

Therapeutic Communication

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Therapeutic communication is a fundamental skill in nursing that plays a pivotal role in establishing trust, rapport and a healing environment for patients. Effective communication in healthcare is the cornerstone of patient centered care and can greatly influence the quality of care provided. Two factors that establish an effective communication environment are privacy and confidentiality, and trust and respect. Maintaining privacy and confidentiality encourages an open and honest conversation that upholds ethical standards. Ensuring that conversations occur in private settings and that the patient's information is kept confidential. Trust creates an atmosphere where patients feel comfortable sharing their concerns, fears, and medical histories. Respect ensures that the patients' values, beliefs, and preferences are acknowledged and honored, which directs the nurse in performing patient centered care. These factors lay the foundation for effective therapeutic communication in nursing, which can significantly impact patient outcomes and overall healthcare experiences. This paper will aim to define therapeutic communication and highlight its importance in the nursing practice. Additionally, it will dive into various verbal and nonverbal therapeutic communication techniques, analyze their significance, and discuss potential barriers to effective communication in the care of nursing.

### **Analysis of Therapeutic Techniques**

Verbal and nonverbal techniques are essential in communication because of their effect in shaping the quality of care provided to patients. Verbal communication is a message that is sent using speech or written words. Two examples of verbal communication techniques are active listening and open-ended questions. Active listening is a technique where the nurse attentively and empathetically listens to the patients concerns, feelings, and thoughts. I choose this technique because of its ability to demonstrate genuine interest and empathy, which can help patients feel heard and understood. It is especially useful in situations where patients express

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emotional distress or uncertainty. An example where active listening can be used is, when a patient is diagnosed with a serious illness and expressed their fears and concerns about the treatment. Using active listening in this situation can help the nurse provide emotional support and address any misunderstandings or fears. Open ended questions encourage patients to provide detailed responses directing deeper conversation. I choose this technique because of its ability to help the nurse better understand the patients' needs and concerns. An example of a situation where this technique can be used is when the nurse is assessing a patient's pain level, asking open ended questions such as, "can you describe the pain you're experiencing?" This question will give more information than a close ended question like, "is your pain severe?".

The non-verbal communication technique is the majority of everyday communication as it occurs 80% of the time. Nonverbal communication is behaviors that convey messages without words. Two examples of this communication are body language and eye contact. Body language is nonverbal cues such as facial expressions, gestures, and posture that can convey empathy, attentiveness, and understanding. Body language complements verbal communication by reinforcing the message being conveyed. Eye contact establishes a connection with the patient, showing attentiveness and respect. Maintaining eye contact can help build trust and a rapport with the patient.

Communication is not always effective, even with these techniques there are barriers that hinder the process. An example of a barrier that can hinder effective communication is language barriers. This is a common barrier to effective communication in diverse healthcare facilities. In diverse healthcare facilities patients may have a limited English proficiency and literacy. Misunderstandings commonly occur due to language barriers and create mistakes. Language barriers can lead to errors in patient care and negatively impact patient outcomes. To overcome

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language barriers, an interpreter can be used to better help the nurse understand the patients perspective. A patient's psychosocial state is another barrier that I anticipate will hinder my effective communication. For example, when dealing with patients who are emotionally distressed or non-communicative due to their medical conditions. Patients in those situations will require extra patience and empathy. To work around those barriers I will remain patient, adaptable, and responsive to the unique needs of each patient.

### **Reflection**

In reflection of verbal and non-verbal techniques, I have observed that I have a strength in open ended questions, and a weakness in active listening. I can ask open ended questions with no problem to continue conversation it is listening to the conversation where I struggle. I often find my mind racing with irrelevant thoughts during conversation, which distracts me from being fully immersed in the patient's perspective. To improve my active listening skills, I plan to dedicate more focused time in my patient interactions. This will allow me to be fully present and immerse myself in the conversation. I will do this by maintaining eye contact, nodding when appropriate, and giving verbal cues to show the patient that I'm engaged in the conversation. Another way I can improve my active listening skills is by reaching out to other nurses to get a better perspective of how to effectively use active listening. What I've learned about improving my communication skills will undoubtedly make a difference in my nursing care. By enhancing my active listening skills and continuing to use open ended questions effectively, I can establish a trusting and collaborative relationships with my patients. This will lead to a better experience for the care of my patients. My patients will feel more valued and involved in their care decisions, which contributes to a higher quality of nursing care.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, therapeutic communication is essential in the nursing practice, establishing trust, understanding, and patient centered care. Active listening and open-ended questions are essential verbal techniques, while a patient's psychosocial status and language barriers pose a communication challenge. Nonverbal techniques, such as body language and eye contact, complement and reinforce the message of verbal communication. Reflecting on my personal strengths and weaknesses, addressing anticipated challenges, and implementing improved communication skills will enhance nursing care and ultimately lead to improved patient experiences and outcomes. The importance of therapeutic communication cannot be overstated in the practice of nursing, as it forms the foundation of patient centered care and positive patient experiences.