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I am a very talkative person and I enjoy giving people advice, so I have gotten some comments on how I handle such. People often say that I am good at relating myself to their situation when I am trying to give them advice. That is, I try to put myself into their shoes and imagine how a certain situation would make me feel if I was experiencing it myself. Responding this way in a conversation allows me to empathize with the person I am talking to, as I am trying to view the situation from their point of view. This self awareness would allow me to build a therapeutic relationship with, for example, a patient in the clinical setting this semester because I can take a mental crisis that the patient may be experiencing, place myself in their shoes of how I may feel if I were in the same situation, and thus build empathy towards the patient. Building this empathy would allow the patient to feel comfortable with me and more willing to open up about their feelings.

Through my work with patients in a hospital setting by working as a nurse aide, I have been given some feedback from my coworkers that have observed my encounters with patients. Nurses and also my supervisor have come to me and told me that certain patients had good things to say about my communication with them such as that they felt listened to by me and comfortable opening up. I believe this came about because I try to be an active listener when engaging with my patients, in that I maintain eye contact with them and try to appear relaxed—not pacing the room or doing anything that may make them more anxious.

Although I obtain traits of an active listener, I also have a certain weakness when it comes to communicating with close relatives/friends that they often point out, and I think is important to be discussed. When talking with people and especially when talking with groups of people, I am terrible about interrupting, I will admit. I often feel like a conversation is carrying on so long and so heavily between other people in a group, that if I don't interrupt, I won't get to say what I wanted to say at all. This is hard because sometimes I feel like while I am waiting my turn to speak and it is taking awhile, this means that the other people of a group would rather me not be there to speak with at all. This is a huge point that I must be self aware of when trying to develop therapeutic communication and relationships, because if I interrupt people then I would be interfering with my ability to actively listen. I can imagine someone being really upset about a situation trying to explain how they feel and getting interrupted by me; that would probably make them feel much more upset and less likely to continue opening up to me. This is a trait I need to work out so that I can allow my patients to feel actively listened to by me and therefore more likely to open up about their feelings.

When communicating, my family members often comment on my loudness and/or tone. The book defines this as paralanguage which I never knew had a term before, but using such incorrectly could definitely impact therapeutic communication. A lot of times my family tells me that I am speaking too loudly, or as most people have probably been told at least once in their life to “watch their tone.” Being self aware of this will help me build therapeutic communication/relationships with my patients because I want to make sure I have a good volume for them to be able to hear me well but not too loud, and to also have a neutral tone that allows

them to know I am listening with no judgement. Speaking too loudly with a patient could cause them to become anxious and would definitely be nontherapeutic to them.