CHAPTER 8

Therapeutic Relationships

Concepts of the Nurse-Patient Partnership

- Basis of all psychiatric nursing treatment approaches
- To establish that the nurse is
  - Safe
  - Confidential
  - Reliable
  - Consistent
- Relationship with clear boundaries

Therapeutic Use of Self

- The nurse-patient partnership is a creative process
- Each person brings their own uniqueness to the relationship
- Use personality consciously and in full awareness
- Nurse uses all the senses
- Attempt to establish relatedness
- Structure nursing interventions

Goals and Functions

- Facilitate communication of distressing thoughts and feelings
- Assist patient with problem solving
- Help patient examine self-defeating behaviors and test alternatives
- Helps patient feel understood without judgment
- Promote self-care and independence

Therapeutic Relationships/Partnerships

- Needs of patient identified and explored
- Clear boundaries established
- Problem-solving approaches taken
- New coping skills developed
- Behavioral change encouraged

Audience Response Question

You are about to initiate your first contact with a patient. Which is the most suitable goal in establishing the therapeutic relationship?

A. Establish friendship and a sense of fun
B. Ensure that mutual needs will be met
C. Establish clear boundaries while identifying patient needs
D. Ensure two-way communication to give or ask for help

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Necessary Behaviors for Nurses

• Accountability
• Focus on patient’s needs
• Clinical competence
• Delaying judgment
• Supervision/mentorship

Establishing Boundaries

• Physical boundaries
• The contract
• Personal space

Blurring of Roles

• Transference – patient unconsciously and inappropriately displaces onto nurse feelings and behaviors related to significant figures in patient’s past
• Transference intensified in relationships of authority
• The patient may say, “You remind me of…….”

Blurring of Roles (continued)

• Countertransference – nurse displaces feelings related to people in nurse’s past onto patient
• Patient’s transference to nurse often results in countertransference in nurse
• Common sign of countertransference in nurse is overidentification with the patient

Transference and Countertransference (continued)

• Although the boundaries of the nurse-patient relationship are generally clearly defined, they can become blurred. This blurring can be insidious and may occur on an unconscious level. Usually, the transference and countertransference phenomena are operating when boundaries are blurred.

Blurring of Boundaries

• When relationship slips into social context
• When nurse’s needs are met at expense of patient’s needs
Audience Response Question

You notice that you look forward to talking to one patient because her dark sense of humor reminds you of your best friend in high school. You also begin to make little cynical jokes, hoping to have a good laugh together. What is this relationship showing early signs of?

A. Rapport
B. Social interactions
C. Transference
D. Countertransference

Values, Beliefs, and Self-Awareness

• Nurse’s values and beliefs
  • Reflect own culture/subculture
  • Derived from range of choices
  • Chosen from a variety of influences and role models

Common Patient Behaviors

• Cries
• Asks nurse to keep a secret
• Leaves before a session is over
  • Interrupted by another patient
• Communicates thoughts of suicide

Common Patient Behaviors (continued)

• Does not want to talk
• Seeks to prolong the interview
• Gives the nurse a present
• Asks the nurse a personal question

Members of the Multidisciplinary Team

• Psychiatric mental health nurse
• Psychiatrist
• Psychologist
• Psychiatric social worker
• Counselors
• Occupational, recreational, art, music and dance therapists
• Medical doctor
• Pharmacist
• Psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner
• Patient

Peplau’s Model of Nurse-Patient Relationship

• Orientation phase
• Working phase
• Termination phase
Orientation Phase

- Establishing rapport
- Parameters of the relationship
- Formal or informal contract
- Confidentiality
- Terms of termination

Working Phase

- Maintain relationship
- Gather further data
- Promote patient's
  - Problem-solving skills
  - Self-esteem
  - Use of language
  - Facilitate behavioral change
  - Overcome resistant behaviors
  - Evaluate problems and goals
  - Redefine them as necessary
  - Promote practice and expression of alternative adaptive behaviors

Termination Phase

- Summarize goals and objectives achieved
- Discuss ways for patient to incorporate new coping strategies learned
- Review situations of relationship
- Exchange memories

Factors That Help Nurse-Patient Partnership

- Consistency
- Pacing
- Listening
- Initial impressions

Therapeutic Relationship (continued)

Factors That Promote Patient Growth

- Genuineness
- Empathy (not sympathy)
- Positive regard
  - Attitudes
  - Actions
Factors That Promote Patient Growth (continued)

- Attending
- Suspending value judgments
- Helping patients develop resources

Audience Response Question
A nurse seeks to establish a partnership with a patient readmitted to the hospital. The patient has bipolar disorder, depressed type, and was hospitalized the preceding month. Which statement by the nurse would contribute to establishing trust?

A. “Weren’t you complying with your medication regimen?”
B. “It must be discouraging to be readmitted to the hospital so soon.”
C. “Everyone with bipolar disorder ends up in the hospital occasionally.”
D. “You must take your drugs as prescribed or you will be rehospitalized.”

Audience Response Question
1. A client tells the nurse, “I have something secret to tell you, but you can’t tell anyone else.” The nurse agrees. What is the likely consequence of the nurse’s action?

A. Healthy feelings of sympathy by the nurse toward the client.
B. Blurred boundaries in the nurse-client partnership.
C. Improved rapport between the nurse and client.
D. Enhanced trust between the nurse and client.

Audience Response Question
2. A nurse spends extra time with a client who has personality features similar to the nurse’s estranged spouse. Which aspect of countertransference is most likely to result?

A. Overinvolvement
B. Misuse of honesty
C. Indifference
D. Rescue

Audience Response Question
3. A client preparing for discharge presents the nurse with a handmade card of appreciation for the care this nurse provided. Should the nurse accept the card?

A. Yes
B. No
C. Not sure