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### Therapeutic Communication

Nursing is a profession that has numerous parts that go into it. Being familiar with various medications or knowing the anatomy of the human body is just as important as communicating with your fellow colleagues, and the patients we provide care for. Therapeutic communication is exceedingly important when we are communicating with our patients. When discussing the importance of therapeutic communication, the *Fundamentals of Nursing* textbook states “Nurses need to respond not only to the content of a client’s verbal message but also to the feelings expressed” (Berman, et al., 418). In many situations during everyday life, people usually do not exactly say what they are feeling internally. Therapeutic communication plays a vital when reading a person; we should listen to the words a patient is saying, but their body language gives off more information than their actual words. In the *Fundamentals of Nursing* textbook, the authors discuss how as a nurse, we should give patients ample amounts of time to process a life altering event when they say “Sometimes clients need time to deal with their feelings” (Berman, et al, 419). When things in a hospital get hectic, I assume that some things can get overlooked. When dealing with a patient, we should be consistent with our care; it does not matter if we are having a good day or a bad one, we need to be present when we are in the room, and we need to recognize when a patient is feeling other emotions than what they are speaking aloud.

### **Analysis of Therapeutic Techniques**

There are many therapeutic communication techniques that help a nurse get to know a patient, these techniques will help develop a productive relationship, and will lead to finding out the reason the patient is seeking medical attention. One technique that lets the patient tell their story in detail is open-ended questions. These are typically general questions that you ask the patient, in hopes that they will further explain what they are feeling. The main goal when using this technique is to form these open-ended questions in a way that cannot be answered by a simple “yes” or a “no.” If a patient finds their way to the hospital, you could simply ask them an open-ended question like “What brings you to the hospital today?” Then, the patient would explain the reason or reasons why they are there, this will help the nurse understand the problem, and get the patient healthy moving forward.

Another therapeutic technique to use when dealing with a patient is the use of touch. This technique provides comfort to the patient when they are dealing with a tragic event. One key factor when using this technique is knowing the patient’s past. If the patient has a history of being abused, the use of touch would most likely not be comforting to that specific patient, and in that situation a different therapeutic technique should be used. An ideal scenario to use this technique would be if you have established a good relationship with a patient, and they need something more than verbal communication. For example, if this patient just found out they had a terminal illness, that could be a lot to take in, and the use of touch could provide comfort to a patient more than words can.

With the therapeutic techniques mentioned above, there are various barriers that could get in the way of proper nursing care. One of the common barriers of affective communication in the

medical field is passing judgment. No one enjoys being at the hospital and if a patient is there, then something is wrong. An example of passing judgment would be if a nurse expressed their own feelings and opinions to the patient regarding the patient's lifestyle choices. If a patient is overweight, judging their diet is not helpful, teaching them portion control and encouraging them would be the route to go.

### **Reflection**

One of my strengths when communicating effectively would be giving information. During communication with another person, I feel like I contribute strongly to the conversation when I know the facts about the topics being talked about. When I am dealing with a patient in the future, I want them to always know what is happening with their care because ultimately, they might be vulnerable in this environment. I want to be able to answer all their questions about their care and if I do not have that answer, I would find it. Another strength I have is being able to read people. In a situation when a patient is feeling overwhelmed or they might not want to talk to anyone, I feel like I would be able to pick up on those indications, and ensure that when they are ready to speak, I will be ready to listen. When discussing communication in general, I consistently want to ensure that the other person knows I am listening. Nonverbal communication can both help and harm the person you are talking to. In these times when I am listening to someone, I feel one of my nonverbal strengths is maintaining eye contact and this will tell them that I am engaged in the conversation being had.

Something I feel as though I need to strengthen is to not react to certain statements nonverbally. Facial expressions can be one of many ways a patient can feel judgment when they are speaking. How I can improve this weakness is to always remind myself to maintain professionalism when dealing with a patient. I want to work in the medical field and help people,

being understanding to all different types of people is extremely important. A weakness that also stands out when I am reflecting is being reserved when first meeting a new person. This is something that I need to work on because as a nurse you deal with new people every day. To improve on this, I need to persistently remind myself that the patient is probably not in the most pleasant place, so being personable is essential. The nurse-patient relationship starts right when the nurse enters the room, first impressions are important, and I want all my future patients to feel I am there to give them nothing short of the best care. Lastly, the information I have learned about therapeutic communication showed me that knowing how to care for a patient is vital, whether that be administering their medication, assessing their pain, and teaching them is just as important as talking and listening to them. There are many things you can learn about the patient if you let them talk about what is going on. Therefore, active listening is a key factor that strengthens the nurse-patient relationship.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, therapeutic communication helps patients feel comfortable and understanding of the care that is being provided. The first technique discussed above was asking the patient open-ended questions. These questions help the nurse understand the chief concerns of the patient so that they can receive the best nursing care. Also, the use of touch when dealing with a patient can be a helpful technique in providing comfort for them. With that being said, you should be mindful about the patient's background, their culture, and if it is appropriate to comfort them that way. In addition, barriers to effective communication were discussed. One of those barriers that stood out to me was passing judgment, and how that severely effects the nurse-patient relationship in a negative way. As a nurse, we are there to provide care and teach our patients. In this paper I also discussed my strengths and weaknesses regarding

communication and how I can improve those weaknesses. All and all, the multiple techniques that were discussed throughout the paper are techniques that must be mastered and convey equal importance compared to understanding the anatomy and physiology of the body; therapeutic communication holds much more weight than people might think. Consistent and proper nursing needs to be done every time you provide care to your patients. Be present when you are in a patient's room and always be actively listening to them.

Work Cited

Berman, Audrey, et al. *Kozier & Erbs Fundamentals of Nursing: Concepts, Process, and Practice*. Vol. 10, Pearson, 2019.