

**Therapeutic Communication in Nursing**

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Therapeutic communication is a form of communication where verbal and nonverbal methods occur face to face, and it helps to build a relationship between the nurse and the patient. The major goal of this communication style is for the patient to overcome any anxiety or stress and be able to discuss issues with a nurse and that's what is important. For patients to be able to share and communicate any problems/difficulties they are experiencing, and this helps the nurse to understand. For this method to be effective, we need an ideal environment that best suits for therapeutic communication such as creating a safe environment. This involves creating a safe atmosphere where individuals would feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and opinions without the fear of being judged. Having individuals feel safe, they are more likely to engage. Another factor that makes up an ideal environment is a place with minimal distraction. A quiet environment helps both nurse and individual to talk one on one and this helps the individual to stay engaged and ensures that they are heard. Therapeutic communication is important in nursing because it helps build trust and understanding between the nurse and individual.

### **Analysis of Therapeutic Techniques**

To promote patient engagement and trust when using verbal therapeutic communication we can use open ended questions. This is a technique where the nurse would ask questions to the patient that require more than a yes or no as an answer. I chose this technique because I feel like this is the best way to get answers from the individual. If I were to be put in the individual's situation, I would rather want someone to ask me questions than me telling them so I would not feel judged. An example of this technique is where a patient who is obese is doing a yearly check up with nutritionist. The nutritionist starts asking questions about the patient's health and proceeds to ask, "What changes have you've made in your diet since the last time we discussed?" This is an open-ended question where the patient would discuss the changes they

have made and add any other details in their diet. Another technique that can be used in verbal therapeutic communication is restating/summarizing. This is where the client's message is in your own words, and you would repeat it to them to clear up any misunderstandings or miscommunication. I chose this because it can be difficult for patients to describe issues, and they might feel as if they aren't understood. Repeating the client's message gives them reassurance that the nurse/professional understands them. An example of this is where a nurse is discussing with a patient on their stay at a hospital. Patient states "The nurses hate me here." And discusses why she feels this way. The nurse then responds with "You feel as though the nurses dislike you here, right?" This helps to make sure that the patient is heard and understood.

One of the challenges I anticipate occurring is the challenge with patients who have hearing impairment since they may not be able to perceive verbal communication accurately. One way I would work around this is by making sure that the patient is able to see my face when speaking so if they can lipread. Also, to hand handouts for them to read and have when needed.

When doing these techniques, we can also incorporate non-verbal therapeutic communication techniques such as silence techniques. When using the silence technique, it allows the patient to have time to reflect and process emotions/feelings. It gives the patient a minute to think through feelings which creates space for them to share more and engage since it can be hard for patients to do. Another non-verbal technique is body language. Body language is crucial in nursing since it plays a significant role in building trust and comfort. Positive body language such as maintaining eye contact, nodding, and facing the patient, helps the patient to feel understood and lets them know that they are being listened to. Showing positive body language demonstrates attentiveness and is an important tool for creating a supportive environment.

**Reflection:**

One of my personal strengths in effective communication is restating/summarizing. I am the type of person that if I do not understand something or I don't fully comprehend I tend to repeat what was said and even better if I am face to face with a person I would repeat the individuals message in my words and if I am wrong then I want for information to be clear so there would be no misunderstanding and this ties up with the technique of clarification too because it helps to ensure that I fully understand what the patient is saying to me.

A weakness that I would have in verbal technique is focusing. Focusing meaning by redirecting the individual when they get off topic. I notice when I talk about something I connect it to other situations, and I start talking about it and completely disregard what I was first talking about. However, a way I would improve this flaw would be having a handout of main topics I want to focus on, and that constant reminder would help me redirect back to the topic and the same way if a patient gets off topic, I will use the handout to remind them of our main topic.

When using non-verbal techniques one of my strengths is listening. I am good at listening to others and acknowledging them and that helps patients because most of them just want to be heard and understood. However, one of my flaws in non-verbal communication is the lack of eye contact I do. I struggle with this because I get anxious and tend to look around when I must keep eye contact for a while. One way I could improve this skill is to make myself comfortable with making eye contact and to not overthink it because it is a technique for others to let me know that they are listening to me.

One challenge that I can come upon is patients who are anxious or upset. They might have struggles to communicate efficiently. A solution that I can first do is by having me and the patient go to a quiet environment where there will be no distraction. This will make sure that I am able to actively listen to the client and that the patient knows they are heard. I would offer support and

just try to create a safe space for the patient. From what I have learned it will make a difference in my nursing care by helping me build stronger patient relationships and making sure that the patient feels safe and supported.

### **Conclusion**

Therapeutic communication is very important in nursing because it builds trust and makes the patient feel supported. Patients in stressful situations often have time struggling on what to say and as a nurse we should be able to implement these techniques to give the best quality care that we can and understand them. Always having a nonjudgmental attitude and use verbal communication such as open-ended questions and clarification. Non-verbal communication is important too such as using the technique silence to validate and acknowledge the patient's feelings. Always remembering that our major goal of this communication style is for the patient to overcome any anxiety or stress and be able to discuss issues with a nurse and that is what is important.

Reference page:

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