



Believe it or Not . . . This I believe about . . .

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR

By Mrs. A. S. Pillai*

WHEN we think of promoting professional behaviour of nursing personnel, we should first of all have a clear understanding and appreciation of the behaviour of the present day nurses, taking into consideration the current social, political, educational and economic changes which have an impact on the behaviour of all human beings. We should also keep in mind the future trends in nursing to keep pace with medical and allied professions so as to achieve the maximum benefit, efficiency, contentment and happiness for the nurses.

This calls for a positive attitude on the part of the nursing staff which is acquired through social environment, purposeful thinking, training and suggestions.

A proper positive attitude which is essential to increase the effectiveness of nursing care, sets the climate for positive relationship with patients which is essential in the treatment and recovery. It also encourages acceptance of patients with all types of illness in hospitals as well as in the community, cooperation and positive relationships between co-workers and smoother functioning of the wards. "It is not what you do, it is how you do it". (Robinson). Examples of attitude useful in developing successful relationships with patients are sympathy, hopefulness and kindness, realism, respect (courtesy) and appreciation of how one would like to be treated if one were ill. Attitudes are part of a person's total personality pattern and thus give rise to characteristic pattern of behaviour in individuals.

BEHAVIOUR

Human behaviour consists of all our physical responses, habits,

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skills and the like, all our organic responses, feeling, emotions and tensions; all our intellectual responses, receiving thinking and recalling, reasoning and willing. (Averill and Kempf). This shows that an individual's behaviour at any particular time cannot be isolated from the environment in which he finds himself.

Any behaviour pattern is a dynamic development with roots in the past, that have a strong influence on present expression. (Matheny and Topalis—Psychiatric Nursing).

Two major motivations underlie behaviour. One biologic and the other psychosocial in origin. The former is easily satisfied and is very essential to sustain life itself. The latter—security, relating to a cultural need (man being social by a nature) is a feeling of safety and certainty in relationship with other people. Security or lack of it is derived primarily from the individual perception of himself in relation to others as equal, inferior, superior, liked, respected, unwanted and so on. That perception and how it is handled profoundly influence the course of a person's development and his subsequent behaviour.

WHAT IS NURSING

Basing on many literatures—Nursing is defined as the process of recognising, understanding and meeting the health needs of any person or society, (a process that serves in three directions) and is based upon a constantly changing body of scientific knowledge and social changes.

PROFESSIONS

Vocation—belonging to a particular body e.g. (medical nursing, engineering).

The criteria of the nursing profession should be intellectual, scientific, essential, self-governing

and service oriented. It should also provide personnel development and economic security (Professional adjustment and ethics for Nurses in India—by the examining board of the Christian Medical Association of India, South Indian Branch).

PROMOTING PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR

1. Nursing leaders (Administrators and Teachers) should recognize the Nurse as a 'Person' first with her own needs, ideas, thoughts and aspirations. Personality improvement always takes place around a central core of values. The concept of dignity and worth of each individual of one's own responsibility for the welfare of others and the sense of friendship with all humanity are necessary to be a happy individual.

Expression towards personality improvement must also include attention to the needs for self-expressions. One must actively seek satisfying activity in which we can be ourselves, in which we can construct, build and attain pleasure out of one's own handiwork or efforts—by encouraging talents and interests in something worthwhile.

The nurse should have a feeling

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of belongings, of securing acceptance from others and of developing a warm and satisfying friendship. Just as we ourselves have needs, so do all other human beings. Just as we ourselves are concerned with their fulfilment so is each and every person around us. One can help himself to friendship by remembering that the other person too may be struggling with feelings of inadequacy and self-consciousness. Cultivation of sensibility to the needs of others can be consciously practised. Just as we blossom when some one is sincerely interested in us so will others feel good and at ease when we show genuine interest in them. (Psychology of human behaviour of Nurses—Dennis”).

2. We should not have preconceived ideas about any one unless you have had some time and experience together. We need to understand and appreciate others with different personality make up which is influenced by family, social and cultural influences, language, education etc. Try to understand why a person says and does something before making a judgement.

3. We must respect the cultural and religious differences in others—Remember that one thing may be wrong in one culture and right in another. Most of all remember the rapid social changes due to industrialisation and migration to urban areas. Trends in nursing and allied fields also affect our profession and our behaviour.

4. We must give responsibility only to those who are fit in all respects to take the responsibility and discharge it efficiently. Praise or encouragement should always be given for good and efficient work.

5. Counselling and guidance in solving problems, both professional as well as personal, can help a great deal.

6. Showing concern and interest in the well-being of the nurses and their family will be an additional asset to encourage positive behaviour.

7. Line of communication should be very clear, listening and

talking to others help better behaviour.

8. Mixing and exchanging ideas with one's own and other professional groups help in the growth of the individual. Interpersonal relationship and communication between all members of the health team encourages professional growth. Giving the nurse a status in the health team and patient care is very essential to promote a feeling of being worthy and important.

9. Avoid too much of authoritarian attitude, as this only brings defiant to stubborn behaviour leading to non-cooperation, leave to absense, getting mixed up with strikes, demonstrations etc.

10. Encourage friendly, harmonious and good relationship with patients and relatives and all others with whom the nurse will have to come in contact. Limitations should also be set up to maintain a professional standard.

11. Encourage continuing education of the nurse e.g. post certificate and post graduate courses, refresher course, inservice programmes, workshops, seminars, visits to other institutions of interest etc.

12. Membership in professional associations and participation in conferences, functions etc.

13. Formal and informal meetings frequently helps air out one's own feelings and problems and also give opinions and suggestions.

In conclusion I should mention, that for professional growth and positive behaviour, freedom of action towards improvement in one's own work and application of mere ideas and methods, freedom to question and evaluate what is being done should all be encouraged and appreciated. It is also most essential to research so as to enlarge our body of knowledge and improve our techniques of education and service. Programme of education must be able to stimulate and motivate the nurse. Opportunity for higher and continuous education, social activities, social securities and better living and working conditions are all necessary to promote positive professional behaviour. □

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should be so situated in the ward that nurses work with least fatigue. The size of the duty room should be adequate for the purpose.

(ii) Adequate furniture should be provided by the hospital management on a priority basis.

(iii) Sterile equipment and supplies should be provided to the wards from the central supply area as and when needed. This will reduce a lot of routine work of the nurses and they can devote the time thus saved for patient care.

(iv) Separate toilet room for nurses should be provided as near their working place as possible.

(v) Rest room should invariably be provided to the nurses in the hospital.

(vi) Canteen and library should be established by the hospital management.

III. EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

(i) Modern equipment should be provided as required for better patient care. There should be an adequate supply of linen in each ward. Replacement of linen should be regular and prompt.

(ii) Losses and breakages not attributable to the negligence of the nurses should be borne by the hospital management. Loss and breakages attributed to the negligence of the nurses may be recovered from the nurses but the cost of losses and breakages should be worked out with reference to the condition of the article at the time of loss and breakage.

IV. WORKING RELATIONSHIP

(i) Efforts should be made to help the community to understand the nurses role by organizing programmes in Radios, Televisions etc. Write-ups in newspapers, family planning programmes, social functions etc. should also be availed of.

(ii) Class IV staff are mostly ill-trained and uneducated. Regular training programmes relating to their duties should be organized in every hospital by the management. This, it is expected, will improve the working relationship between nurses and class IV staff.

(Summary of a study submitted by Mrs. B.A. Samuel in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Nursing at the College of Nursing, University of Delhi).