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Unit 2: Reflection Paper

What makes an individual a therapeutic communicator? After reflecting with friends and family about the characteristics I exhibit, it has given me an opportunity to reflect on my communication skills when speaking to others. As written in our textbook, having a therapeutic relationship is defined as an interaction between two people in which input from both participants contributes to a climate of healing, growth promotion, and/or illness prevention. This can be shown as both verbal and nonverbal, and its main purpose is to bring a change in the person's life. It requires the person providing the therapeutic communication to have self-awareness for people's opinions and a deeper understanding for the greater good of others.

My communication style was characterized by others as being upbeat and bubbly, as well as an active listener who provides great advice to others in times of stress. Active listening is the action of being attentive and to really desire to hear and understand what the person is saying in that conversation. In the workplace, I am seen as an individual who is always willing to drop my tasks and busy schedule to help others in need. One of my main goals in nursing is to promote and restore health, as well as building trust and connection through a joyous attitude. Having effective rapport plays an important role in communication. Establishing rapport is accomplished by developing respect and trust through friendliness and a nonjudgemental attitude. In return, this will improve the patient's hospital stay as well as boost their immune system which speeds up the recovery process.

There are various ways that a person can show components of nonverbal expression, resulting in therapeutic communication: Body movement and posture, touch, facial expressions, eye behavior, and physical appearance. Studies have shown that nonverbal communication is the framework of effective and powerful conversations. When speaking with an individual, it is important to have open body language, provide eye contact, and positive facial expressions which reveal the emotions that the person is feeling. I have been told that I have a quality of genuineness, which also helps to guide the conversation, providing a sense of comfortability and allowing others to be vulnerable.

There are countless verbal techniques that can be used in communication, both therapeutic and nontherapeutic. A specific therapeutic, verbal technique that I find myself using often is the concept of accepting. This helps display an attitude of understanding and a willingness to interact. This is accomplished through active listening and verbalizing that you are considering what they are experiencing by showing empathy and support. Nontherapeutic, verbal communication techniques are considered to be barriers to conversation and should be avoided to improve interactions with others. A nontherapeutic technique that I want to work on avoiding is giving advice to others without allowing the person to think and solve the problem more independently. A better alternative to this technique would be asking open-ended questions, allowing the person to explore alternate options regarding decision-making.

In the past, I have had multiple personal experiences where others viewed me as 'too nice' and asked why I never spoke negatively about anyone. I can remember pondering about this comment after the fact and questioning my own values. However, I now look at this characteristic in myself as a great quality. I look highly that I have the capability to fill people's days with happiness, especially as I become further into my future career of nursing. I can use my trait of being kind as a strength to promote the development of therapeutic relationships and communication. This can be through creating a space where individuals feel safe, respected, and valued with the framework in mind to make people into a better person.