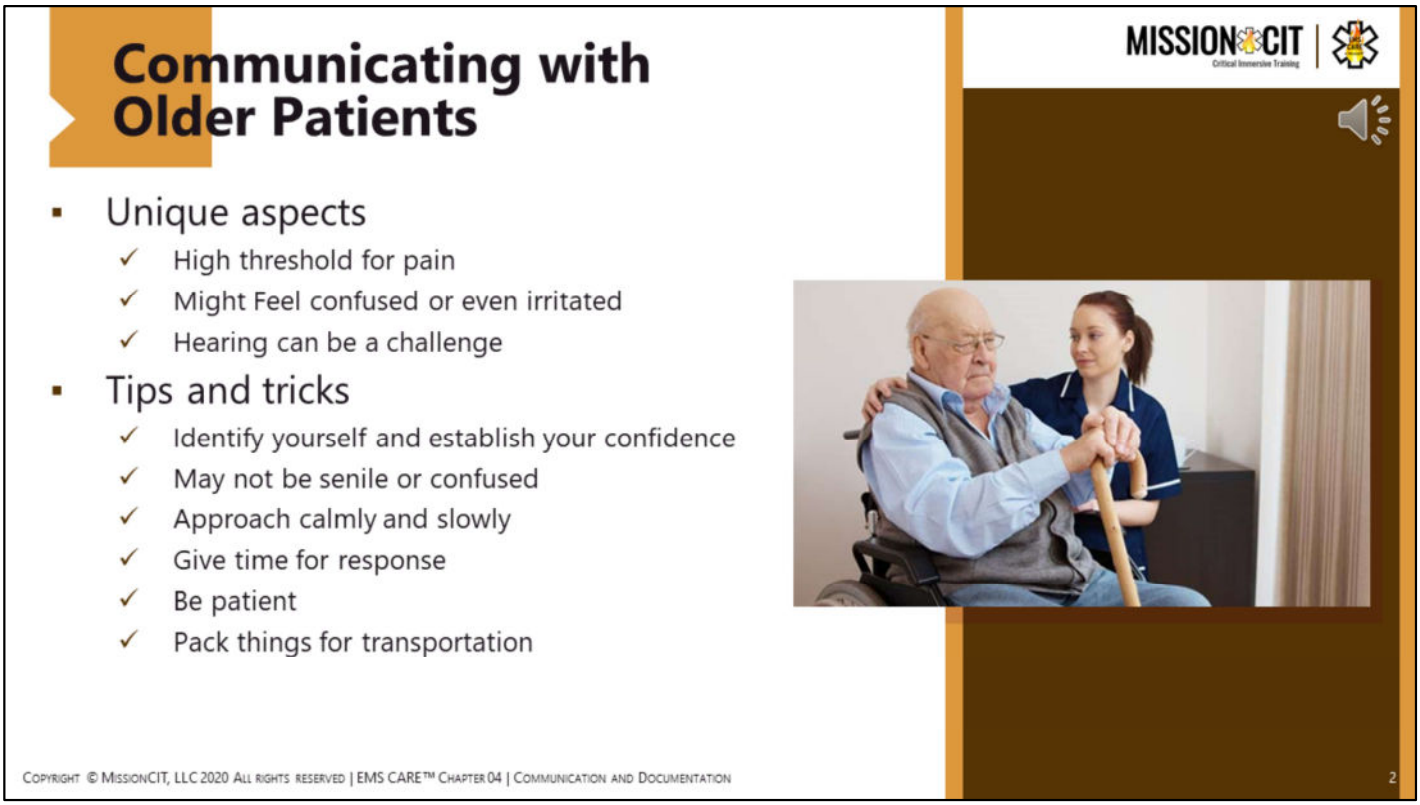



Thank you, Missah!

Welcome to this lesson where we talk about how you can effectively communicate with different groups of people.

