

Therapeutic Communication as a Core Competency in Nursing Practice

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Abstract: *In the nursing profession, effective communication is recognized as a crucial component of patient care and healthcare delivery, involving nurses, patients, their families, and other healthcare professionals exchanging information, ideas, feelings, and concerns. Communication is vital in nursing for several crucial reasons like patient care, patient safety, building trust, patient education, team collaboration, conflict resolution, advocacy etc., Successful communication in nursing involves more than just sharing information; it also entails developing rapport, guaranteeing patient safety, encouraging comprehension, and fostering productive teamwork, all of which are critical to providing patients with high - quality care. Nurses use therapeutic communication techniques to facilitate clients'*

awareness of their thoughts and feelings and mutually develop goals and an individualized plan of care. Nurses provide reflective and nonjudgmental feedback to clients to help them clarify their thoughts, goals, and coping strategies¹. Absolutely, numerous research studies highlight the critical importance of effective communication in nursing practice. The majority of research continually demonstrates the critical role that good communication plays in nursing, both in terms of enhancing patient outcomes and satisfaction and fostering a more secure and cooperative healthcare environment. These results highlight how crucial it is to incorporate communication skills into nursing practice and education in order to improve care quality overall.

Keywords: communication skills, therapeutic communication, nursing profession.

1. Introduction

Information transfer is a typical definition of communication. There is debate on its exact definition, whether inadvertent or unsuccessful transmissions are included, and whether communication creates meaning in addition to transmitting it². In essence, communication is the process of interacting with others and their surroundings. Through these kinds of encounters, two or more people can affect one another's attitudes, thoughts, and beliefs.³

Communication plays a vital and therapeutic role in health care settings. Clear communication at work can help to prevent misunderstandings, develop strong relationships with team members⁴. Human existence and survival, as well as the functioning of an organization, depend on effective communication. It involves the creation and propagation of concepts, knowledge, viewpoints, facts, and emotions from one location, person, or group to another. The Directing function of management relies heavily on communication.

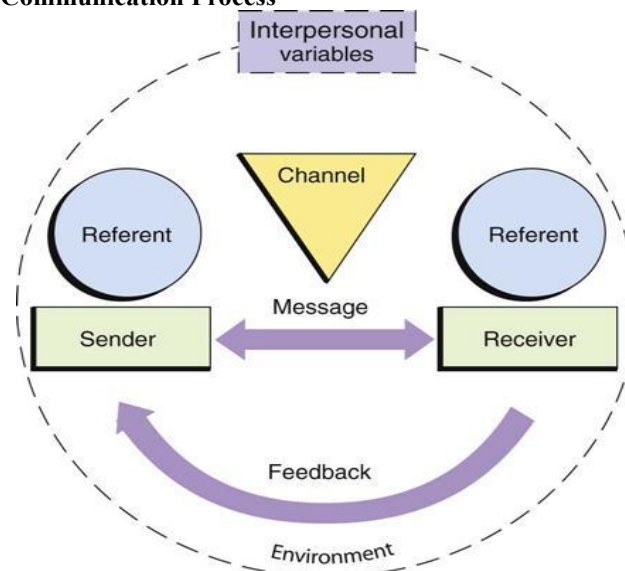
Effective communication is a crucial component of patient care and healthcare delivery in the nursing profession. It involves nurses, patients, their families, and other healthcare professionals exchanging information, ideas, feelings, and concerns.

Purpose of Communication in Nursing⁵

- Collection of basic patient's assessment data.
- To start up with effective interventions.
- To evaluate the outcomes of interventions.

- To find out change which aids in promoting health
- To take measures for preventing legal problems associated with nursing practice
- To analyze factors affecting the health team

Communication Process⁶



Referent: The referent triggers one person to communicate with another. In a hospital setting, stimuli such as sights, sounds, Odors, time schedules, messages, objects, emotions, sensations, perceptions, ideas, and other cues initiate communication. Understanding which stimulus initiates communication allows for more efficient message

development and organization, as well as better comprehension of meaning in another's message. A patient's plea for assistance triggered by difficulty breathing elicits a different nursing response than a request incites by hunger.

