

**Communication Paper**

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Therapeutic communication is type of conversation between a patient and care giver that leads to the overall improvement of a patient's wellbeing. In the field of nursing, therapeutic communication can make the patient feel the most comfortable, which then leads to the optimization of their care. One factor that may hinder communication is a busy environment. By having the space free of clutter and keeping it quiet while speaking with a patient, this leads to better communication. A clear space leads to a clear mind. Therapeutic techniques include both nonverbal and verbal communication, and promote the patients well being when done in a positive manner.

### **Analysis of Therapeutic Techniques**

One example of a therapeutic technique with verbal communication is asking open ended questions. This is asking questions that result in an answer that is more than yes or no. I chose this because it is very beneficial in the clinical setting when you want to get more information out of a patient, and I have witnessed it firsthand working in the hospital. An example of when you could open ended questions is when a patient seems to be upset and you are trying to obtain more information to maximize their care. If a patient tells you that they are upset, you could then follow up with "Tell me more about those feelings." This leads to the patient giving you a detailed answer that you could follow up with another open-ended question. A patient could be agitated and constantly trying to get up out of bed, but by simply asking them "What is the matter?", you could get a detailed response that can lead to your next action. By asking open ended questions, you are creating a safe and supportive environment for the patient.

Another example of a therapeutic technique with verbal communication is clarifying. You can do this by asking follow-up questions to ensure you are getting the most accurate information from a client. I picked this therapeutic technique because it is very easy to

misunderstand a patient, and without clarifying can lead to substandard care. One example of when clarifying can be used is if a patient states that they are anxious about a surgery. You could then follow up with “I understand you are anxious about your surgery, what exactly are you feeling anxious about?”. By asking the follow up question about what they are feeling anxious about, you are clarifying their feelings to then direct your care in the proper direction. This could mean requesting an order for anxiety medications or simply just explaining what will happen before going into the operating room. Another example could be when you ask a patient a question, and then they give you an extended and unnecessarily long answer back. Summarizing what they said to repeat it back in a question is also an instance of clarifying.

Barriers of effective communication are also an apparent problem in a nurse and patient relationship. An example of this could be a hearing impairment. This means that the patient is hard of hearing, and sometimes will have hearing aids. This could inhibit your nursing care because a patient could not understand what you are telling them. For instance, you could be giving a patient a new medicine and explaining the side effects of it. If a patient does not hear you, that could create a harmful situation because they do not know when to reach out for assistance when they have a certain symptom. You could get around this by putting in the patients’ hearing aids if they are available. If they do not have hearing aids, then you can stand in front of your patient and enunciate your words, so they fully understand.

Nonverbal communication is also a necessary in having effective and therapeutic communication. Two examples of these include direct eye contact and standing in a relaxed manner. When you make direct eye contact, this shows the patient you are engaged in the conversation. This can enhance verbal communication because you then appear trusting to the patient. Standing in a relaxed manner is another nonverbal cue that can add a lot to a

conversation. When added with asking open ended questions, you are showing the patient that that you are fully catering to them in that moment, and that you are willingly listening.

### **Reflection**

When working in the hospital, I have realized that I have my own strengths and weaknesses when it comes to effective communication. Some positives I have is that I always will listen to the patient and ask questions to help guide their care. Another positive is that I can keep an open mind. I have had some patients tell me some pretty tragic stories of their life, and I will try my best to give an accepting response back. A weakness that I have is that my body language will give off that I am in a rush, so the patient feels that they are being ignored and dismissed. Patients will even ask sometimes if I am busy, or I have somewhere to be after I am done doing their care. I can fix this by doing my care slower and taking my time to make them feel more included and individualized. Another weakness I have is that I tend to call people words of endearment. I sometimes call my patients “Hun” or “Darling”. I have not had anyone tell me this is offensive, but I know it can come off that I am talking down to them. I can fix this by not calling them that at all to stay professional. Interpersonal communication is the exchange of information between two people. One way that I can improve this communication is by speaking with more confidence. Another way I can improve is by clarifying misunderstood information. During my nursing care, I expect there to be challenges that arise in communication. One of these challenges could be a visually impaired patient. To work around this barrier, I can set up the room with tactile objects over buttons. For example, gauze could go

over the call bell button, so they know where to find the call bell when it is needed. Another challenge that could arise is a language barrier. A patient could come in that does not know how to speak English. To overcome this, I can get an interpreter in the room to help explain my care to the patient. With what I have learned, I can improve my nursing care with making the patient feel more included and at ease through ways of communication.

### **Conclusion**

Effective communication is the gateway to having a good relationship with your patient. When you have therapeutic conversations, this can create a safe and endearing environment where a patient feels comfortable sharing information. When that happens, you can direct their care in a positive way to benefit them in all aspects. After reviewing therapeutic techniques, there are things that I can fix in my communication to help benefit me throughout my nursing career. In conclusion, using therapeutic techniques helps the patient and nurse create a relationship to help lead their care in a positive direction.