As you know, not everyone has the same needs and expectations, so communication should also be geared to meet their individual needs. And that's exactly what we'll talk about in this lesson.

Let's jump in.




Older patients come with their share of problems. Some unique aspects of patient care for this group are:

- They tend to have a high threshold for pain, so you must watch out for signs such as inappropriate movements, difficulty moving their body parts, etc.
- They may feel confused or even irritated because of their ailments
- Hearing could be a challenge
- These seniors tend to be worried about their personal belongings, home, and pets, so be sensitive to their emotions

Here are some tips to keep in mind while communicating with older patients.

- Identify yourself and establish yourself as a confident and competent person who is good at providing prehospital care
- Never assume that older patients are always senile or confused. Make a judgment depending on the merits of the case
- Approach a senior calmly and slowly, and remember, they can take some time to warm up to you
- Give enough time for the patient to respond to your questions
- Be patient and repeat your question, if you have to
- If transporting a senior, give some time to pack a few extra things including their belongings
- Make sure you identify their medicines, glasses, dentures, etc, and help pack them before

transportation

Overall, these people have gone through a lot in life, so be considerate of their medical and emotional needs.

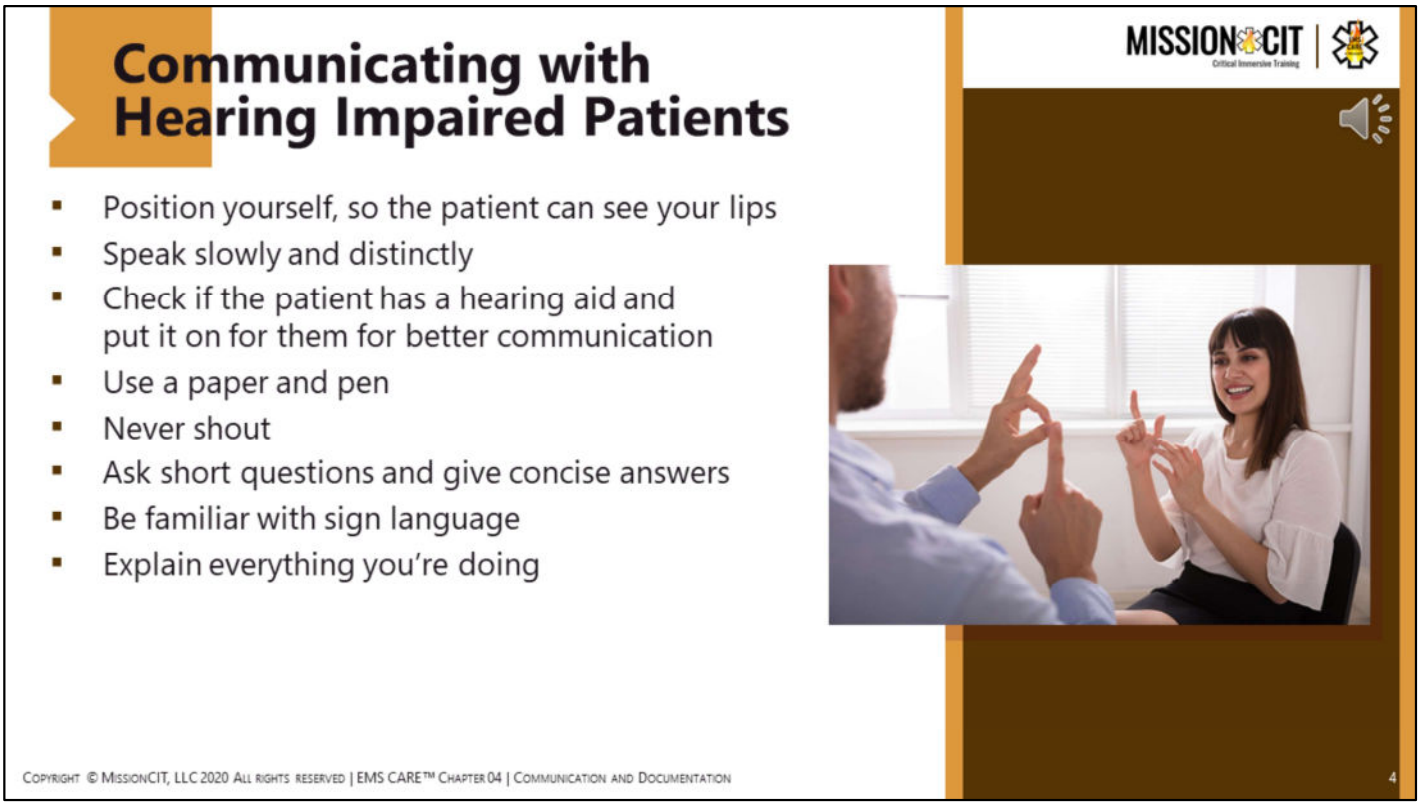



Next, let's move to another vulnerable age group, the children.

A common emotion you'll see about children is fear because they feel uncertain about their condition, your uniform, the ambulance, and possibly the extra attention they're getting.

To make them feel at ease and to help them tide through this situation,

- Maintain eye contact throughout
- Position yourself at the child's level to reduce their feeling of intimidation
- Talk to them in a professional and yet friendly way
- Be honest and tell them the situation gently as children can quickly see through lies that it, in turn, can impact the trust they have in you
- Tell the child ahead of time if something is going to hurt
- Be aware and respect the child's modesty
- If possible, allow a parent or a guardian to hold a child during the examination
- Let the children keep his or her favorite toy or blanket as this can soothe them greatly

