. They very quickly understood what we needed and all the sessions were tailored to our organisational requirements. Feedback from staff was excellent, the course was greatly appreciated and they were immediately able to put what they had learned into practice."

Doreen Miller

Learning & Development Manager  
Nursing & Midwifery Council

## Contact Details

For more information about how Communicaid can assist you and your organisation, please contact our Business Development Team:

T: +44 (0)20 3370 8580

F: +44 (0)20 3370 8501

E: [info@communicaid.com](mailto:info@communicaid.com)

W: [www.communicaid.com](http://www.communicaid.com)

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