

Communication between the nurse the patients and other health professionals essay...

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



In any organization, people spend about two thirds of their time in interpersonal situations. Organizations are now spending time and resources in perfecting the nature in which employees and members of a professional body communicate. For any success to be registered by any organization, communication must be effective and perfected at interpersonal, intergroup, intragroup and at external levels. Similarly nursing and the medical fraternity faces a myriad of problems associated with poor communication methods. Adverse clinical problems have been associated with poor communication and as a consequence several medical practitioners have faced negligence cases. While these issues may be real and affect the manner in which nurses perform their professional duties, Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (ANMC) have developed a National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse that guide in effective communication. This research examines the importance of effective communication between the nurse and patient.

Communicating With the Patient

In order to communicate with the patient, nurses need to understand that communication is a two way process. Listening carefully to the patient directs the nurse on state of the patient's physical health. However, according to Levinson, Roter, Mullooly, Dul, & Frankel, (2007) most patients are not likely to discuss every aspect of their conditions, thus nurses are advised to keenly study the patient past medical records and letting the patient know that he is being taken very seriously. The nurse should often repeat key points to the patient so that the patient is on the same page with the nurse. The nurse should also demonstrate full attention to the patient without unnecessary distractions as it allows the patient to open further

communication to with the nurse .

Adair (2011), provides a succinct guideline on how nurses could achieve an effective communication mechanism with the patient. First and foremost, it is very important for the nurse to identify the preferred language for discussing health care with the patient. Selecting the preferred language of the patient allows the patient to freely express his/her health condition to the nurse. Secondly, the nurse should expressly inform the patient of their rights. Ensuring the patient is fully aware of the rights will allow physicians to undertake any medical procedures on the patient.

Nurses should also try to ascertain whether the patient has special communication needs. It is also very important that any communication between the patient and the nurse regarding the health status of the patient be recorded for future references. Medical records are the only correspondence that medical practitioners can share about patients. Finally, any information regarding unique issues or needs that patients may have needs to be communicated to the entire care team. The nurse must also explain to the patient the importance of passing this information in the most sincere manner possible.

Communication with Health Professionals

Ineffective communication among health professionals is a major contributing factor to most medical errors . Many factors have been associated with the failure of communication methods employed by the health sector. These failures can be categorized onto three basic units that is, the individual, team and organization level.

The individual

Several human factors are to blame for ineffective communication between nurses and the rest of health care professionals. Human factors such as fatigues, different communication skills, personality, attitudes, distractions and interruptions contribute to individual failures in effective communication . To improve individual effectiveness in communication assertiveness among health professionals is one of the methods that can be employed. This is due to the fact that junior health care workers may lack assertiveness to challenge decisions of senior professionals regarding treatments. Promoting assertiveness among health care professionals would provide constructive dialogue when performing treatments (Levinson, et al, 2007). This allows constructive discussion and improvement in health care services.

Listening actively is also one of the suggestions for improving communication effectiveness in between nurses and other health care professionals. Listening keenly to the messages and resisting distractions is a sure way of improving effectiveness in communication. Maintaining eye contact and active responses allows proper communication. Improving self-awareness ensures that health workers are aware of the difference in communication style among the health workers. Self-awareness also gives health workers a chance to appreciate the differences that exist in different professions.

The team

Health care is service delivery unit that involves several players each performing a separate and delicate role. Diverse technical expertise is expected in such an industry and thus different communication styles are bound to exist. Fostering team spirit and developing communication skills that involve the entire team is foundation towards effective communication . Providing timely feedbacks among the team assist in improving team performance in effective communication methods.

Other suggestions for improving team effectiveness in communication include developing structured communication methods. Briefing is one of the structured communication methods that health professionals can use in effective communication. Adair (2011), suggest that briefing is most effective before and after transfer of patient between health facilities. Such briefing of professionals involved in the health facility ensures that the patient receives necessary treatment and medication upon arrival at the receiving health facility. Preoperative safety briefing before and after surgery is equally one of the most effective means of communication in reducing errors in theatres. Structured communications tools develop quality of the communication and health care provided . One such structured communication tools is the use of checklists when performing any medical procedures. Checklists have been employed in other fields Adair (2011), suggests that using checklists minimizes discrepancies in communication content.

The organization

Organization culture plays a key role in the effectiveness of communication between nurses and other health care professionals . Open communication channels, trust and transparency in organizational operations have a bearing on the manner in which personnel communicate. It is important for organizations to develop policies and procedures that allow transparency and open ended communication. Organization leadership must also provide strong will in attempting to implement effective communication skills and policies.

Such organization policies could be directed towards clearly linking effective communication and teamwork in ensuring patient safety. The policies should also articulate the expectations of the organization with regard to effective communication mechanisms . Additionally, such policies should improve organization culture that promoted cooperation, team work, collaboration, honesty and conducts operation in transparency. It should direct health care personnel towards open communication with a culture based quality-based services.

Conclusion

Effective communication provides nurses with a clear perspective on the patient medical condition and thus nurses are able to properly perform their professional duties. Ensuring that nurses and patients are in tandem in terms of issues regarding medical procedures eliminate several medical mishaps.

When nurses are communicating with other health care professionals, effectiveness can be improved for three basic facets. At the individual level,

personal character that improves on self-awareness, active listening and assertiveness would improve a nurse's communication with other health care professionals. At the team work level, health care workers must improve on team to foster effective communication. Finally, organization must improve on the culture and allow progressive communication strategies.

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