

## Communication

- Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to describe an incident which occurred with a patient while in the clinical placement. This paper will attempt briefly to describe an encounter with a patient on the ward in terms of the use of effective communication skills. This essay will also provide two definitions of communication. In addition, this paper will describe how i used verbal/non verbal and other communication skills on the above encounter as well as explain what went well and my weaknesses on that occasion. For the purpose of preserving confidentiality, patients' name will be changed.

- Describe incident with patient

My current placement is in a geriatric ward, designed to deliver health care for old age. Mr. Black is a 64 year old patient diagnosed with personality disorder and paralysis. I approached Mr. Black after he had called for help. I addressed Mr. Black and asked him what i could do for him. As he started speaking, i used colloquialism, as Miller (2002) stated was part of verbal communication, yet i could not understand what he was saying, although i knew he was from the West Indies since i saw how his daughter looked and dressed the day before, his speech was not clear, he spoke low, stumbled over the words and could not articulate the sounds because of the paralysis. Although I asked him to speak louder so i can understand what he was saying, he continued speaking in an unclear manner. After few attempt i felt helpless as the patient was not making sense and there were other patients calling for attention. Suddenly, frustration and distress was appeared on Mr. Black's face, this indicated the urgency of what he was trying to tell me. I observed his surrounding area and notice that there was no catheter anywhere near Mr. Black's bed although i noticed he always had it around. This indicated that he must be wearing a pad. As i lifted the blanket off the patient to see if the pad needed to be changed, i realised what he was trying to tell me. The patient's blanket,bedsheets and clothes were completely wet. That is when he started crying of relief. With assistance from a staff nurse we changed all that was wet on Mr. Black's bed. He Introduced me to his daughter the next day and i told her he was telling me this morning that she lived near Kilburn.

- Two definitions of communication

According to TVU (2005), communication is a personal interactive system where exchange and transmission of information and meanings take place. Similarly, Miller (2002), believed that communication is the act of giving and receiving information. However there are two types of communicate: verbal and non verbal.

- Describe the use of verbal/non verbal and list communication skills used on occasion

In the above incident, i used verbal communication techniques such as use of language/words to communicate with Mr. Black when asking him to tell me what he needed. Although i did not understand what Mr. Black was saying, i felt his frustration through his tone and facial expression.

I also bent over the patient's bed to reach his eye level, looked directly at him and touched his hand to show interest and patience so he would not feel rushed.

- Explain what went well and weaknesses on occasion

In my opinion, i handled the indicated incident in a professional manner with good use of verbal and non verbal communication techniques. I did not pretend to understand what Mr. Black was trying to say or even ignore him. However, Miller (2002) stated that I could have asked him questions about the few meaningless words that i heard him say to allow him feel capable of conveying his message.

- Conclusion

In conclusion, efficient communication skills must be developed and improved for the safe delivery of care. Health care professionals need to be aware of the type of communicate style used while dealing with patients with various age group, backgrounds and mental state as well as overcome the barriers that affect and hinder communication such as sensory, psychological and language.

### References

Miller L (2002) Effective communication with older people. Nursing Standard. 17, 9, 45-50