

There are several things family or friends have told me about how I communicate verbally and nonverbally that I can reflect on.

For example, quite a few of my near relatives that I live with often note how quiet I can be. When alone with someone from my family or with just a few people, I often don't feel the need to communicate verbally, in other words I don't "make small talk" much. Even when there are several people talking, I usually don't do that much verbal communication unless I am spoken to. This is a part of my mannerisms for communication, I find that unless I am interested in something personally or unless something should be of importance to me (many things need communication in school, work and in the nursing profession which require verbal communication), I do not prefer communicating verbally but instead nonverbally. Reflecting on my verbal communication, I would say that I am not characterized as a verbal communicator, probably because of my smaller "social battery". I often anticipate having to communicate a lot verbally and I do so sparingly outside of those times. I suspect that because of this, it is sometimes hard for me to communicate my own thoughts or feelings, but I have more experience in going through and exploring others' feelings and thoughts.

Instead of being very verbal or verbally in touch with others for long periods of time, I tend to communicate much more with facial expressions and through listening. Some of my closest friends and family have told me that I am good at, essentially, active listening. Even if I don't have something I want to communicate to someone, I am able to listen and be interested in the person themselves and what they are experiencing and ask them questions about it. As I very rarely do more talking than listening, I end up replying to thoughts more than putting in my own, so friends have told me that I understand them well. I adopted active listening after having talked with other active listeners and realized that it is a consistent and appropriate way to communicate effectively. I have always made an effort to maintain eye contact since then as well. Reflecting on my nonverbal communication, I would say mainly utilizing nonverbal communication and having active listening skills has made me more adaptable to different kinds of people with different views or experiences.

Communication is one of the most important aspects of nursing, and recognizing the positive and negatives parts of my style of communication could help me become more successful. I think that so far, be it with patients or inter-professionally, my communication skills have affected my experiences as I expected them to. My verbal communication could use improvement, as knowing exactly what to say when put into a tough spot by a nurse or when a patient expresses very negative or hostile feelings would be a challenge for me as I am now. There are also some things that I must adjust to in consistently developing a therapeutic relationship with my patients. For example, active listening is effective especially for building trust and rapport with patients but can lead me to engage in some non-therapeutic communications techniques, I have personally caught myself trying to interpret too much, or when I get comfortable and trusting with a patient, trying to input too much.

Some positives, however, are that active listening has had some amazing impacts on how some of my patients view me after we have talked for a while, especially once I get them able to start communicating more freely about anything they want. I feel various nonverbal communication aspects can affect how a patient views you initially, a very important time in building rapport, so

I want to get better at certain parts of nonverbal communication (balancing a friendly and professional attitude, posturing and gesture use, and tone of voice) to give my patients the impression that I am friendly and can understand them.