**Understanding and Applying the Concept of Therapeutic Communication**

**in the Development of a Therapeutic Nurse/Patient Relationship**

**Davidson, S. (2015). *Lifting the barriers to therapeutic communication that may interfere with the nurse/patient relationship ©*.** (Used with permission of the author)

1. **Clinical Group activity**: Ask each student in the clinical group to write down their greatest fear, anxiety, issue or concern about communicating with psychiatric-mental health patients. Collect the papers. Mix them up and hand them back to the students, making sure that students do not get their own. Have each student read the unidentified concern and give feedback to the group on how to handle the identified fear, anxiety, issue or concern.

**Outcome:** Students will realize that they are not alone in their concerns; they will be given tools to cope with the issues/concerns; they will learn that they already have some skills to be able to communicate and help others with the identified issues, concerns, fears or anxieties.

2. **Clinical Group Activity: Role Playing Therapeutic Communication**

Divide students into dyads or triads. One person is the patient; one is the nurse; the third person, if a triad, is the observer and will give feedback utilizing Peplau’s stages of the Nurse/Patient Therapeutic Relationship.

* Student who is the nurse with practice introducing him/her self to the mentally ill patient and define their role in the relationship and begin goal setting with the patient regarding when they will be meeting.
* Student who is the patient will present as a newly admitted patient. Concept of establishing trust with therapeutic presence and communication will be explored.
* Patient will give nurse feedback.
* Then roles will be reversed so all students have a chance to be the nurse.

**Outcome:** Students’ anxiety about meeting the patient and establishing therapeutic communication to enhance the therapeutic nurse/patient will be reduced.

(It may be helpful for faculty to demonstrate this with student as the patient before students begin to role play in dyads or triads).