CHAPTER 9
Communication and the Clinical Interview

The Communication Process
• Stimulus—need for information, comfort, or advice
• Sender—initiates contact
• Message—sent or expressed
• Channel—variety of media (hearing, visual, touch, smell)
• Receiver—interprets and responds through feedback

Therapeutic Communication
- Social relationships are different from therapeutic relationships
- Therapeutic communication is professional, goal-directed, and scientifically based
  - Patient’s feel safer and protected
  - Patient’s report being more satisfied with care
  - Increased recovery rates
  - Improved adherence to treatment

Therapeutic Communication (continued)
It is often during the psychiatric rotation that students discover the utility of therapeutic communication and begin to rely on techniques they once considered artificial. With continued practice, students will develop their own style and rhythm, and eventually these techniques will become a part of the way they communicate with others.

Case Study
You are a new nurse in a psychiatric ward for adolescents. Noah is your first patient. He is depressed and has fresh cuts on his wrist, which is why his mother has had him admitted. While taking his pulse, you see that Noah also has a number of older scars on his arm. When he sees you looking at them, he shakes his head and whispers, “Yeah, well. It’s just gonna keep on happening.”

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Audience Response Question
Noah’s whispered statement of “Yeah, well. It’s just gonna keep on happening” does not involve which of the following?

A. Channel  
B. Stimulus  
C. Message  
D. Feedback

Case Study
• A new nurse on a psychiatric unit wants to effectively communicate in a therapeutic relationship with a patient.  
• What are some things that will help this communication?

Factors That Affect Communication
• Personal factors  
• Environmental factors  
• Relationship factors

Relationship Factors in Communication
• Symmetrical relationship:  
  – Equal: Friends or colleagues  
• Complementary relationship:  
  – Unequal: Difference in status and power, such as between a nurse and patient or between a teacher and student.  
  • Relationship is characterized by inequality (one participant is superior to the other).

Verbal Communication
• All words a person speaks  
• Communicates  
• Beliefs and values  
• Perceptions and meaning  
• Can convey  
  • Interest and understanding  
  • Insult and judgment  
  • Clear or conflicting messages  
  • Honest or distorted feelings

Nonverbal Communication
• Tone of voice  
• Emphasis on certain words  
• Physical appearance  
• Facial expressions  
• Body posture  
• Amount of eye contact  
• Hand gestures
Non-Verbal Communication

Interaction of Verbal and Nonverbal Communication

- Messages can appear to be one thing when in fact they are another.
- People are often less aware of their nonverbal messages and behaviors.
- Verbal message can be called the content, while the nonverbal behavior is the process.
- Double-bind messages: Mutually contradictory messages, usually given by a person in power.

Discuss Nonverbal Communication (Depicted Below)

Case Study

As you prepare for the initial interview with 15-year-old Noah, you learn that he has a history of cutting himself. His parents have separated and are getting a divorce; his father has left and Noah is living with his mother. Noah has been smoking for about a year and a half and his mother suspects that he has come home smelling of marijuana twice now. All three behaviors were ongoing before the father left.

Audience Response Question

Which behavior from Noah would be considered a double-bind message?

A. He winks at you and says, “Do you date 15-year-old guys?”
B. He puts his head in his hands, shakes it, and snaps, “I don’t want to do this. Just get me out of here!”
C. He sneers at you and almost purrs as he says, “Oh yes, I will tell you anything you want to know. Of course. Of course I will.”
D. He cries and shakes, jiggling one leg, as he says softly, “Please. Let’s just not talk about Dad, okay? God, please?”

Nursing Process: Implementation

- **Therapeutic communication techniques** are specific responses that encourage the expression of feelings and ideas and convey acceptance and respect.
- **Active listening** means using all the senses (hearing, vision, touch, taste and smell) while being attentive to what a patient is saying both verbally and nonverbally.
- SOLER (next slide)
Active Listening: **SOLER**
- Sit facing the patient at eye level
- Observe an open posture
- Lean toward the patient
- Establish and maintain intermittent eye contact
- Relax

**Therapeutic Communication Techniques**
- Tools for enhancing communication
  - Using silence
  - Active listening
  - Listening with empathy

**Active Listening Principles**
- The answer is always inside the patient.
- Objective truth is never simple.
- Everything you hear is modified by the patient’s filters and your own filters.
- Feeling confused or uncertain is OK.
- Listen to yourself too.
Active Listening helps strengthen the patient’s ability to use critical thinking to solve problems. By giving the patient undivided attention, the nurse communicates that the patient is not alone.

