My friends and family have often described my communication style as attentive, empathetic, and welcoming. I am someone who always listens. I can sometimes have very few words to say, but being an attentive listener can be a good thing especially when someone needs a listening ear. They would say that I respond with a lot of thoughtfulness. I try to see positive and negatives in situations and make light of things if they come up. I have also been told that my voice is calm, and that other people feel comfortable when talking to me. I come off a lot more reserved at school, but my family and friends are the ones who truly know who I am. Hearing these things over the years has made me more aware of the impact my verbal and nonverbal communication can have, especially when it comes to being in vulnerable situations and speaking with patients.

Since nursing school, I have actually started using more open-ended questions when talking with friends and family. Since open-ended questions encourage patients to share more of their thoughts and feelings, I have found myself using them more now than ever. It has benefited my communication style a lot and I can carry on conversations a lot longer, even with strangers. I feel like nursing school has actually been an essential tool for me to help build therapeutic relationships with patients. One of the most consistent things I have heard is how empathetic I am. This would explain a lot about me and a part of why I want to be a nurse one day. I feel like there are patients who often remember people who show empathy and how a nurse/healthcare provider has impacted their life. Since patients are often in vulnerable states, I think being empathetic is important. I feel like I was born an empathic person, it isn't something I grew into. I have always had compassion towards others, and I try to put myself in other people's shoes. Nonverbally, I can maintain good eye contact. This helps whoever I am talking to feel like I am listening and engaged in what they have to say. I typically have a soft and warm approach which can help build trust and communication. Sometimes having very few words to say can be beneficial because it shows my ability to sit and listen without rushing and it can make someone feel valued. Being aware of these communication styles has helped me strengthen relationships in both personal and professional settings. Touch is another big one that I have noticed about myself (and others). When someone is upset, I instantly gravitate towards them and offer a hand. In nursing I know that these types of communication styles must be used carefully and appropriately, but it's more used towards a friend who is hurting.

As I continue through nursing school, I know how important it is to build on my communication and therapeutic communication skills. I know that it is important to adjust my style based on how each patient is feeling. I hope I will continue to grow as a person, and I can continue to be attentive, empathic, and welcoming to patients. I hope that I can help create a safe environment where my patients feel comfortable with me and are able to be vulnerable. Being self-aware allows me to be able to recognize my different communication styles and how this will affect patients. Having therapeutic relationships is goal oriented and the nurse and patient get to decide together what the goal of the relationship will be. So as a nurse I think it is very important how you approach a patient in order to establish a therapeutic relationship with them. I believe that the most important thing about therapeutic communication and being a nurse as we learn is to be nonjudgemental and give patients a sense of trust.