Answer Guidance

# Chapter 36: Introduction to the psychological context of nursing

## Activity answer guidance

### Activity 36.1

While reading the section about psychology and psychological approaches, think about how the ideas, theories and examples fit in with your role as a nurse. Critically consider why you feel a theory or a number of theories are most relevant to your practice.

#### Answer guidance:

*While reading the next section in the chapter, you have been asked to think about how the ideas, theories, and examples fit in with your role as a nurse. Critically consider why you feel a theory, or a number of theories, are most relevant to your practice.*

*Theories include:*

 *psychoanalytical—this approach believes that the unconscious mind can be controlled by the individual and is used in therapy for psychological conditions.*

 *behaviourist—provides explanations for why people and animals behave in certain ways or respond to certain stimuli. CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy) is used to treat phobias, depression, and anxiety.*

 *Humanists—focused on the unconscious mind and the sense of “self,” humanisms believe people need to feel safe to share their feelings. An example of this is the therapeutic relationship nurses strive to develop with patients through care, compassion, empathy, and person-centred care.*

 *cognitive (and cognitive-developmental)—believe thinking, perception, and memory can influence our behaviours such as lifestyle and mental health conditions. It has strong links* with the behaviour change model/stages of change (Prochaska and DiClemente, 1984) and motivational interviewing for health, as well as CBT.

 *biological—believes that biology is the reason for mental health issues, for example, low levels of serotonin. Therefore medications can support CBT and other therapies to improve mental health*

### Activity 36.2

Reflect on this conversation between an adult and a 7-year-old child named Britney:

Adult: “Do you know why you are named Britney?” (meaning she must have been named after a famous person or a relative)

Child: “Yes. Because that is what my mummy calls me.”

The child demonstrates an inability to “decentre,” according to Piaget, which means Britney is still centred on herself and her own world (egocentric), whereas the adult has assumed Britney would understand her meaning and did not recognise the ambiguity of the question she was asking.

 How does knowledge of child development, such as this, improve the way you may communicate with a child?

#### Answer guidance:

*An understanding of the cognitive development approach would support your ability to communicate with this child. Children aged 2–7 demonstrate egocentric behaviour, before progressing to the concrete operational stage. It would be important to focus on the child and her family and interests to promote engagement.*

### Activity 36.3

Richard is 52 years old, does not exercise, is a heavy smoker who is 30 kg overweight, and arrives at A&E with severe chest pain. It is suspected that he is having a myocardial infarction (a heart attack) and requires emergency medical treatment.

 When would you choose to talk with him about strategies to promote his health?

#### Answer guidance:

*Your learning about the “teachable moment” would support your communication in this instance. For example, it would not be effective to offer health education to Richard whilst he is in pain and feeling acutely unwell, but neither would it be wise to wait until he is feeling totally better. The optimum time to discuss his lifestyle would be after a plan of care is implemented and Richard is feeling more comfortable, but before he is discharged as he still has recent memory of the event.*

### Activity 36.4

 Reflect on your understanding of the role of family and friends when someone has a serious illness.

 Does having a large social network mean that the person receives more support than someone with a small network?

 Now read the article and consider how you could act on the findings.

#### Answer guidance:

Reflect on your understanding of the role of family and friends when someone has a serious illness.

*Family and friends are huge sources of support when someone is unwell. Studies have shown that families are a source of information to aid person-centred care, help the patient to maintain a sense of identity, and are a positive source of psychological aid to recovery as they provide emotional and practical support. Family members can also provide a source of entertainment and socialisation and assist with some activities of daily living such as feeding and hygiene.*

Does having a large social network mean that the person receives more support than someone with a small network?

*No, it is important not to assume that everyone within the network provides support.*

Now read the article and consider how you could act on the findings

*Undertake family-centred care, as well as person-centred care, and value the important contribution the family has the potential to make.*

### Activity 36.5

“I remember a theatre sister who was excellent at her job.

When confronted with an angry consultant surgeon who was throwing surgical instruments around the operating theatre, she told the junior nurses—including me—who were scurrying around picking them up, “Stop, Mr. Todd will pick up the instruments himself.”

He did!

This demonstrated her courage in standing up to an irate and badly behaved senior surgeon and directing him to deal with the consequences of his own ill-tempered behaviour. This was many years ago, in the days when doctors’ decisions were never challenged by nurses, so that is why it is so memorable for me.”

 Think about the person you will select as a role model in nursing.

 What attributes do they possess that you would like to attain?

#### Answer guidance:

*Attributes may include their caring and compassionate nature and their ability to provide truly person/family-centred care, their leadership skills, their decision-making skills, their confidence, and professionalism, or their knowledge and skill in a certain situation.*

### Activity 36.6

Use PERFORM to examine your skills in communication. Use with up to ten different people involved in healthcare (people receiving care, relatives, community or hospital staff). Each time you complete your score on a person, number them (person 1–10) and then take a few minutes to make notes on the other side of the paper to identify anything that is affecting your score (your skills, the environment, etc.).

Try to do this every time with as much detail as possible. When completed, gather all your scores and notes together. This is your data. Read through your notes several times to carefully examine any factors that have affected your score. You could use a different colour highlighter pen for factors that reoccur the most. Examine them critically and, for example, consider whether your skills improve as you become more experienced at using PERFORM (do you score lower on person 1 than person 10, for example?)

What steps can you take to change the factors that you have highlighted?

