**Professional Aspects of Care**

27th June 2016

## Introduction

According to (Brooker & Waugh, 2013), professionalism is one essential ingredient responsible for achieving a healthy work environment and is often enabled by the context of practice. It’s a building block that enhances the outcomes for nurses, patients, organizations and systems as well as enhance good nurse and patient coexistence. In professional Aspects of care, communication plays a pivotal role in enhancing the way a nurse interacts with his/her environment and also how he/she delivers services to various types of patients.

This study undertakes a critical exploration into the different types of communication systems that nurses can establish with their patients while also focusing on the legal and ethical aspects that may impact upon the quality of care that is given to a patient. It explores legislations policies and the relevant legal framework to substantiate the discussion. Finally, it shows how building an effective therapeutic relationship with patients helps to facilitate communication and enhancing professionalism in healthcare officers.

## Professional Aspects

In the nursing profession, communication can be described as the exchange of information, thoughts and feelings among people using speech, written, digital sounds, signs, or behaviours to express or exchange information or other forms (Norman & Ryrie, 2013). It is a vital component in the nursing profession as it enables nurses to relate to patients and understand their health needs.

Communication plays a major role in delivering care and support to patients and it can take many aspects. One of these is online communication that involves the use of the different social networks such as; Twitter, Facebook, We Chat, and LinkedIn among others to pass information to patients. This form has been advocated within the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC, 2015) code, which states that communication can be established with the help of social networking sites, (Council, 2015). This is because social media helps healthcare professionals to maintain contact with patients and their family. Furthermore, social media sites provide platforms for health care professionals to share their own knowledge and understanding with each other. Clause 20:10 of the NMC (2015) code also suggests that social media can be used to diagnose diseases of patients, (Moorley & Watson, 2015). This diagnosis could by patients getting in touch with nurses through social networks and explaining to them their symptoms. Nurses or health care services can diagnose them based on the information they receive from them and probably give necessary advice on what drugs or preventive measures they should take. However, this same clause also states that health care professionals are required to maintain privacy while establishing communication with the help of social media. The clause also suggests that maintenance of privacy helps to protect the right of every person. A recent NMC survey identified that circa 355,000 of registered nurses of UK are utilising social media as a tool to promote awareness regarding health (Moorley & Watson, 2015).

In terms of current online platforms, Facebook is the primary social media site that nurses are using. This is probably because, Facebook is one of the most popular social sites and most populated as well, hence allowing nurses to get to a large population at one go. Facebook helps nurses to stay connected with the public through allowing them to post comments and/or answers about any health problems that are raised by the public (Brooker & Waugh, 2013). The platform also provides the nurses with a forum where they can disseminate professional advice and explanation to people about the occurrence of illness, hygiene and medical related aspects. Through the same site, they are able to post videos on the different health problems which hence helps them to catch the attention of the general public and as a result breaking down the boundaries between professionals and patients, (Brooker & Waugh, 2013).

NMC (2015) mentions certain guidelines on maintaining nurses’ social network site profiles. These guidelines include;

* Not to accept all but the most trivial gifts, favours or any form of hospitality as accepting them could show a sign of unprofessionalism and may be interpret as an attempt to gain preferential treatment
* Never at any given time ask for or accept loans given to them by anyone in their care or anyone close to them
* Maintain honesty and integrity in any financial and related dealings you have with anyone they have a professional relationship with.
* Any advertisements, or published materials produced in the course of the professional services should maintain accuracy, responsibility, and ethics.
* Avoid the use of their professional status to promote causes that are corporate and non-health related, unless necessary, and then uphold confidentiality and dignity of people receiving treatment or care, (Council, 2015).

This guideline hence promotes professionalism and patient confidentiality thus eliminating unethical factors such as cyber bullying where the patient may be traumatised based on their health weaknesses. Several studies have mentioned that online counselling sessions have proven to be very effective for patients who are suffering from mild disorders (American Nurses Association, 2011). In such cases, the professionals responsible are required to maintain the confidentiality of any given patient’s personal details, (Moorley & Watson, 2015). In the case of face to face treatment, proper care and support are provided by interacting with patients. They are also required to adhere to the rights of the patients who are seeking help from them. In summary, social media enhances professional development among health professionals.

## Legal Aspects

Legal frameworks help to guide health professionals in giving effective care to patients. In order to do this, the legislation sets standards and codes of conduct for nurses to treat patients. In the case of the nursing profession, NMC defines law as “regulations which control the actions of nurses”. These include positive rules and normative rules. Positive rules encompass, and expresses the importance of legal obligations (Druss & Mauer, 2010). They indicate that violation of the law will disrupt professional development. According to Griffith & Tengnah, (2014), normative rulesadvocate ‘the right things to do’. They specify certain rules that professionals are required to follow while providing care to others. They also set some rules that guide persons away from doing the wrong things.

To maintain and differentiate right from wrong, some Legal frameworks have been set aside to dictate professionalism. Some of this frameworks include; the human rights act, equality act, the person act and the dignity act among others. These rights, “dignity, humanity and equality” are universal rights to any individual in all settings.

