

# Communication Techniques for Nursing Students

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Western Michigan University  
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Defense

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# Hello!



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# Problem Statement

- Nursing students report feeling "small" and "lack self esteem" following clinical experiences (Randle, 2003).
- The student nurse's role in the healthcare hierarchy

Discomfort in communication may decrease learning and could put students and patients in danger

# Literature Review

- We completed a literature review of studies related to communication and student nurses
- We identified these themes
  - Assertive communication
  - Self-esteem building
  - Trusting relationships
  - Risks to patient care
  - Development of clinical skills





# Importance :



- Communication is a reciprocal process (Reberio et al., 2021)
- Trusting and nurturing relationship (Otoo, 2016)
- Positive clinical experience (Otoo, 2016)
- Gaining the most knowledge and experiences (Otoo, 2016)



# The problem



- Vertical violence
  - (Randle, 2003).
- Depression, anxiety, and PTSD
  - (Decker & Shellenbarger, 2012)
- Student retention
  - (Keates, 2003)
- Lack of professional value
  - (Decker & Shellenbarger, 2012)
- Negative impact on patient care
  - (Downer et al., 2022)



# Our Experiences

We have each been through five semesters of clinical and worked as student nurses in various healthcare environments

- "I felt like the nurse would not like me if I didn't participate in activities beyond my skill"
- "I feel like my nurses were annoyed when there was 6-8 of us on the unit at once"





# What we know...

- Poor self-esteem (Randle, 2003)
- Decreased quality of patient care (Downer et al., 2022)
- Lack of critical thinking skills (Otoo, 2016)







# What Can We Do?

- What would we have wanted to know?
- What is the easiest way to get this information to students?
- How can we help students remember the information?

"Effective Communication is a key factor in the success of your product"

Jesse James Garrett

# Goals

We have made this pamphlet as a way to support current and future nursing students develop better communication and self-advocacy skills at Bronson School of Nursing

## Goals 1

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Enhance  
communication skills  
for students

## Goals 2

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Put students in the  
best position to  
promote learning

## Goals 3

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Help students have a  
positive clinical  
experience

## Goals 4

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Enhance students self-  
esteem prior to first  
clinical day



# Communication Strategies

## Assertiveness

Student nurses must develop assertive communication skills

## Identification

Student nurses should identify inappropriate preceptor behaviors and know what to do

## Boundaries

Student nurses should share their current knowledge/skill level to avoid discomfort

## Trust

Following the same preceptor over time can develop a trusting relationship

## What Do I say?

Here is a list of common difficult situations that you may encounter in clinical and appropriate responses you can use.

Nurse: "If I sign in can you just scan that med and give it for me?"

Student: "I am sorry, I would love to help you but I cannot give medications under your login and without supervision."

Nurse: "I didn't know I was going to have a student today."

Student: "I will be here every Thursday for the next 6 weeks. I hope to learn from you today and to help you with your assignment in any way I can."



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It is estimated that miscommunication is the root cause of medical errors 80% of the time

(Janagama et al., 2020)



Erin Raby & Karlee Coddens

## Communication Techniques for Nursing Students



# Assertive Communication

Assertive communication is essential to the development of healthy student nurse and RN relationships. Assertive communication is defined as "involving clear, honest statements about your beliefs, needs, and emotions" (Raypole, 2020).

## Communication Techniques

- Identify personal emotions
  - Think about how the situation or what was said makes you feel
- Identify what you need
  - What is your end goal of the communication?
- Use "I" statements
  - Shifting the focus to yourself can prevent discomfort that stems from making assumptions about how the other person feels or thinks
- Be direct, not aggressive
  - Always use respectful and appropriate language. Attempt to use a nonjudgmental attitude.
- After a difficult situation debrief with your clinical instructor
  - This helps you learn from the event by receiving feedback from a trusted mentor
- Listen actively
  - This shows your preceptor you are engaged and ready to learn from them

(Decker & Shellenbarger, 2012;  
Downer et al., 2022; Raypole, 2020)

## The Introduction How to Start Your Day

- Introduce yourself and how long you will be there
- Communicate what you can and cannot do
- Share your goal for the day
- Be ready to listen to report
- Show willingness to learn

(Reberio et al. 2021)



## Importance

- Builds trusting relationships
- Allows for direct and effective communication
- Avoids difficult situations
- Develops better critical thinking skills
- Improves learning
- Increases confidence in clinical skills

(Otoo, 2016)

## What Do I Say?

Nurse: "What can you do while you are here today"

Student: "I am in my second semester, I can participate in most patient care activities and give oral medications."

Nurse: "I know we did not have time to walk the patient, but can you chart that we did"

Student: "I do not feel comfortable with charting an activity I did not do, would you like me to find another student and walk with the patient"

(C. Rosengarten, personal communication, April 2, 2023).



# Situations

Here is a list of common difficult situations that you may encounter in clinical and appropriate responses for student nurses.

NURSE	STUDENT
"If I sign in can you just scan that med and give it for me?"	"I am sorry, I would love to help you but I cannot give medications without your supervision."
"I didn't know I was going to have a student today."	"I will be here every Thursday for the next 6 weeks. I hope to learn from you today and to help you with your assignment in any way I can."
"What can you do while you are here today"	"I am in my second semester, I can participate in most patient care activities and give oral medications."
" I know we did not have time to walk the patient, but can you chart that we did"	" I don't feel comfortable with charting an activity I did not do, would you like me to find another student and walk with the patient"



# Moving Forward

Our hope is that this pamphlet can be passed down to future nursing cohorts to help them develop effective communication skills and maintain healthy boundaries with their preceptors. We want to improve the culture of nursing and inspire the next group of nurses to make their own change.



# Questions?





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