

Communication Paper

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Therapeutic communication is an important part of being a nurse. We use this type of communication while speaking with our clients and their families as a tool to create a relationship with them that is helpful and supportive. Therapeutic communication lays the groundwork for a positive relationship between the nurse and the client and improves outcomes for the client. The environment in which we communicate with our clients is essential. A nurse must be aware of the noise level when speaking to the client. If the room is noisy and full of distractions, it's hard for the client and nurse to focus on each other. Reducing the room's noise level will help the nurse and client better hear and understand one another. Privacy is also key to a therapeutic environment. The client deserves to feel that their privacy is always respected. A nurse can close a curtain in a shared room and sit close to the client to help protect what is being said. The nurse can also ask the client if they are comfortable with family and significant others in the room during conversations and/or care. These two factors can greatly improve the client's sense that their nurse is putting their needs first. Good communication is essential for nursing because it helps us better understand our clients and provide high-quality individualized care.

Analysis of Therapeutic Techniques

One of the most effective verbal techniques for therapeutic communication is active listening. It gives the client a sense that the nurse is giving them their full attention, genuinely cares about them, and is taking their care seriously while acknowledging that what they have to say is very important. The nurse gives their client their full attention by making eye contact, responding positively to what they are saying by nodding their head, asking follow-up questions, and allowing them to share their thoughts while telling them they understand what the client is saying. By doing this, the client feels what they have to say is important and feels heard and better understood. Active listening should be used in all situations and is especially important in

assessing the client and providing direct care. For example, if your client has just received a diagnosis of cancer and is sharing a lot of their concerns with you, actively listening to them allows them to state their feelings and air their concerns. This technique also helps a client feel that you are not rushing them or doing other tasks while partially listening, but instead, you are giving them your focused attention.

Another helpful technique is using open-ended questions with clients. These are questions you ask your client that require more than a yes or no answer, which helps gather more information about the client's needs. By gathering more information, you also build the client-nurse relationship, which allows us as the nurse to use critical thinking to better understand the client's needs. If I am assessing a client's pain and ask the client to describe their pain versus asking them if they are in pain, I can get a better understanding of where the pain is and how it feels, among other questions. It gives the client permission to give the nurse a more thoughtful, meaningful answer to their question and often leads to follow-up questions and being more thorough. A client who is hearing impaired can be a barrier to communication. If the client cannot properly hear your questions or explanations about care, some important pieces of information about their needs might not be properly communicated. If a nurse is providing the client with some education, for example, about the medication they now need to use, it's very important that they can receive that information by either hearing it or seeing it in a printout. In some cases, a sign interpreter may be helpful if the client uses sign language.

Using facial expressions can enhance communication with our clients. About eighty percent of our communication is nonverbal. Our verbal and nonverbal communication must match up. Making eye contact with clients when they are speaking and when you are speaking to them is very important. It's also very important to be mindful of what your facial expressions are

as a nurse. If they are telling you something upsetting, having a smile on your face may not seem supportive to them. A nurse may not be aware of how their facial expressions look, but to our client, it may come across as rude. For example, when giving medication, a nurse may be very focused, and their facial expression may come across as upset or uninterested because they are concentrating so hard. We must be mindful of what we are saying with our faces. Touch is also an important nonverbal communication technique. A nurse needs to know their client's preferences; some clients like touch and others do not. If a client is receptive to touch, a gentle hand on their shoulder, when they are going through a rough time or communicating upsetting medical news, can be very helpful and communicate that you are there for them.

Reflection

Accepting is one of my strengths when it comes to communication. I am good at listening to the client and acknowledging what they are telling me. This helps them feel heard and taken seriously. As someone who has been a patient before, I understand how important it is to have your nurse accept what you are saying and thoughtfully listen to you. Another strength of mine is using distance appropriately, understanding what the client is comfortable with, and knowing my role while in their presence. I am good at asking their permission and telling them what I am doing as I am helping them. I think I'm especially good at distance because I'm very mindful of my personal space and what's going on around me. Making eye contact with my clients is a weakness of mine that I am working on. I understand the importance of making eye contact with clients because it helps show them that I am listening to them. At times I feel uncomfortable making eye contact with people in general, and I always want to make sure I'm making appropriate eye contact with a client. Using the technique of silence is another area that I need to strengthen as a nurse. I don't always know how long to be silent, and it can be uncomfortable to

be silent at times. I do understand that it is very important to use silence to allow clients to absorb information and be thoughtful.

By reminding myself to make eye contact when talking with a client, their family, or other healthcare professionals, I will be mindful of doing so in my communication with them. While it may feel uncomfortable or make me nervous, I know that the more I work on making eye contact, the easier it should be. It may be challenging at times, especially if I have a client who also struggles with making eye contact. I also need to learn about cultural issues and be sensitive about making eye contact with clients who are not comfortable doing so due to their cultural preferences. Improving my use of silence in communication with clients will also help the relationship I have with them. Trying not to automatically fill a silence will allow them time to hear what has been said and think about it. It will give them time to reflect and think of questions. The challenge is to not make them feel like I am necessarily waiting for them to answer me or ask questions; sometimes a client will not want to talk right away. Using silence correctly will give them time to process without making them feel that the conversation is over. Understanding my strengths and weaknesses will help me be more aware of areas I am especially good at and areas I need to be more mindful about. This will improve my communication skills with clients, families, and other healthcare providers. The better the communication, the better the care for the client. Every client is different, and I will need to be aware of what communication skills work best for them.

Conclusion

Communication is one of the key aspects of providing excellent nursing care. It's important to know the many verbal and nonverbal ways we can communicate with our clients

and the ways that they communicate with us. As nurses, we need to be aware of what technique works best for our client and their family. Using techniques like touch and eye contact may be comforting to some clients but intrusive to others. We learn their preferences by being open to them through the many different communication techniques we have learned. Communication techniques help nurses better care for their clients, which in turn should lead to better overall outcomes for the client.