

# The Nurse-Client Relationship

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## Components of the nurse-client relationship

- There are five components to the nurse-client relationship: **trust, respect, professional intimacy, empathy and power.**
- Regardless of the context, length of interaction and whether a nurse is the primary or secondary care provider, these components are always present.

### *Trust.*

- Trust is critical in the nurse-client relationship because the client is in a vulnerable position. Initially, trust in a relationship is fragile, so it's especially important that a nurse keep promises to a client. If trust is breached, it becomes difficult to re-establish

### *Respect.*

- Respect is the recognition of the inherent dignity, worth and uniqueness of every individual, regardless of socio-economic status, personal attributes and the nature of the health problem.

### *Professional intimacy.*

- Professional intimacy is inherent in the type of care and services that nurses provide. It may relate to the physical activities, such as bathing, that nurses perform for, and with, the client that creates closeness. Professional intimacy can also involve psychological, spiritual and social elements that are identified in the plan of care. Access to the client's personal information also contributes to professional intimacy

### *Empathy.*

- Empathy is the expression of understanding, validating and resonating with the meaning that the health care experience holds for the client. In nursing, empathy includes appropriate emotional distance from the client to ensure objectivity and an appropriate professional response

## *Power.*

- The nurse-client relationship is one of unequal power. Although the nurse may not immediately perceive it, the nurse has more power than the client. The nurse has more authority and influence in the health care system, specialized knowledge, access to privileged information, and the ability to advocate for the client and the client's significant others. The appropriate use of power, in a caring manner, enables the nurse to partner with the client to meet the client's needs. A misuse of power is considered abuse.

## Personal Relationships

- Casual Relationships
- Casual relationships arise when nurses, as members of a community, are acquainted with other people in the normal course of living.
- A casual relationship is not regarded by anyone as close, romantic or sexual.

## Friendships

- Friendships or platonic relationships may exist between a nurse and a client, a client's significant other or both, outside of the nurse-client relationship.
- A friendship is a close relationship which may have an important meaning and history for everyone involved, but it is not regarded by anyone as romantic or sexual.
- Nurses do not enter into friendships with clients, but they may have a pre-existing friendship with someone who becomes a client.

## Romantic Relationships

- A sexual relationship implies erotic desires or activities, while a romantic relationship generally involves both an emotional and sexual intimacy.
- Romantic or sexual relationships with clients are unethical and unprofessional, and they have a high probability of harmful consequences to the client.
- Nurses do not enter into a romantic relationship with clients, although they may have a pre-existing relationship with someone who later becomes a client.

## Professional Relationships

- The professional relationship between nurses and their clients is based on a recognition that clients (or their alternate decision-makers) are in the best position to make decisions about their own lives when they are active and informed participants in the decision-making process.
- These relationships must neither have a negative effect on meeting a client's therapeutic needs nor in any way interfere with a client's right to receive safe, competent and ethical care.

### Differences between Professional and Personal Relationships

Characteristic	Professional Relationship (nurse-client)	Personal Relationship (casual, friendship, romantic, sexual)
Behavior	Regulated by a code of ethics and professional standards.	Guided by personal values and beliefs.
Remuneration	Nurse is paid to provide care to client	No payment for being in the relationship.
Length of relationship	Time-limited for the length of the client's need for nursing care.	May last a lifetime.
Location of relationship	Place defined and limited to where nursing care is provided.	Place unlimited; often undefined.
Purpose of relationship	Goal-directed to provide care to client.	Pleasure, interest-directed.
Structure of relationship	Nurse provides care to client	Spontaneous, unstructured.

Power of balance	Unequal: nurse has more power due to authority, knowledge, influence and access to privileged information about client.	Relatively equal.
Responsibility for relationship	Nurse (not client) responsible for establishing and maintaining professional relationship.	Equal responsibility to establish and maintain.
Preparation for relationship	Nurse requires formal knowledge, preparation, orientation and training.	Does not require formal knowledge, preparation, orientation and training.
Time spent in relationship	Nurse employed under contractual agreement that outlines hours of work for contact between the nurse and client.	Personal choice for how much time is spent in the relationship.

There are some limited circumstances when giving or receiving a gift is acceptable.

- Any gift must be openly declared to ensure transparency.
- Nurses may accept a token gift on behalf of others who provided care. For example, a nurse may accept a box of chocolates from a client to share with other staff.
- Occasionally a gift may be part of a therapeutic plan for the client. For example, the nursing team may
  - give a small gift to hospitalized children on their birthday.
- Gifts from clients may be accepted through a charitable organization and used directly or indirectly to benefit client care.
- For example, a client who wishes to give money, even a small amount, to a nurse in appreciation of care received must be directed to the hospital's foundation.

## All patients have the right to:

1. **Receive** comprehensive medical care aimed at reaching a proper medical diagnosis and treatment for your illness.
2. Give **written general consent** in any treatment decision & an informed consent for any procedure
3. **Refuse treatment** and be informed of the consequences thereof and documented on the refusal of treatment form.

4. **Know the name and professional** status of your care providers
5. **Refuse examination** or follow up treatment by any person not directly responsible for your care.
6. **Receive a satisfactory explanation** and comprehensive information in a simple understandable manner



7. Participate in care decision making, obtain a second opinion, refuse treatment or medications.
8. Receive appropriate impartial care and respect of your privacy, your personal values and beliefs from all staff
9. Know what rules and regulations apply to your own conduct and care
10. Have an interpreter if language is a barrier to understand details of your care
11. Be involved in your discharge plan and receive information about the therapeutic plan and follow-up care.

12. Obtain a copy of the clinical summary, medical test results and bill upon request.
13. Request religious support at your own discretion as long as it does not interfere with other patients or regular clinic functioning.
14. Express concerns and suggestions and receive feedback
15. Receive appropriate assessment and management of pain.
16. Patient has the right to access their Medical Record and Medical Information

## **All patients have the responsibility to:**

1. **Bring your identification documents** & health insurance card (when applicable)
2. **Follow rules and regulations of Prime** Medical Center and observe safety regulations. including, but not limited to non-smoking.
3. **Respect the priority given** to emergency cases.

4. **Avoid interference with the treatment** of other patients.
5. **Provide complete and accurate information** about present complaints, past medical history as well as known drug allergies.
6. **Follow the treating doctor's instructions.**
7. Take **responsibility for refusing or not following** the treatment plan after being informed about the potential consequences of this decision

8. Verbalize your understanding of instructions or planned course of action for your treatment given by clinical staff  
Provide accurate information concerning your method of payment, and ability to pay any extra charges not covered by your medical insurance.

9. To keep appointments on time and inform our call center in case of cancellation.

10. Restrict from taking photographs or videos inside procedure / treatment rooms.

Thanks