

Therapeutic Communication

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Nursing 101 - Foundations of Nursing

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October 1st, 2021

In the United States, twelve million people are affected by medical diagnostic errors each year (Mastroianni, 2020). One of the main causes of a misdiagnosis is an inadequate client assessment (Cohen, 2020). When using therapeutic communication, a client assessment will become more detailed and accurate. This will help the provider accurately diagnose the client and keep them safe. Therapeutic communication is the purpose of using communication to build an effective professional relationship with the client. When there is therapeutic communication between the nurse and the client it increases the client's safety, satisfaction, and it increases the quality of care they receive. The importance of this type of communication in nursing is because it helps the nurse to gain the trust of the client. Gaining the client's trust is crucial because they will become more cooperative and open to share more information which will improve their health and the care they receive. When using therapeutic communication, it allows the nurse to express empathy, attend to the client's needs and concerns, and give feedback about their health status (Holman, et al., 2019, p.178). Techniques for therapeutic communication is silence, active listening, open-ended questions, accepting, restating, and reflecting (Holman, et al., 2019, p.178). An ideal environment to have effective therapeutic communication involves minimizing distractions and noises such as the television or family members, providing privacy, and making sure it's a good time for the client. Due to the importance of therapeutic communication, nurses need to know the most effective techniques for the communication to be successful. Also, nurses need to be able to identify their strengths and weaknesses when using therapeutic communication and ways to improve. Having established effective techniques are critical for effective communication, two important techniques to use are open-ended questions and active listening.

This paper will talk about the most effective techniques for communication, ways that I can improve, and why therapeutic communication is so important.

Analysis of Therapeutic Techniques

One technique for therapeutic communication is asking open-ended questions. When asking these types of questions, it allows the client to go more into detail than a simple yes or no question. Open-ended questions also don't make the client feel restricted on what their answer should be. I chose this technique as one of the most important ones because it allows for a more effective and detailed client interview about their chief complaint and their medical history. If the nurse is only asking closed-ended questions, then the information received won't be detailed or thorough. Open-ended questions allow the conversation to keep going. Closed-ended questions require the interviewer to do most of the talking while open-ended questions allow the client to. If closed-ended questions are used, the interviewer could miss an important topic or not ask the right questions. Open-ended questions allow the client to explain what is most important to them and in their own words. Examples of open-ended questions are what brings you in today and how do you feel about your diagnosis?

Open-ended questions are best utilized when performing a client assessment and getting a client history. When performing an assessment, it'll allow you to get more information on their chief complaint. When asking "Are you in pain today?" the client could answer the question with a yes or no response. But when you ask "Can you describe your pain today and where is it located?" it doesn't restrict the client's response and allows a more thorough answer. When performing a client history, open-ended questions allow for a more accurate and concise database. When doing this, it allows the client to explain and express their concerns and their needs. If you ask a client "Does your mother or father have a history of cancer?" it will limit

their answer to a yes or no response. But when you ask “Has anyone in your family been diagnosed with cancer? If so, what was the diagnosis?” it allows the client to describe their family history more thoroughly. When asking these types of questions it’ll improve client safety, satisfaction, and will ensure an accurate diagnosis.

A second technique for therapeutic communication is active listening. Active listening is when the nurse is listening to the client and their only focus is on them. It means that they’re not multitasking at the same time and that they’re not thinking of a response while the client is talking. I choose this technique because it benefits both the client and the nurse when they’re having a discussion. This is because the nurse is giving their client their full attention so they’re able to retain what the client is saying. The client benefits from this type of listening because they’ll feel understood. The best time to utilize active listening is with every interaction with the client, this is because the client should feel heard and understood whenever communicating with their nurse and it’ll increase their satisfaction with the care they’re receiving. A barrier to effective communication is language. A language barrier can occur when the nurse only speaks English and their client speaks another language. This barrier could affect my nursing care because the client won’t understand what I’m saying and we could not be on the same page. This barrier can be fixed with the facilities translator.

Reflection

My strengths in effective communication are being supportive, not interrupting, being empathetic, and asking open-ended questions. My weaknesses in effective communication are active listening and sounding like I’m judging someone when I’m not. Another weakness I have in communication is my body language and posture. One way to improve my communication skills is to make sure I’m actively listening and only focusing on what the client is saying. This is

currently a weakness of mine because I like to plan out how the conversation will go right before I start to talk which could be when the client is talking. Another way to improve my communication skills is to make sure that my posture and body language shows that I'm giving them my full attention. A challenge I anticipate having when implementing effective communication is the client speaking another language. I'll work around this barrier by using the facilities translator and I will also have the printed patient teaching in their own language. Another challenge I anticipate having when implementing effective communication is the client not understanding what I'm explaining or teaching them. I will work around this barrier by not using medical terminology whenever possible, explaining thoroughly, and using printed information or videos if beneficial when possible. With what I learned from this unit, I'll be able to better communicate with my client because I'll incorporate the techniques of therapeutic communication into every interaction I have with the client. I'll make sure to use active listening to show the client they have my full attention, restating what I heard to make sure I didn't misunderstand anything, and use silence so I can remember and interpret what I'm hearing.

Conclusion

In conclusion, therapeutic communication is used with every interaction with a client and is beneficial because it helps build trust and rapport between the nurse and the client. It always the client to be more open about their concerns and needs with their nurse and it allows the nurse to get important information that will affect their care. Therapeutic communication is when the nurse uses open-ended questions, active listening, restating, silence, and accepting (Holman, et al., 2019, p.178). Therapeutic communication is important when doing an assessment on a client because it'll help correctly diagnosis them with the information the client is giving. Therefore, it will decrease the chances of being misdiagnosed.

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