*Person Act 1861*: This is the most prominent act in the UK, as it describes and defines criminal activities (Kongstvedt, 2012). It identifies activities, such as touching a person without consent that can be deemed as a crime. It emphasises that this activity is a civil offence. It describes that touching without permission can cause harm to a person, both physically and psychologically (Reeves, Lewin, Espin, & Zwarenstein, 2011). The mistreatment of health professionals can be treated as criminal activities. However though, some people tend to have learning disabilities, in such cases, this act advises that, the nursing care should either find a way to make sure the patients understands or should involve their families or carers, for decision-making purposes. A number of practices proposed in such cases are;

* Use of alternative and augmentative communication strategies and skills in order to build therapeutic relationships with impaired people.
* Make all relevant information accessible and understandable to this person with  
  learning disabilities. This includes an adaptation of format, presentation as well as delivery.
* Find a more suitable approach to assess, communicate, interpret and respond therapeutically to those with physical and psychological health needs and those in behavioural distress
* Be able to recognise and respond therapeutically to any complex behaviour that people with learning disabilities may use as a means of communication, (Harris, O'Boyle, Bates, & Buckley, 2014).

*Human Rights Act 1998:* The Human Rights Act protects all persons and emphasises that every person has an equal right to fair treatment from any health care unit (Brooker & Waugh, 2013). Consequently, it helps health care units to function. The legislation therefore requires that health care units provide the best possible services to service users. The act also states that professionals must show respect to every patient (Harris, O'Boyle, Bates, & Buckley, 2014). They are encouraged to provide proper care and support to each patient irrespective of their socio-economic background and ensure dignity is maintained in each provision of care. It also states that health care units are required to satisfy the demand of patients and that patients must be given the opportunity to choose treatment according to their need. The act describes that professionals must cater their best services to improve the health condition of patients.

*Equality Act 2010*; this legal framework dictates that are free from any form of discrimination as they have the right for public service provision with equal amounts and in a fair share (Brooker & Waugh, 2013). The Equality Act 2010, protects individuals against the harm that may come through discrimination on any basis such as; age, disability, marriage, gender, pregnancy or their level of maternity status, religion, race, and sexual orientation. It hence protects patients and helps promote the behaviours and professionalism of nurses and the nursing team, (Griffith & Tengnah, 2014). It seeks that nursing care should uphold the dignity, equality and humanity of all patients at all times. They (nurses and nursing care) should appreciate essential potential health inequalities and hence anticipate as well as assess specific concerns that would help meet health needs fully.

Such legal issues help to provide guidance on communicative perspectives of health care professionals. The legal aspect describes that every personal and medical detail of the patient must be identified by health care professionals. Furthermore, proper rapport must be established with the patient to identify the nature of his or her suffering. Legal issues also explain that human rights must be maintained to ensure the proper care and support is given to patients. The relevant legal frameworks define that proper care and treatment must be provided to patients by following these rules and regulations, (Harris, O'Boyle, Bates, & Buckley, 2014).

## Ethical Aspects

(Reeves, Lewin, Espin, & Zwarenstein, 2011), defines ethical aspects as that factors that help to guide the behaviour of nurses in the case of treating patients. In the health care profession, it’s regarded ethical for health care professionals to provide quality care to every patient. They must show respect and treat kindly every patient as well as maintain self-respect (Lowes & Hulatt, 2013). In doing so, they should adhere to the five codes of ethics; ethical relativism, utilitarianism, universalism, rights and justice. These codes of ethics, promote communication and a good therapeutical relationship between the patient and the nurse. They promote proper behaviour hence leading to professionalism. It creates a free and fair environment, just and one where everyone's rights are respected and thereby all including people with disabilities are helped to their satisfaction in a respectful manner. They hence promote the capability to make an adequate decision regarding treatment of patients. They promote safety and security for the patient and maintain confidentiality as well as integrity.

(Lowes & Hulatt, 2013), says that it is the hope of every patient that they get maximum help whenever they visit health care facilities. It hence the responsibility of health care professionals to maintain and deliver quality care to these patients regardless of their age, gender, social status and other factors that may be under consideration. They should do their best to maintain the proper standard of care delivery in health care units. These care delivery services include such as undertaking research before providing care to patients with various disorders. Ensuring that this patient understand exactly what is going on as they have the right and it is only just that they have the consent of any touch on their skin. Nurses should or rather are required to develop a sense of accountability within themselves. The feature of accountability encourages their moral potentialities (Boxwell, 2010). This ensures that they take responsibility for whatever they do, be it good or bad.

## Conclusion

In conclusion to this study, it can be said that health is amongst the most crucial aspect of human wellbeing. Wellbeing in health refers to the absence of illness and that person is free from any sufferings. This hence promotes health care professionals in a rank of actually the most important people in the world as the lives of others depend on them. It's thereby their responsibility to uphold necessary morals and conducts and hinder to set rules and guidance’s by the selected authorities in order to save human life. It is essential for them to promote a necessary code of ethics and be the role model for all that depend on them. Avoid discrimination, be just and fair in order to uphold their professionalism in the health care profession and help those that need them live a day longer.

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