

**Communication Paper**

Olivia M. Creamer

Margaret H. Rollins School of Nursing

Nursing 101: Foundations of Nursing

Mrs. Helsel MSN, RN

September 27, 2024

In the ever-evolving field of nursing, one thing remains true: Therapeutic communication is at the heart of effective, patient-centered care. Therapeutic communication is a purposeful, goal-oriented approach to interactions between a healthcare professional and a client. Therapeutic communication is a cornerstone of establishing a strong client-nurse relationship during early encounters, which is vital for creating a safe environment that encourages engagement, reinforces understanding, and offers support. Mindfulness of time and privacy as a nurse is the first step in orchestrating an atmosphere that is conducive to effective communication. Selecting the appropriate time to initiate conversation can significantly impact client receptiveness and comprehension. Respecting a client's declination of conversation or nursing intervention at any time promotes a sense of autonomy and acknowledges physical and emotional boundaries. Providing adequate privacy during these encounters also reinforces confidentiality and facilitates an honest exchange of information. Identifying and implementing therapeutic communication techniques in nursing practice ultimately enhances the quality of client care and overall outcomes by fostering trust and communality between a client and their nurse.

### **Analysis of Therapeutic Techniques**

Verbal communication is the transmission of thoughts and information through spoken or written words. Two verbal therapeutic communication techniques that can be utilized in nursing practice are active listening and open-ended questioning. Active listening is the practice of fully concentrating on a client and attempting to understand the message they wish to convey. Paraphrasing statements and summarizing subjective data should be prioritized in every nurse-client interaction to enhance mutual clarity. These techniques facilitate open dialogue by

communicating to the client that their values, needs, and concerns are an integral part of formulating care and treatment plans. Active listening is especially important during the admissions process to minimize the risk of medical errors, prevent the underreporting of symptoms, and establish a strong foundation for nurse-client rapport. Open-ended questioning may also be used alongside active listening to enhance client care and safety. Open-ended questions are inquiries that require more than a “yes” or “no” answer. They evoke elaboration and encourage deeper exploration of client concerns. Asking open-ended questions to a client with vague symptoms during the working phase of a nurse-client relationship may assist in eliciting underlying manifestations resulting in more precise and effective nursing interventions.

Barriers to effective verbal communication can be immensely detrimental to the quality of client care and overall outcomes. Language barriers between a client and their nurse can contribute to inaccurate assessments, inadequate intervention, and poor compliance with medical teachings. Prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion in nursing practice is essential for providing culturally sensitive care and creating a channel for open communication. Conducting conversations and providing written materials in the correct language and dialect can reduce client anxiety and encourage active participation. As a healthcare professional, it is critical to identify language barriers during initial encounters and to provide interpretive services when necessary.

Non-verbal communication is the process of conveying a message without the use of spoken or written words. Appropriate gestures and supportive body language, which account for nearly 80% of all communication, can demonstrate attentiveness and enhance verbal cues. Silence is a non-verbal therapeutic communication technique that carries a powerful message. Offering silence during significant moments allows for meaningful reflection and promotes

emotional processing. Silence is a crucial aspect of active listening, as it demonstrates engagement and places emphasis on particular themes. Effective use of eye contact is especially important in adding emotional color to professional dialogue. Maintaining eye contact not only signals focus and projects sincerity, but it also aids in observing client behavior and assessing health status. As the facilitator of nearly all interactions, a comprehensive understanding of the cultural and social perceptions surrounding eye contact is crucial for optimizing therapeutic effect.

### **Reflection**

By reflecting on my own communicative strengths and weaknesses, I can identify ways to enhance my interpersonal skills. As a medical assistant in an urgent care facility, I have gained extensive experience in effective, professional communication. Primarily conducting intake interviews, I am the first point of contact for client's during their urgent care visit. I always prioritize greeting clients with a smile and maintaining a positive demeanor. I initiate eye contact as appropriate and remain empathetic to the reasons for their visit. During the intake interview, I often ask open-ended questions and summarize verbal reports to seek clarification. Before concluding the interaction, I allow time for the client to ask questions and express my appreciation for their patience. Over time, I have observed firsthand the impact these techniques have had on nurse-client trust and respect.

As a young, inquisitive student nurse entering the field of healthcare, I can be quick-moving and energetic. While this portrays enthusiasm, it may also be perceived as impatient, causing the client to feel overwhelmed. This behavior during sensitive conversations or in particular social settings may even be considered inappropriate. Taking a moment to regain composure prior to entering a client's room can provide a brief pause to re-assess behavior and

adjust accordingly. Practicing mindfulness frequently can prevent the misinterpretation of nonverbal and verbal cues and enhance interpersonal communication. My tone and style of communication may also be an impediment to effective correspondence. Often, I fail to adjust my communication style to the needs of pediatric and geriatric clients. This results in a lack of understanding, distrust, and reduced engagement. By identifying my client's specific needs and preferences during the orientation phase of the nurse-client relationship, I can promptly tailor my verbal tone and communication style to formulate an individualized approach.

Time constraints and complex clients with auditory or visual impairments may create challenges in implementing effective communication techniques. Managing multiple clients simultaneously and operating under a strict schedule may limit opportunities for thorough discussion and compromise care quality. Strategically managing time and appropriately delegating tasks enhances nurse-client communication by ensuring that critical client needs are met promptly. Allocating sufficient time to adapt to client needs is crucial for optimizing engagement and receptiveness. For clients with auditory or visual impairments, ample time must be allotted for frequent reorientation and repetition. Utilizing visual or tactile aids can also help in effectively communicating information and educating clients with sensory deficits.

Having gained a deeper understanding of effective communication in the nursing discipline, I now recognize the therapeutic impact that active listening and supportive body language can have on client-centered care. I aim to actively implement therapeutic techniques and exhibit sensitivity during every phase of client care to encourage interactive discussions and establish unwavering trust in my nursing practice.

### **Conclusion**

Nurses fulfill a variety of roles during their typical day. They administer medications, ensure proper operation of all medical devices, and conduct evidence-based research. That being said, the most vital role a nurse must assume is to be an effective communicator. Implementing therapeutic communication techniques enables nurses to better receive, interpret, and respond to often complex nonverbal and verbal cues elicited by clients. Open dialogue allows nurses to advocate successfully for their clients, fostering client-driven care and improving overall outcomes. With this in mind, we should commonly reflect on the impact that just one nurturing conversation can have on a client navigating the healthcare system.