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Mental Health Case: Sandra Littlefield

Guided Reflection Questions

Opening Questions

How did the simulated experience of Sandra Littlefield's case make you feel?

The simulation made me check my own personal thoughts of this patient as if it were a real life situation. The tone of her voice did make me feel a bit defensive but I had to overcome those feelings even in my responses to her questions. Then as the simulation continued, her personality changed and I was able to better understand more about her disorder due to the "splitting" factor.

Talk about what went well in the scenario.

I believe I was able to ask the questions appropriately and in a timely manner. I even changed my tactic of asking questions to assessing the patient due to her continuous complaints of pain. I then returned to asking more about her condition when her personality changed. At that point, I realized that her "splitting" factor would have conducted a whole different scenario if I continued with the same questions as before. Which gave me a better understanding of her disorder.

Reflecting on Sandra Littlefield's case, were there any actions you would do differently? If so, what were these actions and why?

I should have been more aware of my nontherapeutic techniques when answering the patient's questions. I should have used more firm boundaries and not have been drawn to the patient's splitting behavior. The healthcare provider can be easily manipulated by the changed personalities if their guard is down.

Scenario Analysis Questions*

PCC/S What should be the nurse's priority when caring for Sandra Littlefield?

The priority for the nurse is to be aware of the instability of the patient's mood and splitting behaviors. The focus should also be on protecting themselves due to the patient's visible irritability and aggressive tone.

What action should be initiated to maintain personal safety?

Do not make matters worse by using aggressive or defensive tones toward the patient. Keeping a safe but therapeutic distance is important. The nurse should never allow the patient get between themselves and the door for escape. A guard should be near if the patient begins to get aggressive.

If the nurse did not recognize the importance of personal safety, what could be the consequence?

The nurse could have been physically hurt by the patient. Due to the patient's comments regarding her thoughts of pain, suicide and murdering of others, she is very unstable and could have possibly killed the nurse.

PCC/S Discuss the importance of therapeutic communication and setting limits for Sandra Littlefield.

The use of therapeutic communication allows for firm boundaries and also gaining the trust of the patients. If the nurse is considered the "bad guy," the patient will not respect the fact that they are there to help. Being truthful about the patient's condition shows that nothing is being kept from them and allows them to be part of their own treatment plan. Setting limits will show that the healthcare provider is still in charge but welcomes the patient to have a say in their treatment and the overall outcome. This will improve the bond so both parties are satisfied and safe.

T&C/S What members of the healthcare team should be involved in Sandra Littlefield's case?

The nurse, psychiatrists, healthcare provider, social services should all be part of the patient's case.

Concluding Questions

Describe how you would apply the knowledge and skills that you obtained in Sandra Littlefield's case to an actual patient care situation.

I would apply the use of extreme caution and patience with this type of situation. I was not expecting the patient to change behaviors so suddenly but at the same time, I let my guard down when the situation changed to less stressful. How the patient can manipulate the situation can be overwhelming if one is not trained or has the experience with personality disorders. Being firm and using the appropriate therapeutic communication I believe is key when dealing with such patients. I would do my best to keep from making matters worse by being defensive if the situation became heated for the protection of the patient as well as for myself. Also, maintaining safety is important to keep the safe distance and be aware of surroundings. The goal is safety for the patient and personnel, but these types of disorders can be unpredictable.

* The Scenario Analysis Questions are correlated to the Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN) competencies: Patient-Centered Care (PCC), Teamwork and Collaboration (T&C), Evidence-Based Practice (EBP), Quality Improvement (QI), Safety (S), and Informatics (I). Find more information at: <http://qsen.org/>