

**Communication Paper**

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Therapeutic communication is a type of communication that builds trust and establishes rapport with not only the patients and clients but with their support system too. Two factors that make up the best environment for communication are a nonjudgmental environment and a distraction-free environment. Therapeutic communication techniques are what show our patients that we are listening to them as people and not just seeing them as a diagnosis.

### **Analysis of Therapeutic Techniques**

Two therapeutic communication techniques are silence and restating or summarizing. I picked these two techniques because they seem to be the most important. Silence is important because it allows you to take in what the patient is saying and not just jump immediately to what you are going to say. It also gives them an open space where they can say something without being interrupted. Restating and summarizing are important because it allows us, as nurses, to clarify something we may not have understood so we can make sure we are optimizing our patients' experiences while they are under our care specifically, and this helps to avoid mistakes as well.

Situations where you could use silence are when the patient tells you something important and you do not want to say something right away or do not know what to say, so you process it so you can prompt more information out of them by asking more questions instead of grazing past what they are saying. Opportunities where restating and summarizing can be used when you do not understand something. Saying what the patient or client says back to them in your own words gives the client the opportunity to clarify something you might have misunderstood or missed entirely.

A barrier to effective communication is language. If someone has a language barrier and it is a language that you cannot speak or understand, it can be harder to communicate. This

affects nursing care because they do not understand or maybe cannot comprehend what you're saying, which is not helpful when you need to educate them, talk to them, or ask questions about their lives. Therefore, interpreters are now in place to make communication easier and more effective, which helps our cars be easier and more effective.

Two non-therapeutic techniques are judging and rejecting. Rejecting enhances verbal communication in a bad way because it shuts down one topic and moves on to another. As does judging, because the patient may feel like they cannot trust you or be open and honest and change the subject, but it could also cause them to give short answers or prompt them to not answer at all.

### **Reflection**

My personal strengths in therapeutic communication would be silence and active listening. Since I am not a talkative person, listening is no problem because I am usually a listener rather than a talker anyway. With silence, I sometimes can be too silent, to the point where people think I am not listening when sometimes I do not know what to say, especially if something is personal or sad, and I can't formulate proper words to tell someone how I feel or what I think, but that rarely happens, which is why I count this as a strength. Active listening is easy for me because I am a very observant person and I listen more than I speak, so I think that will help, especially when communicating with people who may not be able to express themselves due to getting cut off or nobody speaking to them. Some weaknesses of mine with therapeutic and non-therapeutic communication would be facial expressions and focusing. Facial expressions are how I usually express myself. I have been told that I may not say it a lot, but my face says everything someone needs to see, and I have been trying to work on that, but it's very hard for me. Focusing is another thing I have a weakness with; sometimes I feel like I am being

rude if I redirect a client or patient back to the topic I am talking about. I feel like it shows them that I do not care, and I do not want them to feel cut off.

Two ways that I can improve my intrapersonal communication skills are to maintain an open posture and maintain eye contact. I said these two because I tend to cross my arms a lot, and it is not meant to be rude, but I know that it can come off as rude, and that is not how I want to come across to a patient or client. I also said to maintain eye contact because sometimes I feel weird just staring at someone, and I also do not like people looking at me for too long, which is something I am learning to get over, but I understand that it may look like I'm uninterested in what they have to say, and this has been the most challenging thing to overcome because when someone says something that makes me feel weird and they're looking right at me, it makes me feel uncomfortable, so I have to break contact and switch topics.

Some challenges that I anticipate while implementing effective communication are time, hearing and visual impairments, and cognitive impairments. Time could be a challenge, especially if you are running behind. Patients could feel obligated or rushed to answer any questions, and they could feel like you are not actively listening, which could lead to them not telling you the full truth at all. I will try to overcome this challenge by being on time and trying not to run behind. Hearing and visual impairments are also challenges because, with older populations, these are common impairments, and the way to overcome them is to face them while speaking, provide adequate lighting, and provide hearing aids and glasses if needed. Cognitive impairments could also become a challenge. Those with Alzheimer's and dementia cannot fully understand what is being said to them, so it can be hard to communicate with them. A way to communicate effectively with them is to have a trusted conversation with their family

or an appointed trusted person. These are challenges that I think are the most known in healthcare, and they all require different techniques to effectively get around these barriers.

What I learned helps me make a difference in my nursing career by showing me that communication and trust go hand in hand. People must trust you to tell you information, and trust can take a long time, especially with certain generations and populations. Through this lesson, I have learned that I struggle with a lot of non-therapeutic techniques, not because I am trying to be rude or write people off. There are things I struggle with, like changing the topic, especially when I am uncomfortable, and this has shown me that some people look at that as if you do not want to listen to what they say, so from now on I will be working on trying to get used to not changing topics or avoiding certain ones.

### **Conclusion**

Communication is very crucial, especially for healthcare workers. Communicating with therapeutic techniques allows the patients and clients, as well as their families, to feel like they can trust you, and it helps them to understand that they have an advocate for their specific needs or concerns that may need to be addressed. I think working in the healthcare system allows you to see how to communicate with other people and to look at them as friends, neighbors, and family instead of as their diagnosis. Communication is hard, especially with barriers, which is why today there are so many things in place that help make communication easier.

Communication is something that is established on trust, as stated before. Most will not communicate something personal unless they trust you and feel like you are going to do something about it. Patients are sometimes scared to communicate with healthcare workers, so taking the steps to ensure a nice environment and using therapeutic techniques allows them to

feel safe and opens a space where they feel they could trust you. Using these skills will help me build trust and rapport with my clients and patients.