

Sample Nursing Essay on Communication

The essence of nursing is in the practice of communicating. It involves speaking with patients to elicit their reports of illness, listening to them, responding to requests for care, and conveying information about patient condition—to physicians, other nurses, family members, friends, or self.

Nurses use many different forms of communication in daily nursing practice. These include oral communication such as face-to-face conversations; written communication such as documentation; nonverbal communication such as body language; electronic communications through phone calls, emails and faxes; sign language used by deaf persons or others who cannot comprehend vocalized speech (ANMAC 2005) . Emotional support during difficult situations also falls under the definition of "communication".

Good communication is difficult for many reasons. Nurses are often in a position of responsibility—treating an ill person, making decisions about treatments, and helping the patient through what could be frightening or confusing experiences. Because there can be serious consequences to inappropriate communication between nurses and patients, it is important that nurses learn how to communicate effectively.

It starts with knowledge of good communication skills: observing body language and facial expression; listening actively using appropriate responses such as "please tell me more" and "I understand". Communicating honestly and empathetically respecting feelings, values and opinions even if they conflict with our own. It takes training to maintain objectivity while supporting another person emotionally .

Effective communication is an important nursing skill that helps in offering quality care to diverse patients (Giger & Davidhizar 2008). It is at the heart of patient-centred care. Such care facilitates healing, recovery and positive outcomes.

Good nurses must be able to sense when relatives or friends are anxious about their loved ones' conditions; they must know when patients need privacy. Nurses have to be good listeners being able to help patients express themselves without interrupting them or making judgments. They also need the ability to communicate clearly with colleagues who may be busy, distracted—or even upset by a problem with another patient.

Communication is also an essential skill for nursing students. They must learn to match the level of their communication to that of patient, family members, colleagues, and other health care staff.

When they are observing nurses at work, student nurses can become overly focused on technique or details—forgetting to think about how the nurse's words are being received by patients or co-workers. Thus good communication skills are not only important for giving effective nursing care but also for learning.

Communication involves speaking with patients to elicit their reports of illness, listening to them, responding to requests for care, and conveying information about patient condition. It takes training both in perception and in communication to maintain objectivity while supporting another person emotionally.