Sender and Receiver: The sender is the person or entity that initiates the communication by encoding a message and sending it through a channel. The receiver is the person or entity that receives the message and decodes it to understand its meaning⁷ for e. g. like when a nurse witness and hear about the suffering of the patient. Finally, the recipient gives the sender feedback on the communication and, if necessary, requests more explanation.

Messages: The content of the communication comprises of vocal, nonverbal, and symbolic language/ expressions. Two nurses can offer the same information but express totally different messages due to their distinct communication styles. Same message can be understood differently by two people. Effective and clear communication must be done so the receiver understands the message⁸. For instance, Nurses should speak slowly and clearly to ensure understanding. To guarantee that the message is heard and understood, timing is essential. This entails paying attention to the demands and worries of the clients.

Channels: Methods of communicating and receiving signals via the visual, aural, and tactile senses. Facial expressions convey visual messages, spoken words communicate through auditory channels, and touch communicates through tactile/ tangible channels. With the advancement of common verbal language, the communication focus has switched to predominantly obtaining information from a single channel - words, but a message in its fullest form is frequently formed from up to five channels: face, body, voice, verbal content, and verbal style. Nurses helps the patients and their family members to comprehend medical needs and treatments through all five channels of communication. There is more to verbal communication than merely talking⁹.

Feedback: In communication, feedback refers to the recipient's response, reaction, or information to the sender. It is the process of informing someone about areas in which they need to improve¹⁰. Giving and getting high - quality feedback is an important part of professional development and skill enhancement. It promotes introspective learning and, along with excellent communication, fosters a safe and supportive atmosphere in which nurses can thrive¹¹.

Interpersonal Variables: Communication is influenced by factors within both the sender and the recipient. Each person perceives, analyzes, and comprehends events differently depending on their experiences¹². Interpersonal communication in nursing has a direct impact on patient satisfaction by increasing understanding, minimizing misunderstanding, fostering trust, and improving comfort. Effective communication can also help patients feel heard, valued, and included in their own treatment plans¹³.

Environment: The environment is the context for sender - receiver communication. For efficient communication, the environment must provide participants with physical and emotional comfort and safety. Noise, temperature

fluctuations, distractions, and a lack of privacy or space cause confusion, tension, and discomfort. Environmental distractions are widespread in health care settings, interfering with communications transmitted between individuals. You regulate the atmosphere to create favourable conditions for good communication. To make a patient feel at ease and heard, a nurse may decide to discuss sensitive health information with them in a quiet, private area¹⁴.

Significance of Healthy and Effective Communication in Nursing

Good communication skills are required while working in teams with other nurses and professionals from different specialties. It's also critical for patient - focused care¹⁵.

There have been several studies examining the significance of healthy communication among nurses and between nurses and patients.

Ezennakwe, Juliet Okwuchukwu (March 20, 2023) has conducted a research study on effective communication practices in nursing and challenges: the perspective of student nurses in Anambra State. The population included 425 students from two randomly selected nursing schools and one Department of Nursing Science in Anambra State. Yaro Yamane's formula was used to obtain a sample size of 206. Most students (99.5%) defined effective communication as a two - way process in which the sender transmits a message that the receiver easily absorbs and understands. 97.1% viewed it as encompassing patient education, informed consent, and involving the client in their care. 94.6% believed that asking open - ended questions, and 95.2% and 99% considered attention to non - verbal communication to be the best strategies for effective communication in nursing practice¹⁶.

Wieke Noviyanti L, Ahsan A, Sudartya TS (April 15, 2021) executed A research study on exploring the relationship between nurses' communication satisfaction and patient safety culture. This is a cross - sectional study that used proportional random sampling to collect data from 51 nurses. The Spearman rank test was used to assess the results. The bulk of the nurses were female, aged 20 to 30, and had 1 to 5 years of work experience. Results: The findings revealed a substantial link between nurse communication satisfaction and the quality of the patient safety culture. Furthermore, the higher the nurses' level of communication satisfaction, the higher the quality of the patient safety culture ($r = 0.338$). Therefore, this study describes the relationship between nurse communication satisfaction and patients' safety culture¹⁷.

