

Researcher: Eva Gibbs

**Question:** Do novice nurses need to engage in more difficult conversations with patients, rather than avoiding difficult conversations, to gain more effective communication skills with patients?

**Summary:**

In the article American Nurse, Sandy Bailey states, "Difficult conversations provide opportunities for feedback that will improve communication, overall patient care, and the work environment. Avoiding isn't an option" (Bailey, 2021). Difficult conversations are hard to engage in as a novice nurse. Whether its with your coworkers or patients it is still difficult. They are the ones who get bullied and avoid difficult conversations with coworkers. Having a effective open communication relationship with your team can help with you care of patients as well. One of the hardest takes of nursing has to be communicating with loved ones about a family death or talking to patients about dying. As a nurse you would just love to avoid these conversations all together. Keith Carlson states, "Nursing care at the end of life is crucial aspect of supporting the dying patient and their loved ones during a highly emotional process" (Carlson, 2021). It seems to be our gateway as novice nurses to avoid these conversations with patients and hand them off to someone that can communicate better with them. Learning to engage in more difficult conversations with patients, coworkers, and family members will gain confidence and gain more effective communication skills.

"Families feeling seen and heard can be achieved by the nurse using high-level listening skills, receptive body language, and verbally paraphrasing what the speaker has said so that they know their words are being accurately received. The nurse's ability to maintain eye contact and demonstrate caring and compassion is essential for loved ones to feel supported and acknowledged" (Carlson, 2021).

**Conclusion:**

Engaging younger nurses and less experienced nurses will help them gain more effective communication skills with not only their patients but also family members and coworkers. Having an open mind, having the ability to show grace and understanding in tough conversations, and learning to understand and collaborate with one another are some goals the novice nurse can gain before entering into a difficult conversation. (Bailey, 2021). Even involving student nurses in their difficult conversations with coworkers and patient death to family members will help the novice nurse gain more understanding and what to expect when that time comes.

**Work Cited:**

**Primary Article:**

Carlson, Keith Bsn. "How Can Nurses Communicate with Families During End-of-Life Care."

*The NursingCE Blog*, 26 June 2021, [www.nursingce.com/blog/family-communication-during-end-of-life-care](http://www.nursingce.com/blog/family-communication-during-end-of-life-care).

**Secondary Article:**

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2021, [www.myamericannurse.com/seven-steps-for-having-difficult-conversations](http://www.myamericannurse.com/seven-steps-for-having-difficult-conversations).

**Tertiary Article:**

Contributor, N. "Communication Skills 6: Difficult and Challenging Conversations." *Nursing*

*Times*, 9 Dec. 2019,

[www.nursingtimes.net/clinical-archive/assessment-skills/communication-skills-6-difficult-and-challenging-conversations-20-04-2018](http://www.nursingtimes.net/clinical-archive/assessment-skills/communication-skills-6-difficult-and-challenging-conversations-20-04-2018).