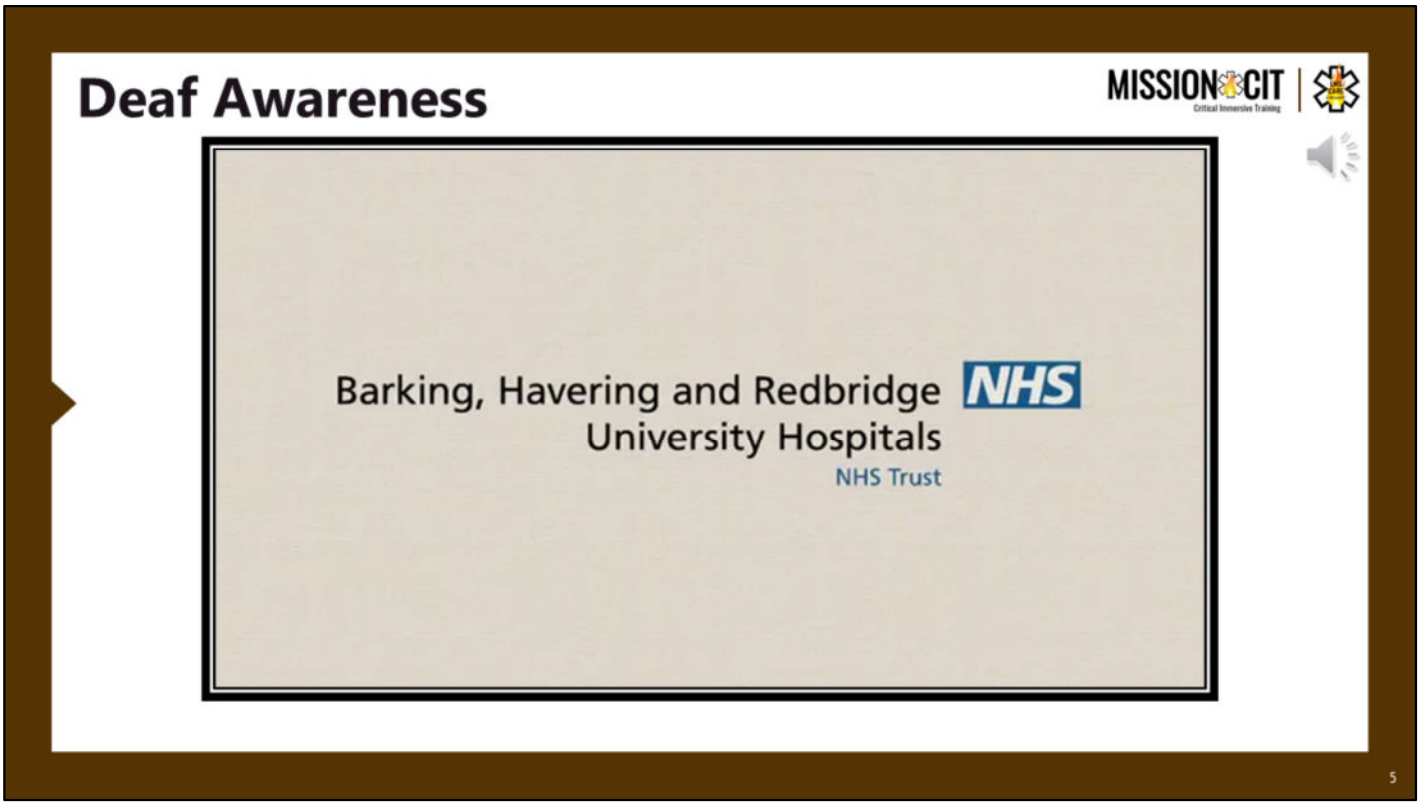



Communicating with hearing-impaired patients may require some extra time and effort as you may have to express using signs, especially if the patient is not wearing any hearing aids.

But remember, most of them have normal intelligence levels and can even understand with your lip movements. More often than not, their disability doesn't embarrass them either.

Below are some communicating strategies you can use to communicate with these patients.

- Position yourself, so the patient can see your lips. This is important as most patients will understand what you're saying through the lip movements. Speak slowly and distinctly
- Check if the patient has a hearing aid and put it on for them for better communication
- Use a paper and pen, if that works better
- Never shout
- Ask short questions and give concise answers
- It's good to be familiar with some basic sign language
- Explain everything you're doing