John Enoredia Elizabeth (2016) has executed one study on Significance of effective communication during health education in nursing. This study advances nurses' understanding of communication, which is essential to any organization and serves as its cornerstone. A positive public perception of the medical industry is promoted, early diagnosis is made easier, and communities at large gain confidence in the profession thanks to excellent communication that enhances patient care quality and continuity. As it is essential for patient safety, illness prevention, treatment, and health promotion, the study also

highlights the significance of efficient communication between nurses, patients, and other healthcare professionals during health education. A strong communication skill set is also required of nurses because poor communication can lead to medical errors due to a lack of rules or format. Nurses are also trained to develop good communication skills, as the absence of guidelines can hinder effective communication¹⁸.

Dorothy Afriyie (2020) conducted an evolutionary concept analysis on Effective communication between nurses and patients. This concept analysis uses Rodgers's (1989) evolutionary framework of concept analysis to elucidate effective communication and its effect on patient care. The presentation includes surrogate phrases, qualities, antecedents, consequences, linked concepts, and a sample case for effective communication between nurses and patients. It was found that effective communication is a multifaceted concept that nurses and patients can both agree upon. This affects clinical reasoning, decision - making, and the nursing process. Thus, it encourages excellent nursing care, favorable patient outcomes, and nurse and patient satisfaction with treatment¹⁹.

Abukari Kwame and Pammla M. Petrucka (2021) has conducted A literature - based study of patient centered care and communication in nurse – patient interactions: barriers, facilitators and the way forward. They found that Patient care and recovery depend heavily on efficient communication between patients and healthcare professionals. As a result, patient - centered communication is essential to guaranteeing the best possible health outcomes, reflecting long - standing nursing principles that care needs to be tailored to each patient's needs and circumstances. In clinical settings, achieving patient - centered care and communication among nurses and patients can be challenging due to several hurdles, including institutional, communication, environmental, and behavioral barriers. The PC4 Model is a proposed framework that aims to familiarize healthcare workers with the various aspects of care practices, discourse contexts, and communication contents and forms that can either facilitate or hinder the implementation of patient - centered care in clinical practice²⁰.

Arkorful, V. E., Hammond, A., Basiru, I., Boateng, J., Doku, F., Pokuaah, S., Lugu, B. K. (2020). A Cross - Sectional Qualitative Study conducted on Barriers to Effective Therapeutic Communication among Nurses and Patients. An unstructured interview guide was utilized in the exploratory study to conduct interviews with 60 respondents, 30 of whom were patients and 30 of whom were nurses. The study identified barriers connected to the health environment in addition to those experienced by nurses and patients. The study also identified barriers connected to the health environment in addition to those experienced by nurses and patients. Because therapeutic communication is important for health services, the study suggests, among other things, that sector actors work to address the issues and support the advancement of high standards for the provision of healthcare services²¹.

2. Conclusion

It is concluded by saying that Effective communication between patients and nurses is cardinal to health care. Nurses help patients become more conscious of their thoughts and feelings by using therapeutic communication strategies. Together, the patient and the nurse create goals and a personalized treatment plan²².

A report by the Joint Commission found that poor communication in health care during patient transfers contributed to 80% of serious medical errors. In order for nurses to provide quality care, they must approach each patient contact with the goal of comprehending the patient's worries, experiences, and viewpoints. This entails applying both verbal and nonverbal communication tactics, as well as patient teach - back methods and active listening. Effective communication is fundamental to nursing practice because it improves clinical outcomes, encourages patient - centered care, and fosters a cooperative and supportive healthcare environment. As a result, developing one's communication skills is not only essential for nurses in terms of their professional development but also a critical component of providing patients with compassionate, high - quality care.

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