

Subjective health assessment



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Despite the importance of an individual's perspective of their health and wellbeing, individuals are extremely influenced by the extent to which their treatment outcomes meet their expectations (O'hagan et al., 2014). This is why it is important for nurses to incorporate the individual's perspective into the interventions; to accomplish this nurses need to use effective communication, such as verbal and non-verbal techniques, to receive the appropriate subjective health information (O'hagan et al., 2014). Nurses further must implement the individual's perspective into the development of nursing interventions; this will help influence a positive recovery (O'hagan et al., 2014). This essay will define communication in the context of nursing; it will discuss the process followed regarding the selection of an individual and the arrangements made, also which interview techniques were utilised. The essay will further discuss the health strengths of an individual, as well as any health concerns which may benefit from health promotional education. Lastly, there will be a summary about what I learnt from this assignment.

It is crucial to understand the importance of communication in the context of nursing, in order to implement it in a nurse-client relationship.

Communication is central to human interaction, as it allows individuals to establish, maintain and improve contact with each other (Juvé-Udina et al., 2014). The word communication originates centuries ago from the Greek word "communis" meaning to make common (O'hagan et al., 2014). Tay, Hegney and Ang (2011) define communication as 'a two-way process - sending the right message that is also being correctly received and understood by the other person'. Communication in the context of nursing is where the nurse and patient perceive the other in the situation and, through

communication of verbal and non-verbal messages, sets goals, and agrees on interventions to help achieve these goals (Tay et al., 2011).

The initial goal for this assignment is to find a healthy individual between the ages of thirty and sixty five who is not a friend, family member or anyone I knew well. This was achieved by ringing my aunty and asking if she knew anyone in the area that would be happy to help with my assignment. My aunty gave me the phone number and the email of a colleague; from here I sent an email explaining the “ subjective health assessment” project to her. Jenny (pseudonym) promptly replied saying she would be happy to assist, when she agreed I emailed her a consent form. I also ensured her that to be in accordance with The Nursing Council Code of Conduct (2012) as a student nurse I must respect her rights to confidentiality and therefore any personal or identifiable information will be altered to protect her privacy and dignity. From here we arranged to have the interview take place at her house as it would not only be private but it would help ensure that she feels comfortable, we worked out a time that suited us both and decided at 10am on Wednesday 30th of July.

The quality and reliability of information is influenced by the way in which information is collected, which is related to the use of nonverbal and verbal communication (Jarvis, 2012). Nonverbal communication of appearance, demeanour, facial expression, silence, and listening are highly influential. I incorporated all these aspects into my interview. Firstly I wore my nursing uniform which made my appearance look professional, and kept a neutral friendly expression throughout the interview. I also made sure my attitude was non-judgemental and that we were seated at eye level; this helped to

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maintain eye contact which showed that I was alert and listening to her. Sitting at eye level also helped make us both feel equal as no one had an authoritative role over the other. However, verbal communication is just as important as nonverbal communication. I ensured that all the questions I asked were open ended this allowed Jenny to expand in areas which provided me with relevant and detailed information. Also, by using the communication technique reflection I was able to respond in a way that allowed Jenny to realise that I was listening and understanding what she was communicating.

June has the belief that, for her age she is healthy and she is content with her current level of health. She lives a healthy lifestyle and has few health issues. June's health and wellbeing is supported by having had completed all of the immunisation programs recommended for her through her childhood. These immunisations are very important during an individual's childhood as it protects children from negative impacts of illness (Grant, Luxford, & Darbyshire, 2005). However, even though June completed these immunisation programs she still contracted chicken pox at seven years of age. This is an extremely contagious disease which is spread by the same methods as the common cold such as coughing, sneezing and skin to skin contact (Grant, Luxford, & Darbyshire, 2005).

There are many things that influence an individual's overall health, and the likelihood of developing diseases (Jarvis, 2012). Diseases can occur due to a combination of genetic, lifestyle and environmental factors (Jarvis, 2012). In the context of Jenny's health she is unaware of any hereditary diseases in her family history. This is a great strength to have as Jenny does not have any

increased risks of getting genetic disorders or passing them onto her children. Another strength Jenny has is that she works on a farm; this means she is often outdoors in the natural environment. Tardona, Bozeman and Pierson (2014) research indicates that exposure and experiences in natural environment can improve wellbeing by increasing self-esteem, spiritual wellbeing, cognitive functions and relieving stress. This shows that Jenny is free of health illnesses and her job contributes to her overall wellbeing Peterson (2000) discusses how this is a proven benefit not only to the individual but the family as well.

