

ROLE OF NURSE TO HELP TO COPE WITH STRESS OF ILLNESS AND HOSPITALIZATION OF CHILDREN

The nurse may help the parents and children to feel more secure & calm in the hospital and less anxious by the following means:

→ In Neonates

Provide continual contact between baby & parents with active involvement by rooming-in & sensory-motor stimulation as appropriate.

→ In infants

- Encourage mother to balance her responsibilities & minimize separation with confidence.
- Mother can be allowed during procedure.
- Tension & loneliness can be relieved by toys.
- Basic needs of the infant should be fulfilled promptly with attention.

→ In Toddlers

- Provide rooming-in & unlimited visiting hours to express child's feeling.

- No punishment to the child, treat them with care & affection
- Home routine can be continued especially regarding sleeping, eating, bathing etc.
- Allow play & choice wherever possible & arrange physical setting to encourage independence.
- Familiar toys & articles can reinforce the child's sense of security.

→ In preschool children

- Minimize stress of separation by providing parental presence & participation in care.
 - Help the child to accept the stressful situation by love & concern.
 - Set limits for the child and provide opportunity to verbalize the feelings.
 - Careful preparation for all procedures by privacy & explanation according to level of understanding.
 - Encourage the child to participate in self-care and hygiene as appropriate.
- Plan to shorten the hospital stay, as possible.

→ In School Children

- Help the parent to prepare the child for elective hospitalization
- Respect the child's need for privacy & modesty during examination.
- Use treatment rooms whenever possible to perform painful & invasive procedures.
- Encourage the child in self care, play and to continue school work when the condition permits.
- Explain the procedure & its purpose with reassurance.
- Help the parents to deal with their own anxieties & to assist their child to cope with the situation.
- Encourage parental participation in child care.

→ In adolescent

- Help parents to prepare the adolescent for planned hospital admission.
- Respect the need for privacy, recreation, personal preferences on self care and food habit.
- Involve the adolescent patients in planning of care & help them to accept restrictions & health teaching.
- Explain all procedures and reassure to accept the plan of care and cooperate.

- Provide opportunities for recreation, peer relationship interaction with adolescent patients & expression of feelings.
- Assist parents to deal effectively, adolescent's response related to stress of illness and hospitalization

Preparation of Child for Diagnostic Tests

Advancement of medical technology and laboratory science has a greater impact in the modern health care services. The clinical diagnosis is confirmed by laboratory investigations, X-ray, ultrasonography and other diagnostic techniques. Outcome of the management can also be evaluated by these procedures.

The children with the differences in physical and emotional functions from adult, require special physical and psychological preparations for the diagnostic procedures. The approaches towards children will differ than that of adults to remove fear and anxiety and to gain co-operation during these interventions.

The diagnostic procedures are done in a variety of settings including laboratories, outpatient department and inpatient settings. Regardless of the setting, infants and children of all ages and their parents should be prepared before any procedures are done. Verbal explanation cannot be understood by very young children, but they can understand the parent's or nurse's softly spoken words and the touch of comfort. Older children should have all procedures explained in ways they can understand. Nurses can fulfill their responsibilities through adequate explanation and increasing the trust of the parents and children.

The pediatric nurses should have specific knowledge about the diagnostic procedure and they should explore about the knowledge of parents and children before preparing them for any procedures.

For the *psychological preparation* of parents and children the following guidelines can assist the nurse:

- Emphasis on the positive outcome of the procedure, its importance and purposes.
- Timing of the preparation should be settled. The initial preparation for certain procedures can be done by the parents at home. In hospital, nurse can prepare the parents and child prior to the procedure. Preparation should be done, if possible, when the child is rested and alert.

Verbal preparation to be done with the use of specific words to explain the procedure. Parents and child should understand the explanation rather than confusion. Explanation to be given according to the level of maturity and understanding and past experience with medical care and discomfort. Nonthreatening terminology is used to reduce anxiety. Information to be given about sensations during procedures, which is more important than that about where and how the procedures will be done. Anxiety-producing information should be given at the end of the preparation.

Use of visual aids is important to make the verbal explanation more concrete. The nurse, parents and child can play out the procedure to be done using the materials like intravenous equipment, syringe, stethoscope, etc. through dramatic play. A doll can be used by the nurse to demonstrate the procedure.

- Role-playing of the procedure to be done in which the child will take an active part. For example, the diabetic child who requires insulin injections can role-play by giving an injection to a doll initially.
- Evaluation of the preparation can be done through the verbal explanations of parents and children or the use of teaching aids. The knowledge of parents and child concerning the procedure to be evaluated. The process may stimulate further questions that the nurse can then answer.

The *physical preparation* of the child vary from one procedure to others. The major aspects are positioning, privacy, asepsis, restraint, etc, should be done accordingly.