


Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing,  
6th Edition

## Chapter 8

### Therapeutic Communication



Copyright © 2009. F.A. Davis Company

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing,  
6th Edition

## Introduction

- The nurse must be aware of the therapeutic or nontherapeutic value of the communication techniques used with the client—they are the “tools” of psychosocial intervention.



Copyright © 2009. F.A. Davis Company

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing,  
6th Edition

## What is Communication?

- Interpersonal communication is a transaction between the sender and the receiver. Both persons participate simultaneously.
- In the transactional model, both participants perceive each other, listen to each other, and simultaneously engage in the process of creating meaning in a relationship.



Copyright © 2009. F.A. Davis Company

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing,  
6th Edition

### The Impact of Preexisting Conditions

- Both sender and receiver bring certain preexisting conditions to the exchange that influence both the intended message and the way in which it is interpreted.
  - **Values, attitudes, and beliefs.** Attitudes of prejudice are expressed through negative stereotyping.
  - **Culture or religion.** Cultural mores, norms, ideas, and customs provide the basis for ways of thinking.



Copyright © 2009. F.A. Davis Company

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing,  
6th Edition

### The Impact of Preexisting Conditions

- **Social status.** High-status persons often convey their high-power position with gestures of hands on hips, power dressing, greater height, and more distance when communicating with individuals considered to be of lower social status.
- **Gender.** Masculine and feminine gestures influence messages conveyed in communication with others.



Copyright © 2009. F.A. Davis Company

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing,  
6th Edition

### The Impact of Preexisting Conditions

- **Age or developmental level.** The influence of developmental level on communication is especially evident during adolescence, with words such as "cool," "awesome," "dude," and others.



Copyright © 2009. F.A. Davis Company

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing,  
6th Edition

### The Impact of Preexisting Conditions

- **The environment in which the transaction takes place.** Territoriality, density, and distance are aspects of environment that communicate messages.
  - **Territoriality**—the innate tendency to own space
  - **Density**—the number of people within a given environmental space
  - **Distance**—the means by which various cultures use space to communicate



Copyright © 2009. F.A. Davis Company

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing,  
6th Edition

### The Impact of Preexisting Conditions

- **Four kinds of distance in interpersonal interactions:**
  - **Intimate distance**—the closest distance that individuals allow between themselves and others
  - **Personal distance**—the distance for interactions that are personal in nature, such as close conversation with friends
  - **Social distance**—the distance for conversation with strangers or acquaintances
  - **Public distance**—the distance for speaking in public or yelling to someone some distance away



Copyright © 2009. F.A. Davis Company

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

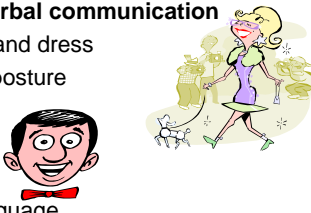
---

Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing,  
6th Edition

### Nonverbal Communication

#### Components of nonverbal communication

- Physical appearance and dress
- Body movement and posture
- Touch
- Facial expressions
- Eye behavior
- Vocal cues or paralinguage



Copyright © 2009. F.A. Davis Company

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing,  
6th Edition

### Therapeutic Communication Techniques

- **Using silence**—allows client to take control of the discussion, if he or she so desires
- **Accepting**—conveys positive regard
- **Giving recognition**—acknowledging, indicating awareness
- **Offering self**—making oneself available
- **Giving broad openings**—allows client to select the topic



Copyright © 2009. F.A. Davis Company

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing,  
6th Edition

### Therapeutic Communication Techniques

- **Offering general leads**—encourages client to continue
- **Placing the event in time or sequence**—clarifies the relationship of events in time
- **Making observations**—verbalizing what is observed or perceived
- **Encouraging description of perceptions**—asking client to verbalize what is being perceived



Copyright © 2009. F.A. Davis Company

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing,  
6th Edition

### Therapeutic Communication Techniques

- **Encouraging comparison**—asking client to compare similarities and differences in ideas, experiences, or interpersonal relationships
- **Restating**—lets client know whether an expressed statement has or has not been understood
- **Reflecting**—directs questions or feelings back to client so that they may be recognized and accepted



