

Therapeutic Communication in Nursing

Jamesia Alphonse

Margaret H. Rollins School of Nursing

Nursing 101: Foundations of Nursing

Ms. Hesel

October 7, 2024

Communication is essential in building a nurse-patient relationships. It is very important that we as nurses use therapeutic communication skills when interacting with clients. It not only makes the client feel more comfortable and at ease when having a conversation, but it also helps get the information that we need to develop a care plan specific to that person. Therapeutic communication is the use of talking and listening to build a strong, supportive relationship with clients and their families. While having these conversations with our clients it is important that we provide the right setting and environment to make a person want to talk. Two ways to do this is to close the door to provide privacy for the patient and to make sure that the room is not too hot or too cold. This ensures that the patient is comfortable. Having great communication skills could build or break the trust that a client has for their healthcare team, so it is vital that we as healthcare professionals take the time to develop the skills that are needed to effectively communicate with our clients.

Analysis of Therapeutic Techniques

There are many different techniques that are used when having a conversation with a patient. One that I personally like to use is active listening. Active listening is processing and understanding the meaning and intent of a patient's words. It allows the patient to express themselves without interruption and it allows the healthcare provider to get an overview of who the patient is and what they have going on. Active listening requires full focus on the speaker so that the receiver can hear what is being said and observe the body language of the speaker. An example of this would be a nurse sitting and listening to a patient as they express how they are feeling after being diagnosed with cancer. The nurse can hear the words being spoken and gauge the facial gestures of the client.

Another technique in therapeutic communication is restating. Restating is the act of repeating or summarizing what the client said in your own words. I think that restating is a way to make sure that a healthcare provider is understanding exactly what the client is saying. Repeating can also clear up any misconceptions or miscommunications that could possibly happen throughout the conversation. An example of restating would be if a client is describing to a healthcare provider how they have been so anxious that they are unable to sleep, and the healthcare provider clarifies by asking if it is anxiety that is keeping them awake a night. This will make ensure that the client and healthcare provider are on the same page.

Although a person says a lot with words, majority of communication is through non-verbal cues. Two examples of non-verbal communication are facial expressions and body posture. Speaking to a person with a smile on your face and making good eye contact can give off that the healthcare provider is engaged in what the client is saying and increase the trust that the client has for the healthcare provider. A relaxed and open body posture also conveys that a person is interested and focused on the person in front of them. This is why it is so crucial for a person's behavior and body language to match the words that are coming out of their mouth.

There are some barriers that may come with communication. One of them is vocabulary. As healthcare professionals we tend to want to use medical terminology to explain to a person what is going on within their body. A lot of people outside of the medical field will not be able to understand the terms that are being used. It is important to explain at a level that the person can fully understand. A good way of making sure that the client understood is teach back. It is a way of having the person explain in their own words to see if they understand and clear up anything that may be confusing to the client.

Reflection

When it comes to communicating, I am a very good listener. I like to give people the floor to fully express themselves without interrupting. I am also good at understanding exactly what it is that a person is saying to me, and if I don't understand I have no issue with asking questions to clarify or clear up anything I'm confused on. Where I lack is in non-verbal communication. When I am sitting in a chair, I tend to bounce my leg up and down and to a person that doesn't know me quite well they may think that I'm not interested or that I'm in a rush. This has been a habit of mine that I have been working on and for the most part I do very good until I start to get anxious. I also don't always wear a smile on my face, and I've been told that I look mad at times when I wasn't angry at all. I think the best way for me to work on my interpersonal skills is to work on my body language. I could do this by trying to smile more often and keeping an open, welcoming body posture. I know that through my career I will come across a few barriers. I may come across some people who do not speak the same language as me or there may be a time that I'm working with children, and I won't know how to explain to them in terms that they understand. The way I plan on working around these barriers is using a translator when there is one available. I could also use pictures or demonstrations for the children. I know that as I continue to put into practice what I have learned about the uses of therapeutic communication, I will become better at it

Conclusion

Communicating with different people isn't always easy. It takes time, effort and patience to develop skills to effectively have conversations with people from different social and cultural backgrounds. The people that healthcare providers treat will always remember who made them feel like they were heard and cared for and who made them feel like they were just another

diagnosis. So, it is important that all healthcare providers take the time out to use therapeutic communication when we are having interactions with our clients. This way they will never have question their value to us.