

LEARNING ACTIVITY

Pre-op checklist (answers)

Before you watch the film clip

In this film clip, Gloria, needs to complete a pre-op checklist with Tom, a patient who is going to have surgery.

Nursing communication

Gloria (student nurse) has not met the patient before.

1. In order to make the patient feel comfortable, what does Gloria need to consider when asking the patient questions?

If the procedure is planned or unexpected; how the patient might be feeling; if the patient is in pain; how much the patient knows and understands about what is happening; if the patient has a support person; how to create rapport.

2. Do you think there are any questions that Gloria might find difficult to ask (the patient is a young man)?

Questions such as: when did he last void? Any jewellery? Any dentures? Any makeup?

Nursing Behaviour

3. In order to make sure that the pre-op checklist is completed properly, what paperwork does Gloria need to complete?

Correct patient verification checklist.

4. As Gloria is a student nurse in her first year at university, what should she check with her clinical facilitator or RN?

Does she need to be supervised i.e. does the facilitator need to be present at the bedside.

Watch the film clip

Complete the following notes as you watch the video. The questions are given in stages so you can watch a section of the video and pause it while you make notes.

5. Introduction by the patient

Reason for hospital stay

- shoulder surgery - to repair fractured right shoulder

History of injury

- occurred during a football match .

Patient's attitude to injury

- upset, in a 'bad' mood, possibly worried and angry at having to be in hospital and have an operation.

6. Student – facilitator talk

Gloria asks the clinical facilitator for some advice.

What does she ask and how does the facilitator respond?

Gloria is not sure of how to ask some of the questions given the patient is a young man, for example 'are you wearing any makeup?' The facilitator explains that it may not always be necessary to ask a question as some things can be observed. However, if it is not possible to notice or observe, then it is important to ask the patient.

7. Nurse – patient interaction: the pre-op checklist

What is the first question that the nurse asks the patient?

Gloria checks that Tom knows that he is having surgery today
Look at the transcript and find out exactly what Gloria says

What is Tom's answer to this question?

Tom confirms 'yes, they told me'

According to Gloria, why is it important to ask the patient's name and date of birth? Is she correct?

Gloria explains that it is important to ensure the correct procedure is done with the correct patient – it is necessary for the patient's safety

How would you describe the patient's mood or attitude?

The patient seems upset, irritated, not happy and 'difficult'.

Complete the following notes

Time of last food: 9 am

Time of last drink: 11 am

Contact lenses: no

Prostheses: no

Dentures: no

Voided: in the morning

Nail polish: no

Showered: this morning

Time of surgery: 6 pm

Reason for operation: to repair fractured right shoulder

8. Student reflection with clinical facilitator. Complete the following notes:

Challenges

- Difficult to talk with a patient who is upset, 'in a bad mood'. Unsure of how to talk with him, how to empathise with him.
- Difficult to ask some questions e.g. 'do you have any dentures, artificial limbs' - questions that must be asked to ensure the patient's safety but may seem 'intimidating'.

Gloria's assessment of her performance

- Did well with asking some of the questions.
- Felt unsure of how to ask some questions of a young man without making the patient feel uncomfortable e.g. 'do you have dentures?'

The Clinical facilitator's assessment of Gloria's performance

- Gloria did well given that she was doing the check for the first time on her own.
- With more experience, Gloria will develop more therapeutic communication skills to help patients express their feelings and become more comfortable in responding to the nurse.

Improvements suggested by the facilitator and Gloria:

- Some questions must be asked – it is important to ensure the patient's safety
- Work on developing more therapeutic communication skills to know how to ask some questions more appropriately.
- Recognise that sometimes patients respond in a way that is related to how they are reacting or feeling, not to how the nurse is providing care
- Keep working on skills.

Nursing communication

Asking questions

A pre-op check list is a long list of questions that the nurse needs to ask the patient. Gloria prepares Tom for the questions by explaining what she is going to do.

So, at the moment now I'm going to do a preoperative checklist, which is going to be a little bit of questions, and sometimes they are going to be uncomfortable for you, but just think that I'm going to do all this in order to have a good outcome in your surgery. OK?

How do you think Tom, the patient, might have felt after this explanation?

Tom would have an idea of what to expect (questions) and the reason for the questions (a good outcome with the surgery). This would most likely help him to feel more comfortable about the situation and with being asked the questions

Here are some other ways Gloria could have introduced the checklist. Which of the following do you think would help the patient understand what you were going to do and to feel comfortable?

I'm just going to ask you a few questions to make sure you're ready for surgery

I must now do a pre-operation checklist

I just need to check that you're ready for your operation

When asking a list of questions, the first question is usually asked in a complete form but the rest of the questions are abbreviated. The nurse will also ask the questions in 'groups'. What are the 'groups of questions you can see here? The first one has been done for you.

Student: *Can I have your full name, please?* [personal details]

Patient: *Tom Williams.*

Student: *Your date of birth?*

Group – checking about fasting

Student: *When did you last eat?*

Patient: *Breakfast this morning, I guess.*

Student: *Breakfast – umm, what time was it?*

Patient: *It would be – nine?*

Student: *Nine. What about your last drink?*

Patient: *Well I was drinking water at the game, that'd be eleven, I reckon.*

Student: *Eleven. OK. As long as I see, you don't have glasses – what about contact lenses, do you have any –*

Patient: *No.*

Group – checking about personal accessories and prostheses

Student: *– contact lenses? No. Hearing aid?*

Patient: *No.*

Student: *No. Good. Sorry about this question, but do you have any artificial limbs or prostheses?*

Patient: *No!*

Student: *Any denture?*

Note how each 'group' of questions usually begins with the full question and the follow up questions in the same group are abbreviated.

Checking your understanding

It is important to collect accurate information from patients.

After each of Tom's responses, Gloria repeats what she has said. This confirms she has understood. If she has heard incorrectly, the patient can correct her.

If you are not sure if you have understood correctly, you could also say:

Sorry, did you say you don't contact lenses?

Showing empathy

The facilitator suggests that Gloria did quite well but she also says that as Gloria gains more experience, she will develop more therapeutic ways of communicating that will enable her to show empathy.

Find some parts in the interaction where you think Gloria could show empathy. What could she say to Tom to show that empathy?

When Tom is expressing frustration with having to have surgery to repair his fractured shoulder, maybe Gloria could have said something like 'this must feel pretty frustrating for you having to be in hospital'. This may have enabled Tom to open up and talk more about his feelings.