Regular exercise and sleep patterns are more beneficial strengths displayed by Jenny which contributes positively to her overall wellbeing. Ekblom-Bak, Ekblom, Vikström, De Faire, and Hellénus (2014) discusses how at least 150 minutes per week of moderate to vigorous exercise is important for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Jenny well and truly does more than 150 minutes per week as she motivates herself to go for a power walk every day for around an hour. Kemmler and Von Stengel (2013) research shows that there is a lower chance of experiencing heart disease, some cancers, stroke and type two diabetes when regular exercise is implemented into everyday life. Exercise further helps to improve sleeping patterns. As Jenny is a farmer she has to wake up at 5am most mornings, this results in Jenny having to manage her time well to make sure she gets enough sleep. Jenny goes to sleep around 9. 30 at night usually without waking throughout the night and does not nap throughout the day this shows Jenny has healthy sleep patterns. According to Gruber (2013) healthy sleep patterns are shown to

have a positive impact on an individual's body as it enables the individual to cope with everyday living tasks.

Musculoskeletal disorders are the main representation for absence at work worldwide, Jenny experiences back pain which is increased by stress (Lövgren, Gustavsson, Melin, & Rudman, 2014). Lundberg and Melin (2002), look at how the conditions at work, such as time pressure and heavy lifting, can contribute to elevated stress levels and muscular tension. They further explore how the elevated levels of stress can reduce the time for rest and recuperations (Lundberg & Melin, 2002). Therefore it is important for Jenny to implement interventions that help improve her back pain, when Jenny is at work she could limit the amount of heavy lifting she does and also be educated on the correct lifting technique to avoid further injuries or strains to her back. Jenny can further implement the use of over the counter medication such as deep heat to help relieve the pain and tension in her muscles.

The increasing instability in the economic sector and the increase in unemployment rates are likely to trigger financial worries, which can contribute to fatigue levels (Stewart, Abbey, Meana & Boydell, 1998). This is because financial worries present themselves as a psychological threat which is prolonged and chronic in nature. This causes an increase in fatigue levels as our bodies are not designed to cope with prolonged periods of increased stress hormone (cortisol) levels (Stewart et al., 1998). In Jennys context she has a job however she still feels financially unstable which could be related to her increased levels of fatigue. Therefore Jenny needs to

implement interventions such as seeing a financial consultant to help her understand her future options and avoid financial crisis.

Through completing this assignment I feel I now have a greater understanding of the importance of communication in a nurse-client relationship. I learnt that without using proper communication skills you will be unable to understand the individual's perspective of their health and what they want in life. What I found is that by being non-judgemental and honest throughout the interview developed the nurse-client relationship more, which is extremely important with the client as they are the primary source of information. I believe this was shown when Jenny felt respected as she opened up more by telling me more about her life instead of answering briefly. I further understand the importance of asking open ended questions and using non-verbal communication skills as if I had not the information I received would have been different. I also learnt the importance of taking your time and just listening to the client, especially in Jenny's case as she got very excited talking about her children and upset when I approached the subject of financial stability. So from this I understood that her major worries and weakness in her life is to do with financial pressure and that her children provide her with a source of happiness.

In conclusion, effective communication provides nurses with a way to gather information from a client successfully. This essay looked at how I went about selecting an individual and the arrangements made. While also discussing how non-verbal techniques of eye contact and appearance helped make Jenny feel comfortable and verbal techniques of open ended questions to receive more relevant detailed information. This essay further suggested that

Jenny's strengths included having a healthy childhood, no hereditary diseases in the family history, working on a farm and having regular exercise and sleep patterns. However Jenny's weakness of back pain and feeling financial unstable can lead to health issues which is why interventions of education of proper lifting techniques, using deep heat and seeing a financial advisor can help Jenny's overall health. This essay also looked at what I learnt from completing this assignment which was that communication skills majorly affect the quality of the information gathered and the trust between a nurse and a client.

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