**Asking Questions and Eliciting Patient Responses**
- Open-ended questions
- Closed-ended questions

**Therapeutic Communication Techniques**
- Accepting
- Giving recognition
- Offering self
- Offering general leads
- Giving broad openings
- Placing the events in time and sequence
- Making observations
- Encouraging description of perception
- Encouraging comparison
- Restating
- Reflecting
- Confrontation

**Therapeutic Communication Techniques—cont’d**
- Exploring
- Giving information
- Seeking clarification
- Presenting reality
- Voicing doubt
- Seeking consensual validation
- Verbalizing the implied
- Encouraging evaluation
- Attempting to translate into feelings
- Suggesting collaboration
- Summarizing
- Encouraging formulation of plan
- Focusing
Blocks to Therapeutic Communication

• Giving premature advice
• Minimizing feelings
• Being falsely reassuring
• Making value judgments
• Asking “why” questions
• Asking excessive questions
• Using clichés
• Giving approval—agreeing/cheerleading
• Disapproving—disagreeing
• Changing the subject

Case Study/ Audience Response Question

Noah has made it clear he doesn't want to talk about his dad. But the truth is, as the interview proceeds, he becomes anxious and tries to evade all questions about why he is here. Which type of communication might be most appropriate right now?

A. Stop questioning so much and just give him some good advice so he'll trust you.
B. Express honest disapproval of his resistance to help.
C. Ask him pointblank why he is evading you.
D. Ask a miracle question.

Cultural Considerations: Negotiating barriers

• Four areas that may prove problematic for the nurse when interpreting specific verbal and nonverbal messages of the patient include the following:
  1. Communication styles
  2. Use of eye contact
  3. Perception of touch
  4. Cultural filters

Therapeutic Communication Goals

• Feel understood and comfortable.
• Identify and explore problems relating to others.
• Discover healthy ways of meeting emotional needs.
• Experience satisfying interpersonal relationships.

Preparing for the Interview

• Pace
• Setting
• Seating
• Introductions
• Initiating the interview
Attending Behaviors

*Attending behaviors* encourage talking.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Control vocal qualities (tone and speech rate).
- Face the person.
- Use encouraging gestures.
- Track verbal content; do not change the subject.
- Use open-ended vs. closed-ended questions.
- Asking why may place a person on the defensive and cause discomfort.

Helpful Guidelines

- Speak briefly
- When you do not know what to say, say nothing
- When in doubt focus on feelings
- Avoid giving advice
- Do not rely on asking questions
- Pay attention to nonverbal clues
- Focus on the patient

Tactics to Avoid

- Arguing, minimizing, or challenging the patient
- Giving false reassurance
- Interpreting or speculating
- Probing into sensitive areas the patient doesn’t want to discuss
- Trying to “sell” the patient on accepting treatment
- Joining in attacks patients launch on others
- Participation in criticizing other staff members

Clinical Supervision

- Communication and interviewing are acquired skills
- Fosters professional growth and helps minimize the development of nontherapeutic nurse-patient relationships.

Process Recording

- Written record of a segment of the nurse-patient session that reflects as closely as possible the verbal and nonverbal behaviors of both patient and nurse
- Useful tool for identifying communication patterns

Bathe Technique

- **Background:** What is going on in your life?
- **Affect:** How do you feel about what is going on?
- **Trouble:** What troubles you the most about this problem?
- **Handling:** How have you been handling (coping) with this problem?
- **Empathy:** This must be very difficult for you.
NURS
• Name the patient’s emotion (It seems as though the constant headaches really get you frustrated.)
• Understand (I can see why you feel this way.)
• Respect (You’ve been through a lot and that takes courage.)
• Support (I want to help you get better.)

Information Communication Technologies
• Definition: Use of electronic information and telecommunication technologies to support long-distance clinical health care
• Uses: Live interactive mechanism, as a way to track clinical data and to provide access to people who otherwise might not receive good medical or psychosocial help.

Information Communication Technologies (Cont.)
• Mobile Applications
  • Monitor, diagnose, treat, and communicate with patients
  • Mobile phones are used at a high rate
  • Many quickly adoptable apps available
  • More research is needed
  • SAMHSA Resources for suicide prevention, bullying prevention, and underage drinking prevention

Telehealth Technologies
• Intel™ developed a mobile phone application that mirrors cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT).
• Touchscreen “Mood Map” for Android and iPhone invites users to plot mood during the day and view trends.
• The University of Colorado Hospital is using Skype to work with children with autism and their families.
• Lacks reimbursement by third-party payers.

Audience Response Question
As a nurse assesses a new client, the nurse makes sure the door remains open. Which type of communication factor is this action?

A. Environmental
B. Relationship
C. Personal
D. Mutual safety

Audience Response Questions
A nurse assesses a newly hospitalized client. Which communication technique will the nurse use most?

A. Rapid, high-pitch voice tone
B. Closed-ended questions
C. Direct eye contact
D. Frequent touch