

Reflective Case Study Gerontology Assignment:

ATI: Nurse's Touch 2.0: The Communicator 2.0 Video Interaction: Client Comfort and End of Life Care

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What was learned from this scenario?

Some of the things learned from this scenario by this student nurse include the ability to communicate with dying patients and their relatives. This student nurse has only had a handful of real-world experiences with this, and all of these instances have been in the emergency department when a patient has died while unconscious without any awareness that their death was approaching, so seeing the portrayal of patient death in a hospice-like environment was new for this student nurse. Additionally, the nurse in this scenario demonstrated knowledge of when to consult the nurse manager for help in discussing the case with the family, and this student nurse believes it is always important to know when to seek assistance if one's own skills or confidence will not aid the patient or their family.

Identify the biggest takeaways.

a) Explain the factors that influenced this decision.

After completing this scenario, this student nurse largely feels the most important takeaway is that communication during the end-of-life scenario is not entirely different from any other instance of communication, as therapeutic language will still be a large factor aiding in completing the conversation and aiding all involved parties in reaching a mutual understanding. This student nurse identified this as the biggest takeaway because he has always viewed the end-of-life scenario as one requiring extensive knowledge and experience with this type of situation, but, after completing this simulation, this student nurse feels instead that simply approaching the situation with the ability to communicate therapeutically will help it to go smoothly.

What are some of the main problems or key issues expressed in the scenario?

The problems expressed in this scenario are the patient's daughters disagreeing on whether the patient should be on hospice, the patient's sister and daughter disagreeing on whether to involve the hospital chaplain, the patient's grandchildren causing noise that is preventing her from getting adequate rest, the patient's daughters disagreeing on whether she should be administered pain medication, and the patient's nurse requesting that the nurse manager and the patient's physician re-discuss the terms of the patient's updated plan of care with her family.

What were some of the challenging decisions the nurse needed to make?**a) Describe the rationale behind these decisions.**

The nurse initially had to mediate discrepancies between the daughters' beliefs on hospice/palliative care. This was to ensure the patient's daughters understood each other's concerns and to realize the best course of treatment for their mother. Later, the nurse had to mediate a disagreement on whether to involve religious services, as the patient's sister wished for the hospital chaplain to intervene while the patient's daughter insisted that the patient was not religious. This is important to ensure the patient's spiritual needs are met such that, in turn, her psychological needs are met in regards to her end-of-life wishes. This will also bring peace of mind to her family, as they will know that her spiritual wishes have been fulfilled. The nurse was also forced to confront the patient's inability to attain proper rest due to noise disturbance from her grandchildren. Adequate rest is important at the end of life to maximize patient comfort. This is also relevant to the patient's daughters disagreeing on whether she should be given pain medication after the patient reported pain. The nurse's role at the end of life is, again, to maximize patient comfort, and, thus, it is important to determine whether the patient would want pain medication. This would also help the patient's daughters to know that her pain is being

addressed properly per the patient's wishes. Lastly, the nurse chose to ask the nurse manager and the patient's provider to aid the nurse in providing further clarification on the plan of care to the patient's family, as the nurse believed the patient and her family were not in a cohesive place of understanding. It is important that everyone in the patient's end-of-life scenario to understand the plan of care so that all involved parties have understanding and the most possible peace of mind.

What factors influenced the nursing decisions and responses during the scenario?

- a) Explain the response.**
- b) How will a nurse respond if this scenario presents again in the future?**

For each conflict or misunderstanding, this student nurse opted for the most therapeutic response that would encourage the involved party to either disclose more information or would allow that person to essentially determine their own needs and way of solving the problem. This is essential to all nursing activity, as this prevents the other person from feeling encroached upon or even slighted while also allowing the nurse to continue the conversation to reach a suitable conclusion. Should a similar scenario present in the future, this student nurse would think back on simulations and real-world scenarios to determine what worked best in each situation. By drawing on prior experiences, this student nurse hopes to achieve the best possible outcome by realizing which actions/responses aided the conversation in resolving properly rather than failing to do so.

Have similar situations been experienced in current clinical rotations?

- a) How did nursing or others respond to the situation? Please explain.**
- b) Describe successful communication strategies used or experienced in the clinical setting.**

This student nurse has not encountered similar situations during nursing school clinicals, but similar situations have been encountered in real-world scenarios at work in the Sarah Bush Lincoln emergency department. The specific scenario was a patient receiving CPR, which this student nurse performed as the tech in the department. The patient's family initially disagreed on

whether to stop the resuscitative treatment, but the nursing staff in addition to the patient's provider were able to discuss the outlook if the patient were to be revived, and the patient's family opted to discontinue the measures. In scenarios like that one, communication largely focuses on presenting objective facts and helping the patient's family to realize their wishes if they are unsure of which decision to make.

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of having families discuss treatment options, including end-of-life decisions before a loved one becomes ill or early in a terminal illness.

Obvious advantages of discussing treatment options (particularly end-of-life decisions) include ensuring the patient's wishes and family's needs are met during the treatment scenario. This will help not only with the legal aspect of providing care but also the well-being aspect of it. By clarifying end-of-life and other treatment decisions, there is less room for a treatment to be deemed as falling outside of anyone's specific wishes, and this prevents the need for legal intervention that may lead to fighting amongst family members or the healthcare members losing their ability to practice. This also emotionally protects the patient and their family by helping to ensure wishes are followed so that there is less room for someone to wonder "Could I have done more?" This will help treatment and end-of-life decisions to be even slightly less stressful since clarity was reached before the process was initiated. One disadvantage of discussing these subjects prior to their relevance is that these conversations may be distressing due to their subject matter often directly pertaining to death.