

Tikrit University

College of Nursing

Clinical Nursing Sciences



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Nursing Mangement

Communication and Public Relations

by:

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Part IV

Communication and Public Relations

Communication is an essential tool for nursing practice because a critical link exists between effective communication and positive patient outcomes. Nurses must communicate effectively with all members of the health-care team, including other nurses, the patient, and the patient's family. Effective communication involves two distinct steps: first, adequately articulating ideas; and second, understanding the listening audience with whom one is communicating.

Types of communications:

1. Verbal communication:

Verbal communication is a conscious method of communication. It occurs face to face, by mobile, and through written. For nurse leaders and managers, communicating verbally with staff in an effective matter. Nurse leaders and managers must convey clearly, typically in writing information that is important for employees to know, such as policies and procedures and performance evaluations. When communicating through e-mail nurse leaders and managers must write professionally and use easily understandable language. With written communication particularly, clarity is important because feedback is typically depend on what was written. Regardless of the purpose, effective written communication must contain language and terminology appropriate to the person or persons being addressed; correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

2. Nonverbal communication:

Nonverbal communication includes behaviors, actions, and facial expressions that transmit messages. Nonverbal communication plays a central role in human interactions and is crucial in transmitting emotional and relational information. Nonverbal communication can be conscious as well as subconscious and includes eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, body movement, touch. Facial behavior and expressions in particular provide valuable clues and can indicate a person's comfort level with the topic under discussion.

Beyond paying attention to the receiver's nonverbal cues, the speaker must be aware of his or her own body language because it must match the verbal message being sent. Consider a staff nurse who approaches the nurse leader or manager and asks whether he or she has a few minutes to discuss a patient situation. The nurse leader or manager says - sure but proceeds to continually look at his or her watch, and hence the verbal message sent to the staff nurse is incongruent with the nonverbal message. In addition, nonverbal communication alone can have great impact. Sometimes the presence of the nurse manager on the unit sends a message to staff, I am interested in what is going on here. Never underestimate the power of nonverbal communication.

Direction of communications:

1. Downward communication:

The sending of information by administrators to nurse leaders and managers or by nurse leaders and managers to staff. Downward communication includes directives to staff.

2. Lateral communication:

Is the sharing of information among nurse leaders and managers or other staff at the same level. Examples of lateral communication are coordination between units and services, information sharing, problem solving, and conflict management.

3. Diagonal communication:

Communication with others in the hospital who are not on the same level. This occurs, for example, when a nurse leader and manager communicates with the chief financial officer or the maintenance department.

4. Upward communication:

Is the sending of information up the chain (e.g., staff to the nurse manager or leader, or nurse leader and manager to higher level managers and administrators). Common instances of upward communication are requests for resources, sharing ideas or suggestions for improvement, and employee grievances.

Active Listening:

Effective communication requires the ability to listen actively. Hearing and listening are two different things; Hearing is the physiological process of sound communicating with the hearing apparatus, whereas listening is more active and participatory and requires energy and a high level of concentration. Active listening includes five stages:

1. Receiving.
2. Attending.

3. Understanding.
4. Responding.
5. Remembering.

Types of communication in a health-care environment:

Three types of communication come into play in a health-care work environment: organizational, interprofessional, and intraprofessional. Nurse must understand and be able to apply all three when communicating.

I. Organizational communication:

Health-care systems must communicate important information, such as regulations, policies, and procedures. The goal of organizational communication is to convey the same message across the entire system. Various directions of communication may be used at the organizational level.

A. Downward communication is the sending of information by administrators to nurse leaders and managers or by nurse leaders and managers to staff.

B. Lateral communication is the sharing of information among nurse leaders and managers or other staff at the same level.

C. Diagonal communication. This occurs, for example, when a nurse leader and manager communicates with the chief financial officer or the laundry department.

D. Upward communication is the sending of information up the chain (e.g., staff to the nurse manager or leader, or nurse leader and manager to higher- level managers and administrators).

II. Interprofessional communication:

Is the communication between nurse leaders and managers with all members of the health-care team, as well as with patients and their families.

*** Miscommunication between nurses and physicians contributes to medication errors, patient injuries, and patient deaths.

III. Intraprofessional communication:

Is the communication between nurses only. Intraprofessional nursing communication is essential for safe patient-centered care, health care team collaboration as well as providing a positive work environment, Inadequate or poor communication can lead to sever adverse effects for the patient, obstructions in the work environment and dissatisfaction within the staff. Any nurse should be able to overcome communication difficulties in practice and therefore be able to enjoy their workplace while providing excellent safe patient care.

Why is it important for nurses to develop good communication skills?

1. Various studies have found that poor communication, unclear instructions and/or reports written by a nurse can lead to misunderstandings, errors and can potentially lead to patient harm and injury.
2. Poor communication is 1 of 5 major reasons for medication errors.
3. Poor/lack of communication has also lead to lack of respect and support, bullying practices, horizontal violence (violence directed to one's self by a colleague) and other negative meanings.
