

Good Relationships (5)

By

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Interpersonal Relationships in Our Dealings with the Public

Our Relationships with the public are beautifully summed up in the Golden Rule—*Love Your Neighbour As Yourself*. We are obligated to them, in a manner, by wishing for them and seeking for them the good things we desire for ourselves.

The Golden Rule gives clear and practical instruction for it bids us "*Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you*". This is an extremely practical rule to the nurse in active service. Ask yourself the question, what sort of nurse would you like to have if you were ill? I would like to have a nurse with sound professional education and one who is skillful, diligent, sympathetic and cheerful.

Our relationships with the public may be classified as duties towards their mind and will, their bodies and lives, their honour and good name, and duties towards their property.

Towards the mind and will of others we owe the duty of speaking the truth, of giving good example and of exercising a good influence so as not to mislead them.

Towards their good name and honour toward others, we owe truthfulness and respect of another's reputation.

Towards the property of others we owe justice and equity in our dealings.

Avoid untruthfulness and the communication of false principles. A lie is defined as speaking contrary to one's mind and thoughts.

We should communicate our true thoughts to others. A lie deceives them. Sometimes a nurse is asked a question which she cannot answer without doing harm. It may happen that a patient may enquire about his condition when he is very ill, or in a dangerous state of worry and anxiety—in such a case common sense and prudence is necessary. Hit on a satisfactory answer without violating the truth. We are not obliged

to divulge facts. Public Relations is defined as "an effort to influence public opinions." It is also defined as "any kind of activity designed to impart information, form ideas and opinions by means of radio, press, cinema and, in short, it is the art of propaganda to be used sincerely and with a full sense of social responsibility."

Public relations consist of those activities which are aimed at securing the understanding and regard of the community and its success is measured by the degree of public understanding.

To establish good interpersonal relationships with our public, we have to modify our tone of voice when speaking to them. Our manners and bearing are all of signal importance and therefore must at all times be courteous and dignified.

Another way of building up good relationships with the public is to provide the public with the Hospital Annual Report to read so that they are in the know of what has been accomplished. It is a stock-taking experience and a tool to awaken public interest to unmet needs.

In order to gain an attitude towards others (the public), the nurse must have a real belief in the work she is doing. In all cases the right professional relationship is a friendly approach. When effort is made to establish and maintain professional relationships it must be remembered that part of this must negate feelings and a way of behaviour.

Another duty we owe to the public is that of avoiding or causing scandal. We are bound by justice and charity to help others. To make scandal is to hinder them and it is a violation of our duty towards our fellow men. The nurse ought to be careful to avoid scandal if she is to be held in high esteem and to be influential among those whom she serves. She ought to know the difference between right and wrong.

(To be Continued)