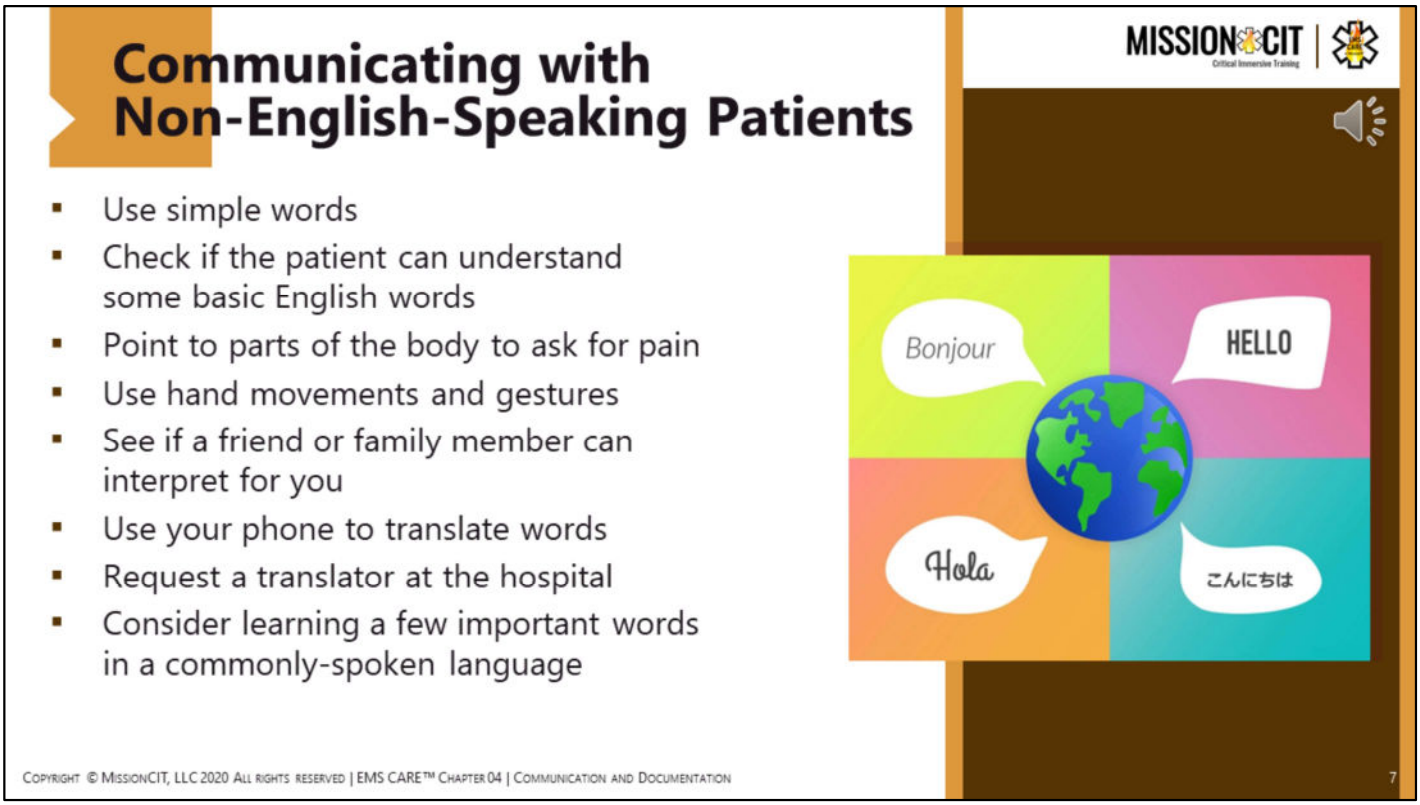

Here is a video on Deaf awareness detailing the tools and techniques for communicating with people with hearing loss.




Like hearing impaired patients, visually challenged patients also present communication difficulties. Of course, they can hear what you say for the most part and not all patients are completely blind. Also, more often than not, they have normal intelligence that helps them to perceive what you're saying.

Still, there are some challenges, and here are some things you can do to make life easy for them.

- Check the visibility levels of the patient
- Explain everything as you do
- It's important to be in physical contact with the person during the entire treatment
- If the patient can walk to the ambulance, hold his or her hand
- Make sure you transport aids such as a walking stick
- If the patient uses guide dogs, transport them as well. This removes stress for both the patient and the dog
- Otherwise, make alternative arrangements for the dog. Take the patient's suggestions for its care




You're likely to face communication challenges if the patient doesn't speak English. In such situations,

