

Communication Paper

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Therapeutic communication combines verbal and non-verbal cues to create and maintain a trustworthy relationship with patients and their families. When done correctly, it allows more room for the patient to feel comfortable and confident enough to tell the nurse the truth about a topic. This type of communication is so important in nursing because it allows the patient to feel safe and can reduce the patient's anxiety. To start building a relationship, the environment the patient is in must be comfortable. There must be minimal distractions so that the patient can focus on what is being asked or talked about. The messenger should be willing to sit and listen, so the receiver doesn't feel like they are being rushed to answer. There is certainly more than one way to create an atmosphere where a patient can feel more comfortable sharing information.

Analysis of Therapeutic Techniques

Even with all the effective communication techniques, it is not going to be easy to communicate with every individual. This is due to communication barriers. One communication barrier that affects communication the most is an individual cognitive and developmental impairment. This is where the individual can have trouble expressing thoughts, concerns, or understanding of what was taught. The second one is where they can express thoughts and concerns but cannot understand the information. The reason that I chose this barrier is because if they have difficulty speaking, I will have to find other ways to test the patient's understanding of the information. Overall, it will affect my ability to teach the patient effectively, and more people may have to be involved with teaching just so that I know the individual or their family understands what is going on or how to perform a task.

One way to conduct therapeutic communication is to actively listen to what the patient is saying. Active listening is when as receiver of the message you give all your attention to the

speaker. You listen to what is being said without thinking of a response to each statement. But, at the same time, you will respond respectfully with acceptance and in a non-judgmental tone. The reason this technique is one that I chose is because to fully understand your patient as a person and not their diagnosis you have to be willing to listen. It can also show that you care and that they have your full attention. If you do not listen, then you can miss information that could lead to a bigger picture or underlying problems. This technique will be best used when a patient is expressing their concerns and fears.

The second technique that I think is the most important is asking open-ended questions. This allows the patient to give more than a yes or no answer, which allows the nurse to gather more information from the patient. I chose this technique due to its ability to elaborate on a topic that could lead to vital information needed to provide the best patient care. Open-ended questions are best used in a health interview or when trying to find out what is bothering the individual. For instance, you can ask are you having pain today? They will answer with a yes or no and from there you can ask, how would you describe your pain, or when did the pain begin? By using it this way it helps dig a little deeper into how severe something is or if there is a bigger problem to focus on.

Now that we know some verbal techniques for effective communication we also must focus on our non-verbal communication because non-verbal and verbal communication must match. If they do not match, then the patient is more inclined to believe whatever your non-verbal communication is saying. One way to show that you are paying attention is eye contact. Maintaining eye contact with patients will allow the patient to know that you are paying attention to them and not worrying about other things. Another non-verbal factor that comes into play is our facial expressions because we can say one thing but if our face says another thing, they most

likely won't believe what we are saying. Which will take away our credibility and honesty, which in the end will make the nurse-client relationship worse. Both factors enhance our verbal communication by illustrating that we have the time of day to listen. It also allows the patient to know that they are free to express and share anything without the fear of being judged.

Reflection

Reviewing effective communication techniques has prompted me to look at some of my strengths and weaknesses when it comes to effective communication. I would have to say that my strengths include being willing to listen to all concerns, allowing time for silence when needed and not rushing the individual to respond. Then I am not scared to restate something if I am not sure I heard it correctly or if I would like further explanations. Now my weaknesses include maintaining eye contact, hiding facial expressions, and body gestures because I talk with my hands a lot, and rocking side to side while standing which can come off as being in a rush.

Out of all my weaknesses, I can say that I must work on maintaining eye contact and my facial expressions. This is because I do not like to stare people in the eyes if they are staring back into mine. For me this causes my body to feel like it's in system overload. Then my face tends to say what I am thinking most of the time. So, one way that I will improve my interpersonal communication is by being more conscious of what my face is doing. Then just work on maintaining eye contact frequently even if I cannot keep my eyes locked during the whole conversation. I just must remember that everyone will take what I do or how I look more seriously than what I am saying.

Even after working on ways to communicate more effectively and show that I care, there will be challenges that will cause a barrier to our communication. One challenge is just my confidence. I need to be confident in the information that I am sharing. Then if a patient asks

something that I am not confident about I will let them know that I do not know at this moment, but I will find that information out for them. Another challenge is going to be generational, meaning some of the phrases that I can say with people around my age may not be appropriate or perceive the same as an older individual. To be able to work around this I will always keep in mind that professionalism needs to always be present. That will keep me from saying anything that people can take the wrong way. After, learning everything I did about effective communication will help me see the patient as a person even more in my nursing care. It has also been shown that an individual's mental or social status is just as important as their physical health.

Conclusion

After everything is said and done to carry out effective communication as a nurse you have to use both verbal and non-verbal cues to communicate. If they do not match, then the non-verbal cues will be more believable than the verbal resulting in a decline in trust and breaking the nurse-client relationship. To have therapeutic communication the patient must be comfortable and not feel rushed. You as the nurse must actively listen and maintain eye contact to show that the patient has your full undivided attention. Then if you want to get more information on a topic or issue you must use open-ended questions. When they answer you must respond in a non-judgmental tone and without showing any negative facial expressions. Just remember that you may have to work around some barriers like the level of the person's ability to understand. Overall, the patient is more than their diagnosis so take the time to talk and listen without making them feel rushed.