**Learning Activity:** Effective Communication

**Module:** Communication in Health Care

**Competency:** 1. Describe the components of verbal and nonverbal communication and situations in which these skills can be effectively used.

8. Using a problem solving process applied to healthcare situations, describe how healthcare workers can effectively communicate with their clients/individuals and team members.

**Recommended Resources:**

PowerPoints: *The Communication Proces:* *Components of Communication* and *Effective Communication: Nurse and Client* *and Wife*

Documents: *Therapeutic Communication Techniques*” and *Barriers to Communication*

**Potential Uses:**

**Activity:** Effective Communication

1. Review the power point lectures: *The Communication Process: Components of Communication, Effective Communication: Nurse and Client and Wife*

2. Review document: *Therapeutic Communication Techniques* and the list of *Barriers to Communication*

3. Read the scenario: *Effective Communication: Nurse and Client and Wife*

**Scenario: *Effective Communication: Nurse and Client & Wife***

Lois, a licensed practical nurse (LPN), is assigned to care for Mr. Leno. He will be returning to his hospital room after surgery for cancer that has spread to his abdomen. His wife comes into the room crying. Lois asks: *What is wrong*? Mrs. Leno continues to sob and is unable to answer. Lois gets two chairs, one for Mrs. Leno and one for herself, urging Mrs. Leno to sit down.

Both seated, Lois puts her hand on Mrs. Leno’s hand and says: *Come on now. The news can’t be that bad, can it?*

Mrs. Leno answers by telling Lois that the surgeon has said that the cancer was so bad that there is nothing more they can do.

Lois responds: *I am so very sorry. That must be difficult news to hear*. Mrs. Leno weeps a bit longer, and then says she does not know how she can live without him.

Lois comments: *You should wait and see how the chemotherapy and radiation treatments go before you think about living without him. Things may turn out all right*.

Mrs. Leno grasps at that hope and says: *Oh, do you really think those treatments could help him? May be he really does not have cancer that bad?*

Lois says: *It has been known to happen. I really have to go see some other patients now. Everything will be okay for you. It will turn out just fine*.

**Questions**

1. What communication techniques did Lois use?

2. What barriers to communication did Lois use?

3. What non-verbal communication did Lois use?

4. What non-verbal communication did Mrs. Leno use?

5. Was the verbal and non-verbal communication congruent? (Lois’ & Mrs. Leno’s)

6. Identify and describe steps of the communication process Lois utilized in this scenario (include the setting).

**Scenario 2**

The client and his wife live along in a small cottage several miles outside the city. Mrs. Leno does not drive and has always been a stay-at-home wife. She also expresses concerns about caring for him at home and getting him to his treatment appointments.

Mr. Leno is very controlled and sits quietly not joining in the conversation with Lois and his wife.

**Questions:**

1. What do you think is happening in this situation regarding communication?

2. What nonverbal cues are apparent in this scenario?

3. What barriers or factors might be influencing Mr. Leno’s behavior?

4. How would you involve Mr. Leno in the conversation?

5. Do you think there is a gender barrier here? Explain your reasoning.

6. What do you think Lois could do to make the communication more effective?

**Scenario: Long Term Care**

You are working the afternoon shift at the long-term care facility. You are one of two nursing assistants assigned to a team on the north wing to care for fourteen residents. Most of the residents require assistance in their activities of daily living, such as bathing, walking to and from the bathroom, dressing, etc.

You are walking down the hallway to check one of your assigned residents at the far end of the hall. As you pass Matilda’s room, to your surprise you notice that Matilda is on the floor. (Matilda is more independent than most of your assigned clients.)

**Questions:**

1. Using the information you have learned about communication what forms of communication will you use to learn why Matilda is on the floor?

2. What would you want to know about the situation?

3. List the types of questions you would use and explain why you selected those types.

4. What might you ask her? (Provide examples of statements-conversation)

5. Which step of the communication process would you use?

6. What therapeutic communication techniques would you use?

7. What might be some barriers to communication that you would encounter?

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