#### Answer guidance:

*Perform Scoring grid: Never = 0, Sometimes = 1, Always = 2, (Maximum score = 14)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *PERFORM* | *SCORE* |
| *Preferred name* |  |
| *Eye contact* |  |
| *Respect* |  |
| *Facial expression* |  |
| *Open mind* |  |
| *Recall* |  |
| *Manage self* |  |

## Case study answer guidance

### Case study 36.1: Suzie

Suzie is a specialist stoma nurse. When she gives information to people, she tailors the information she gives while observing and assessing the person’s understanding, level of engagement and enthusiasm, and disengagement or distress, as she shows the person how to attach the bag to their skin around the stoma. A knowledge of psychology helps Suzie to recognise, understand and manage the behaviours being demonstrated by the people she works with. Suzie will match what she is saying with the use of specific verbal and non-verbal contact to maximise the person’s receptivity. Reflect on the case of Suzie and any experiences you may have had when working with a nurse who demonstrated similar skills:

Do you think that observing, interpreting, and understanding all of the skills (the practical and the psychological) being demonstrated by a nurse is made more difficult because they can be very subtle?

Is it easier to learn a practical skill, such as taking a temperature, than it is to build a rapport with an individual?

#### Answer guidance:

Do you think that observing, interpreting, and understanding all of the skills (the practical and the psychological) being demonstrated by a nurse is made more difficult because they can be very subtle?

*These skills can be very subtle but reading this chapter and being aware of what the skills are, should make it easier to recognise them in practice. You could ask the nurse questions about the skills she uses before or after a patient consultation to see what she is thinking when using her skills.*

Is it easier to learn a practical skill, such as taking a temperature, than it is to build a rapport with an individual?

*Not necessarily. Although some people think we only need to learn technical skills and that non-technical skills such as communication come naturally to us. This is wrong, non-technical skills require just as much learning and practice as technical skills do to ensure we develop mastery of them.*

### Case Study 36.2: Sarah

Sarah is a businesswoman who perceives herself to be unsuccessful. However, the external reality and the perception of others is that she is excellent at her job. This discrepancy between her self-perception and that of the people around her is related to her self-image. Her distorted self-image may have developed in childhood when her parents offered her love only when she behaved well, rather than giving her unconditional positive regard.

Rogers suggests unconditional positive regard and acceptance are important to use in psychological therapy, as the person is not being judged and feels supported so they are more likely to develop trust in the therapeutic relationship and talk honestly about their problems.

How would this approach be beneficial for Sarah?

#### Answer guidance:

*Unconditional positive regard offered in therapy means that whatever Sarah says and does, it will not negatively affect the therapeutic approach used with Sarah. Unconditional positive regard will help her to build confidence in her achievements.*

*Acceptance and acknowledgment of Sarah as a person in her own right will help her develop healthy self-esteem and confidence.*

### Case study 36.3: Copper and Alise

Copper’s 8-year-old daughter, Alise, is morbidly obese. Copper tells you that he and Alise eat a healthy diet and he follows good nutritional advice.

How can you incorporate trust skills into your professional approach with him and Alise?

How can you remain open-minded, listen carefully to what you are being told, and then evaluate the evidence?

What questions could you ask about the food Alise eats to get an accurate understanding?

#### Answer guidance:

How can you incorporate trust skills into your professional approach with him and Alise?

*We have learned about the humanistic approach and more specifically genuineness. This theory suggests people need to be able to feel safe to share their feelings (Rogers, 1970). A trusting relationship is needed between nurses and those they deliver care to, so being genuine, non-judgemental, and empathic, and giving unconditional positive regard and acceptance to Copper and Analise may encourage them to be open and honest about their lifestyle.*

How can you remain open-minded, listen carefully to what you are being told, and then evaluate the evidence?

*By adhering to the NMC code of conduct, using active listening skills, and using the APIE model to develop a plan of care that is person centred. The humanistic approach would also recognise their potential for human growth. The stages of change model may also assist you to develop a plan for developing a plan collaboratively with Copper and Analise.*

What questions could you ask about the food Alise eats to get an accurate understanding?

*You could ask Analise to tell you what her favourite foods are, what she has for breakfast and what if she has pack-up or hot school dinners. As Analise is 8 she will have progressed from an egocentric stage but this approach may be suited to her age and level of comprehension.*

### Case study 36.4: Poppy

Poppy is a nursing student on her second placement in a medical ward and was told by the Sister to take a drink to a patient in a side room. She was not given any further information. When she opened the door she saw a man in bed with severe burns to his face and chest. His skin looked like a log of wood that had burnt on an open fire and was blackened, blistered, and flaky. Poppy was shocked but managed to stop her jaw from dropping.

The patient’s wife was sitting next to the bed with other relatives and said to Poppy, “It’s all right for you nurse, you see this sort of thing every day, but this is my husband. I am struggling to cope!”

This comment was miles from the truth of the situation and not how Poppy was feeling, but she managed to compose herself and replied, “Yes, it must be really difficult for you.” Poppy did not say how shocked she was as she had been unaware of the patient’s condition when she entered the room and had never seen severe burns before.

Poppy’s actions were correct. Despite the lack of information from the Sister, she did not have permission to share her feelings of shock with the patient and his wife. This would have been meeting her own needs to express her feelings rather than meeting the patient’s.

What could Poppy do to prevent a similar incident from occurring in the future?

How would using PERFORM have helped Poppy in this situation?

#### Answer guidance:

What could Poppy do to prevent a similar incident from occurring in the future?

*Poppy could have asked the named nurse or checked the nursing records of the gentleman so that she knew his reason for admission prior to entering the room.*

How would using PERFORM have helped Poppy in this situation?

*Although Poppy managed the situation correctly she was intuitively responding to it. Her focus was the task and she was anxious about her performance in relation to this and so did not focus on the patient. If she had been using PERFORM she would have prepared herself before entering the room for meeting with him and his relatives by finding out his name and preparing herself by thinking through all the aspects of PERFORM ( her eye contact facial expression and managing herself etc).*