

# Therapeutic communication



To gain better understanding of the use of therapeutic communication a review of an interview on Larry King Live involving Christina Aguilera regarding “ Rock the Vote” was used. The interview was a discussion of the importance for the young voter to be involved in the upcoming presidential election. “ Rock the Vote’s” purpose is to engage and build the political power of young people in order to accomplish progressive change in the country. “ Rock the Vote” uses music, popular culture and new technologies to engage and motivate young people to register and vote in the presidential election.

During the interview three distinct types of therapeutic communication were utilized by the shows host. The types of therapeutic communication used included active listening, broad openings to questions, and focusing discussion on certain areas of interest. These communication concepts can be utilized by the psychiatric nurse to better care for the patient. Listening is an active process of receiving information and examining the reaction to the messages received. Thus making listening much more than simply hearing what is being said. Listening is essential to reach any understanding of the patient.

It is an integral component of the therapeutic-nurse relationship. The patient should be talking more than the nurse during the interaction. Listening is a sign of respect and is a powerful tool at achieving treatment goals. One should also be aware that active listening involves all the listener’s senses. Another therapeutic technique used in communication includes the use of broad openings to encourage the patient to select topics for discussion.

The patient should be welcomed to the communication with warmth and respect. The patient should feel that the nurse is ready to listen. Open-ended questions result in fuller, more revealing answers. Lastly, focusing helps the patient expand on a topic of importance while assisting in analyzing the topic in detail. It helps the patient talk about life experiences or problem areas and allows the patient to accept the responsibility for improving them. If the goal is to change thoughts, feelings or beliefs, the patient must first identify and explore them.

It allows the patient to discuss central issues and keeps the communication goal directed. Communication is the most powerful tool a psychiatric nurse has for developing the therapeutic-nurse relationship. Communication is a complex process and needs practice to be used effectively. To enhance the quality of therapeutic communication the nurse must be aware of both verbal and nonverbal cues.

Courtesy, understanding, and nonjudgmental attitude must be goals of the nurse. Therapeutic communication techniques are methods used to encourage patients to interact in a manner that promotes their growth and moves them toward their treatment goals.