**Improving communication skills**

Plan-DO Study-Act(PDSA0 cycle is a technique employed to improve small and estimated milestones and evaluate an individual’s success, before moving on with further plans.  This method should have clear tools for measurement put in place to assess the progress. This method is also called Plan-DO- Check Act; the reason being someone has to first make plans, implement the plans, check if the plans are workable and lastly acts on the workable plans

To begin the PDCA process, we have to first identify their areas of weakness and those they feel they need to improve (Thareja, P 1993).

Effective communication is one that is clearly passed, well received and well understood. Learning the skills of effective communication will definitely assist me in solving the differences and at the same time gain trust with my fellow work-mate as a nursing student. Effective communication is associated with certain skills which include being a good listener, taking control of emotions and stress, empathizing with others and understanding them as a whole, using good body language and nonverbal cues. Applying these skills in day to day life will aid me to better connect with patients, fellow students, family and workers in general. My ultimate objective is to be efficient in communication at both the workplace and out of the work area and give more time for practicing effective communication whenever I go.

As a student in a nursing school, I have come to appreciate the importance of communicating effectively in my day to day chores including patient care. This is one area in my life that I realize I am week in and I would love to improve on it; I feel I do not give others a chance to be listened to and I any kind of a person used to giving orders and wanting them done without giving others a chance to express themselves. I believe when effective communication is correctly mastered it will make me a better nurse in my nursing profession. I plan to use the Plan-Do-Check-Act as described earlier to achieve this ultimate goal for my quality communication improvement skills. As Neuhauser, Myhre, & Alemi, (2004) claim for one to implement a plan successfully, they have to do the following; plan for improvement, collect data to assess the plan and establish its effectiveness or see if there is any need to modify my plan.

To begin with I will start making plans on how to improve my communication skills. My plan for improvement will be to create time to read books and other materials that will help me improve on my communication skills. In this I will set aside 30 minutes per day at 9.00 pm before my bedtime for the reading materials on how to improve and communicate for the first five weeks. I will also set some time to reflect and even take online exams on proper communication skills. I will come up with a daily diary in which I will record my achievements for each day. This will enable me to keep track and make some notes concerning the communication skills. I will collect reading materials and some tests for theoretical assessment in regards to communication improvement.

After the identification of my area of improvement which is communication. The next step will be coming up with an improvement plan that will assist me to achieve my set goal. The plan will be documented with clear, specific goals. For example, my goals will be to first understand what communication really is, to get the courage to say what I really mean, to practice my communication, to engage other work-mate in my communication, and to have the perfect body language during my communication process and more or so to have good attitudes that towards people that will enhance my communication with them and not to forget having good listening skills because communication is a two way .I find communication a problem for me because next step will be the implementation stage; to do what I have planned this will be in accordance with my plans, this will gauge if I have mastered my communication skills which I will nurse as a manager in my unit. As the old adage says charity begins at home, I will start practicing the grasped communication skills at home, then at my clinical area and school for the first one week. I will begin by being an active listener, practicing effective verbal cues and using appropriate body language as learned from my reading materials. I will come up with a way of recording what I have achieved each day, probably in my diary which I will keep private. For the second week I will make a work schedule in which I will record the achieved data during the interaction with others, especially in school and at the clinical areas, the datab collection will continue for the next two weeks. I will take 30 minutes within these 2 weeks before my sleep time to go through the data.

Evaluation of checking if my plan has worked will follow after implementation for a while in accordance with my time line of five weeks to study if the results are successful of needed improvement.  The data sheet collected will be evaluated or checked to identify if I have mastered the communication skills. This will be in accordance with the set goals; such as rating myself using a scale of 1 to5. 1 being poor and five being perfect to assess if I have mastered the skills associated with effective communication. The skills which will get a score of 3 will be deemed to have been fairly achieved while those above the scale of 3 will be deemed well grasped but those below the scale of 3 will need some improvement. This evaluation will be done at the end of the five weeks to gauge if I had mastered effective communication skills (Lawson, K. 2006).

I will act according to the data collected and the evaluation of my findings. Based on my plan of improving my communication skills the plan was successful. I believe the success was attributed to massive literature research, dedication and practice. Though the plan was successful my body language got a score of less that a 3 and this meant I still need to improve on this. The failure could be due to the tool of data collection of the scale in regards to body language.

Lawson, K. (2006) suggests that good communication is all about practicing and I intend to continue with my journey to become perfect in my communication skills. Thus, I have to develop a way of achieving this by practicing more and get rid of some of my personal barriers such as pride and undermining those who are lower at my course level and giving respect to my tutors and the clinical area personnel.

 Despite the some few set back I achieved a great milestone in developing my communication skills. I thus, believe I will have to continue with the good practice as it has made me a new person, who not only communicates at individual level but now I can address a crowd at large without any fears. As the old adage says practice makes perfect I plan to continue to practice on my communication skills, which I believe will enable I too have a good lasting and a healthy relationship with others. I will have to continue with the PDCA cycle to improve my communication skills as a nurse student and a leader in every possible way that will make me a better person.

**Reference**

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