

Communication Paper

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The most vital action to occur in nursing is communication, specifically therapeutic communication. Therapeutic communication can be defined as a strong use of communication to help build and sustain relationships with patients and their families. This form of communication is the key to success in the nursing profession to ensure and build that nurse-patient relationship. During this process, you are obtaining information about your patient and giving any feedback necessary, expressing empathy and concern, as well as attending to your patient's thoughts, feelings, and needs. You want to make your patient feel as comfortable as possible to ensure the proper and best communication. To provide effective communication, you will need to ensure the environment where you will be communicating with your patient is quiet, with no environmental distractions, and private. Therapeutic communication fosters trust, as well as improving patient outcomes not just in their care but also in their overall mental and emotional well-being.

Analysis of Therapeutic Techniques

Verbal communication serves as a foundational tool for interaction with others and allows individuals to express their thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Open-ended questions are a form of verbal communication and are the most common form that we almost always do without thinking. Open-ended questions allow for further conversation, elicit more information, and strengthen the nurse-patient relationship. When you first go to the hospital and meet your nurse for the first time, they are going to ask you open-ended questions, like "What brought you in today?" and if you are experiencing any abnormalities or discomfort, they will have you further explain. Another form of verbal communication is reflecting; this is attempting to have the patient reveal their feelings and elaborate on why they feel the way they feel. Reflecting builds that nurse-patient relationship because the patient is expressing their feelings and opening up in

either a positive or negative way about how they feel. Reflecting can really shape the nurse-patient relationship because not only does it show the patient that you care and are listening, but it validates the patient's feelings and opens doors for any further concerns or diagnoses. An example of reflecting occurring between a nurse and patient would be after the nurse explains the recommended surgery that needs to be done and the patient expresses how scared they are. The nurse would then respond with a very calming and understanding response like, "It sounds like you are scared and feeling uncertain about the surgery, tell me what worries you?". From there, that rapport is increasing and making the patient feel more comforted. Along with effective verbal communication, some barriers can affect nursing care. The major barrier is not listening. Not listening to your patient can make your patient feel unwanted and almost as if they are bothering you. This can also lead to poor care and rapport.

Along the lines of verbal communication, there is non-verbal therapeutic communication, and it is just as important in building that nurse-patient relationship and is used more often than verbal communication. Your body language is a powerful form of non-verbal communication; it expresses how you really feel if your verbal communication is showing something completely different. Body language consists of facial expressions, eye contact, touch, posture, and body movement. Your non-verbal communication should always match your verbal communication as a nurse because it provides trust and credibility to your patient. If you ask your patient to express what part of their abdomen hurts, you want to make sure you are keeping eye contact, face them when they are talking to you and when you talk to them, maintain proper body posture, and nod occasionally to show them you care and acknowledge them. Along with body language is silence. Silence is a very powerful therapeutic technique that allows time for the patient to process everything and create that safe space for their thoughts and feelings without pressure.

Just by simply being there for your patient can create a safe space environment and further encourage verbal communication when the patient is ready.

Reflection

My personal strengths in both verbal and non-verbal effective communication is my ability to accept when talking to a patient and listening. If a patient were to talk to me about how they are recovering from a surgery they just had, I am always acknowledging them and showing them I care by simply listening and never being judgmental towards them because I know sometimes surgeries can be for a chronic illness or if for something minor, it can still be worrisome for them. Along with accepting, I am also very good at encouraging further conversation between myself and the patient by asking open-ended questions. This could be as simple as asking them how they feel today or asking them to elaborate on the pain they are experiencing. Along with communicating with patients, I am very proficient in having proper body language. This includes eye contact, correct posture, and facial expressions. I always have a smile on my face when talking to my patients and treating them as individuals rather than just another patient.

There is always room for improvement, as we all are still learning, so the way I can improve my interpersonal communication skills is by knowing my patient's limits. Some patients may not always want to talk to you, or some may have a difficult time hearing, and I tend to be afraid to speak louder to them because it feels as if I am yelling at them. Another way I can improve my interpersonal communication skills is by knowing the signs of whether or not my patient favors empathy in the form of appropriate touching, such as putting my hand on their shoulder or gently holding their hand in difficult times. I adore showing empathy to my patients, and I am always wanting to be there for them by showing that form of empathy, but not every

patient favors that form of empathy. Some patients prefer silence and time alone to collect their thoughts. Therefore, the desire I have to show empathy through touch towards my patient does not work or apply to everyone.

Implementing effective communication often comes with a range of challenges. One in particular being language and culture. In healthcare, you are going to care for a variety of patients coming from many different backgrounds, but that does not inhibit you from providing them with effective care. If my patient spoke a different language, the nursing intervention I will undertake is to provide my patient with a language interpreter so my patient, as well as their family, can naturally communicate with the medical staff involved and receive quality care. Providing my patient with a language interpreter not only allows the patient to be fully involved and understand, but it reveals to the patient that we truly care for them and want to provide the best quality care. With everything I have learned, I will be able to make a difference in my patient's care by providing appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication and performing the best quality care.

Conclusion

In conclusion, all forms of communication play a crucial role in nurturing trust between all healthcare providers and patients, as well as their families. As nurses, we have many jobs and care for many patients, yet it all comes down to one thing, and that is providing the wonderful quality of care that every patient deserves, as well as promoting positive health outcomes. Having clear, positive, and strong verbal and non-verbal communication not only promotes effective nurse-patient relationships but also enhances patient satisfaction and their well-being. The further you advance your communication and focus on your patient as an individual, the

more your patient will begin to trust you as their nurse caring for them, and overall, a better outcome your nurse-patient relationship will become.