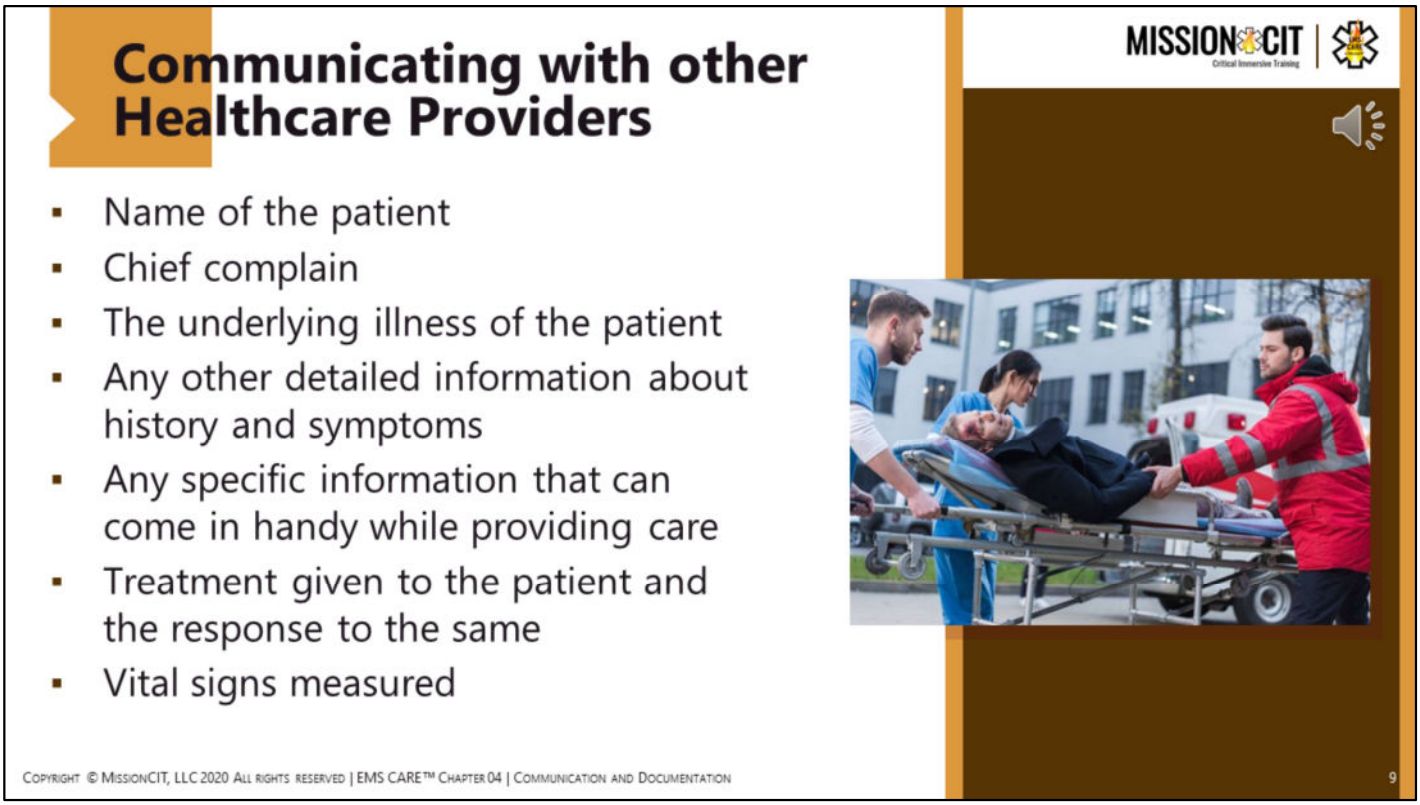
- Use simple words to communicate
- Check if the patient can understand some basic English words
- Point to parts of the body to ask for pain
- Use hand movements and gestures to communicate
- See if a friend or family member can interpret for you
- Use your phone to translate words
- Request a translator at the hospital
- Consider learning a few important words in a language that's commonly spoken in your area

