

Unit 2: Psychiatric Nursing

ONLINE CONTENT (1H)

Learning Objectives:

- Identify components of nonverbal expression. (3)*
- Describe therapeutic and nontherapeutic verbal communication techniques. (3)*
- Describe active listening. (3)*

*Course Objectives

Write a one-page journal reflecting on some things that friends or close relatives have told you characterize your style of communicating and relating to others. How can you use this self-awareness to promote the development of therapeutic relationships and communications? Please include types of verbal and nonverbal communication techniques as well as if you are an active listener.

This one-page journal should be single spaced, Calibri or Times New Roman font, and 12 point.

Place this completed assignment in the Unit 2: Reflection Paper Assignment drop box by June 2, 2025 at 0800.

In order to receive full credit (1H class time) for this assignment, it must be completed in its entirety by the due date/time assigned. Any assignment not completed in its entirety will result in missed class time.

While reading this chapter, I came to recognize that I frequently rely on non-therapeutic communication techniques in my everyday interactions. Over the past year, I have been consciously working to improve my communication style. During a period of personal growth, I attended therapy for several months, where my therapist encouraged me to express my thoughts and emotions more openly with those around me. Around the same time, I met my now-boyfriend, Carson. Since then, I have been making a concerted effort to communicate my feelings and thoughts more transparently with him.

Carson has often shared that he can gauge my emotional state based on my facial expressions and body language. He's pointed out that when I'm upset or saddened, I tend to withdraw physically; I become silent, turn away from him, and avoid eye contact. These nonverbal cues, though unintentional, have had an emotional impact on him, and his feedback has helped me become more self-aware of how I communicate nonverbally. I now strive to verbalize what is bothering me rather than shutting down, allowing us to address issues constructively and move forward together.

This growing awareness of my own non-therapeutic communication habits has already proven valuable and will continue to guide me as I interact with patients throughout this semester. Developing self-awareness about my communication style allows me to better interpret and respond to the nonverbal signals of others, including patients who may not be ready or able to articulate their feelings verbally.

Though I have noticed that much of my communication is nonverbal, reading this chapter and reflecting on feedback from people in my life made me realize that I also use verbal communication techniques. For example, I've been told that when I'm excited or joyful, my voice rises in volume as I continue speaking. Conversely, when I'm upset or angry, my tone flattens and my voice remains calm and monotone, lacking emotion.

One specific therapeutic technique discussed in the chapter that I often use without realizing is "making observations." In my daily conversations, I tend to point out when someone visibly reacts to a topic, whether with happiness, sadness, or frustration. This simple observation often opens the door for deeper conversation, as the person usually feels seen and is more willing to elaborate on their feelings or experiences.

Regarding active listening, I've come to recognize that I generally embody many of the traits associated with being an active listener, although I also see areas where I can continue to grow. Active listening involves several key characteristics, including offering the speakers one's full attention, listening to understand rather than respond, utilizing appropriate nonverbal cues to show attentiveness, asking clarifying questions, and paraphrasing the speaker's message to confirm understanding.

I believe that, for the most part, I practice active listening effectively in my personal and academic life. When someone is speaking to me, I make a conscious effort to give them my undivided attention. I avoid distractions, such as looking at my phone or thinking about how I'll respond while they are talking. My primary goal is to fully comprehend what the other person is trying to communicate, rather than preparing my own thoughts while they are still speaking.

That said, I recognize that I am not perfect in this area. There are times when, despite my best intentions, I find myself rehearsing my response before the other person has finished speaking. This tendency can detract from the quality of my listening and reduce the speaker's sense of being fully heard. I am working on being more mindful in these moments by gently bringing my focus back to the speaker and reminding myself that understanding must come before responding.

I also try to be conscious of my nonverbal communication during conversations. I use gestures such as nodding, making appropriate eye contact, and smiling to show that I am engaged. However, I've noticed that at times I become overly focused on how I am presenting myself nonverbally, to the point that it can distract me from truly hearing what the speaker is

saying. This self-consciousness is something I am actively trying to balance, ensuring that my body language is supportive without losing focus on the actual content of the conversation.

In addition, I often ask questions during conversations to clarify what the speaker means. This not only helps me gain a deeper understanding but also shows the speaker that I am genuinely interested in what they are saying. I also make it a point to paraphrase or summarize parts of the conversation to ensure that I've interpreted their message correctly. This helps build mutual understanding and strengthens the overall communication process.

In summary, this chapter has deepened my understanding of how both verbal and nonverbal communication can influence interactions. By reflecting on my own tendencies and continuing to develop self-awareness, I aim to adopt more therapeutic communication strategies that will strengthen my relationships, both personally and professionally. Also, I see active listening as a valuable skill that requires continuous practice and self-awareness. While I do believe I demonstrate many of the characteristics of an active listener, I also recognize that there is always room for improvement. As I continue to work on refining my communication skills, especially in the context of therapeutic interactions, I aim to become more consistent and present in all of my conversations.