Copyright © 2009. F.A. Davis Company

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing,  
6th Edition

**Therapeutic Communication Techniques**

- **Focusing**—taking notice of a single idea or even a single word
- **Exploring**—delving further into a subject, idea, experience, or relationship
- **Seeking clarification and validation**—striving to explain what is vague and searching for mutual understanding
- **Presenting reality**—clarifying misconceptions that client may be expressing



Copyright © 2009. F.A. Davis Company

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing,  
6th Edition

**Therapeutic Communication Techniques**

- **Voicing doubt**—expressing uncertainty as to the reality of client's perception
- **Verbalizing the implied**—putting into words what client has only implied
- **Attempting to translate words into feelings**—putting into words the feelings the client has expressed only indirectly
- **Formulating a plan of action**—striving to prevent anger or anxiety from escalating to an unmanageable level the next time the stressor occurs



Copyright © 2009. F.A. Davis Company

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing,  
6th Edition

**Nontherapeutic Communication Techniques**

- **Giving reassurance**—may discourage client from further expression of feelings if client believes the feelings will only be belittled
- **Rejecting**—refusing to consider client's ideas or behavior
- **Giving approval or disapproval**—implies that the nurse has the right to pass judgment on the "goodness" or "badness" of client's behavior



Copyright © 2009. F.A. Davis Company

---

---

---

---

---

---

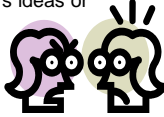
---

---

Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing,  
6th Edition

### Nontherapeutic Communication Techniques

- **Agreeing/disagreeing**—implies that the nurse has the right to pass judgment on whether client's ideas or opinions are "right" or "wrong"
- **Giving advice**—implies that the nurse knows what is best for client and that client is incapable of any self-direction
- **Probing**—pushing for answers to issues the client does not wish to discuss causes client to feel used and valued only for what is shared with the nurse



Copyright © 2009. F.A. Davis Company

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing,  
6th Edition

### Nontherapeutic Communication Techniques

- **Defending**—to defend what client has criticized implies that the client has no right to express ideas, opinions, or feelings
- **Requesting an explanation**—asking "why" implies that the client must defend his or her behavior or feelings
- **Indicating the existence of an external source of power**—encourages the client to project blame for his or her thoughts or behaviors on others



Copyright © 2009. F.A. Davis Company

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing,  
6th Edition

### Nontherapeutic Communication Techniques

- **Belittling feelings expressed**—causes the client to feel insignificant or unimportant
- **Making stereotyped comments, clichés, and trite expressions**—these are meaningless in a nurse-client relationship
- **Using denial**—blocks discussion with the client and avoids helping him or her identify and explore areas of difficulty



Copyright © 2009. F.A. Davis Company

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing,  
6th Edition

### Nontherapeutic Communication Techniques

- **Interpreting**—results in the therapist's telling client the meaning of his or her experience
- **Introducing an unrelated topic**—causes the nurse to take over the direction of the discussion



Copyright © 2009. F.A. Davis Company

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing,  
6th Edition

### Active Listening

- To listen actively is to be attentive to what the client is saying, both verbally and nonverbally.
- Several nonverbal behaviors have been designed as facilitative skills for attentive listening.



Copyright © 2009. F.A. Davis Company

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing,  
6th Edition

### Active Listening

- **S**—Sit squarely facing the client.
- **O**—Observe an open posture.
- **L**—Lean forward toward the client.
- **E**—Establish eye contact.
- **R**—Relax.



Copyright © 2009. F.A. Davis Company

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing,  
6th Edition

## Process Recordings

- Process recordings are written reports of verbal interactions with clients.
- They are written by the nurse or student as a tool for improving communication techniques.



Copyright © 2009. F.A. Davis Company

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing,  
6th Edition

## Feedback

- **Feedback is useful when it**
  - Is descriptive rather than evaluative and focused on the behavior rather than on the client
  - Is specific rather than general
  - Is directed toward behavior that the client has the capacity to modify
  - Imparts information rather than offers advice
  - Is well timed



Copyright © 2009. F.A. Davis Company

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---