# TeamSTEPPS: LEP: Opportunity



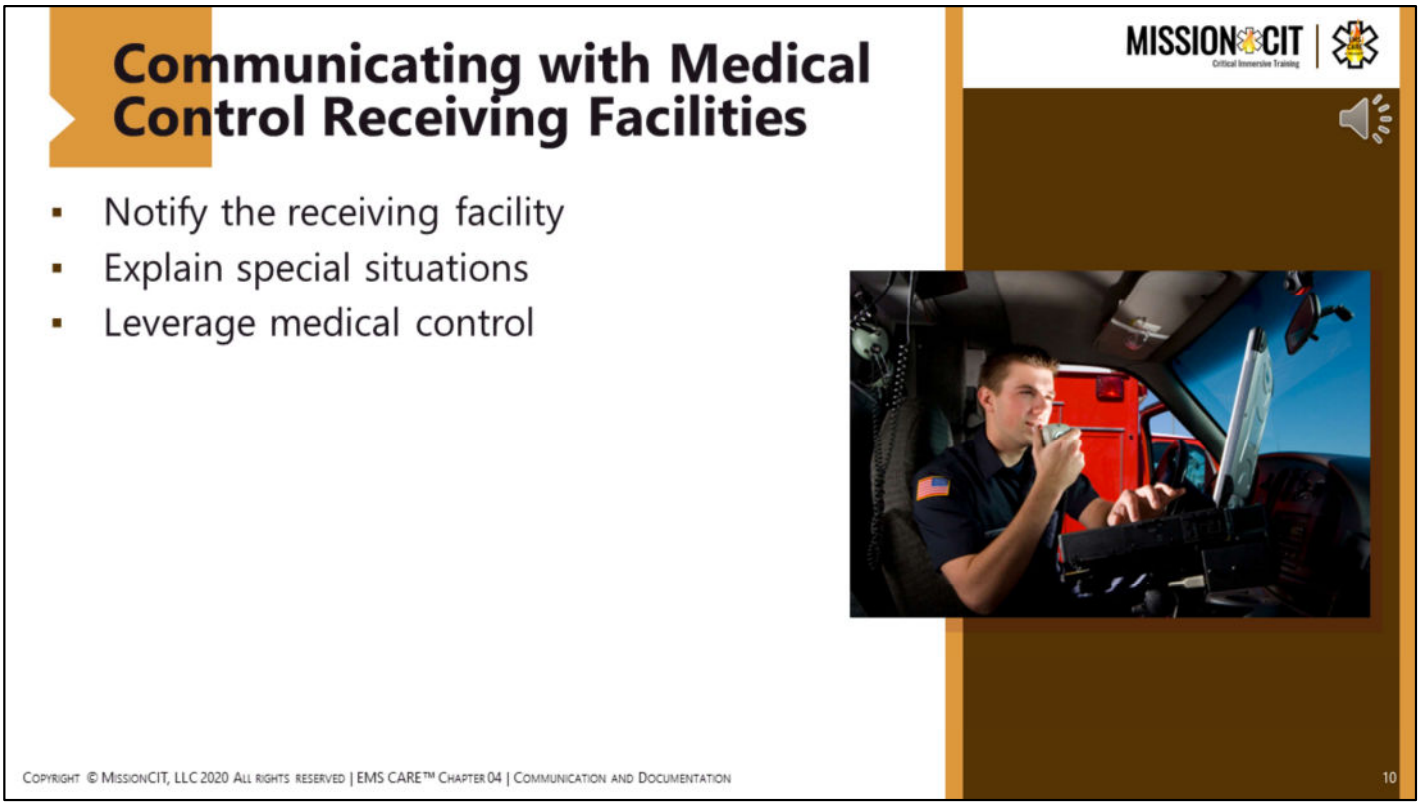



Here is a case scenario showing a lack of communication and ensuing errors related to language barriers.




Effective communication between the EMS provider and other healthcare professionals is critical to provide the best possible care for the patient. So, give an oral report to the healthcare provider at the receiving hospital, provided this person has at least the same training level as you. Your oral report must encompass the following:

- Name of the patient
- Chief complain about which you were called
- The underlying illness of the patient
- Any other detailed information about history and symptoms
- Any specific information that can come in handy while providing care
- Treatment given to the patient and the response to the same
- Vital signs that were measured




Before you transport a patient, notify the receiving healthcare facility of the patient's condition. Specifically, inform the facility of an incoming patient and give suggestions on some special situations or conditions that may require additional preparations.

Medical control can be an important source of information, so turn to it for any advice and follow the instructions given by the medical control carefully. Remember, this medical control can be located at the receiving hospital, another facility in the same city, or even a different city. Still, consulting with them can improve the quality of care provided, especially if you're in doubt.

With these words, we conclude this lesson, and in the next one, Missah will talk about interviewing and tips and tricks for conducting effective interviews.