
UNIT 4 PUBLIC RELATION

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4.0 OBJECTIVES

After completing this unit you should be able to:

- explain its application to nursing situation; recognise the importance of the principles of public relation;
- describe the methods of public relation;
- identify the barriers of public relation; and
- improve the efficiency of the nursing services through interpersonal relationship and co-operative service.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

You already learnt different aspects of nursing administration. Now you will be introduced to one of the important aspects public relation. This is an era of industrialization mechanization, advances in technology. Nurse as a manager and care provider have the unique opportunity to interact with patient relation or family members and other team members. Public relation is very much essential for rendering quality care to the patient. It depends upon the value, philosophy and culture of that hospital.

Hospital administration vastly differs from that most others fields. Public relation's aspect of the hospitals are more pervasive, delicate.

Health Department of the Government is a tax supported public agency of that community it serves. Its existence in a democracy depends on final analysis of their wish to maintain it. In the long run this wish can be sustained only by public understanding and satisfaction. In the modern thinking, health is for the people, with the people, of the people. Let us begin with the concept of public relation.

4.2 CONCEPT OF PUBLIC RELATION

Relationship means how you are talking, behaving, treating, providing services and logistics, helping to the patient and his/her relatives from entering in the hospital to discharge and follow up of the patient.

According to Millett, public relations has four primary aspects:

- i) Learning about public desires and aspirations.
- ii) Advising the public about what it should desire.
- iii) Ensuring satisfactory **contact** between public and Government officials.
- iv) Informing the public about what it should desire.

Public relations means customer **understanding** and attitude. It includes techniques, practices and activities designed to win the good will of people individually and collectively. Public relation **is a two** way process – not only involves flow of **information**, reactions and understanding from the agency but also to the reverse direction.

Most of the time we mix up public relation with publicity and internal communication. Let us define the term public relation.

4.2.1 Definition

You have already learnt process of communication techniques and skills in communication and you also know effective communication. Now you will come to know public relation and its definition.

Public relations is any situation act or word that influence people.

Public relations is the term applied to all activities and attitudes intended to judge, influence or control opinion of any groups of persons in the interest of **any** individual, group or institution.,

Public relations is the skilled communication of ideas to the various public with the objective of producing a desired result.

4.2.2 Purposes

Purposes of public relation are:

- i) Vast increase in Government **functions**. Public should be aware of the various **facilities** offered to it by the Government.
- ii) To sell the policies and programmes of its agencies to build up good will and good understanding with the people.
- iii) To minimise the overstressed situation. Good public relations has the power to control public and brings customer satisfaction.

Check Your Progress 1

What are the purposes of public relations?

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4.2.3 Factors Related to Public Relation

Let us discuss factors related to Public Relation.

Organisational and Management Factors

- Philosophy and value systems of the hospital Management.
- Congenial atmosphere and importance of patient care.
- Infrastructure for health care.

Appearance

Success of the good public relation depends on dress and other aspects of personal appearance.

Behaviour

It is the most important factor of good public relation. Courtesy and mannerism to be followed throughout interaction.

Complaint

Each and every complaint should be respected and thoroughly investigated, so that customer can develop trust and faith in the organisation.

Training of Employees

Good public relations do not occur by chance, planned training programme is required for workers to make them aware about the organisation, its goal, objectives, programmes, effects of good public relations, otherwise to equipped them for skilled communication.

Competency

It breeds respect when a worker solves the problem skillfully with knowledge, it influence the people, brings customer satisfaction.

Transactional Analysis

It plays a vital role among public relation workers of the organisation need to be unbiased. They have to be master in the techniques of sensitising people and evaluate the reality. It helps in understanding how people interact and transact.

Check Your Progress 2

List the factors influencing public relation.

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4.3 ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING PUBLIC RELATION

Let us examine the methods of public relations.

It is an art and science. So some methodology and techniques need to be followed to influence the people for effective public relation.

4.3.1 Methods of Public Relation**Personal Contact**

Informal and formal contacts between public employees/patient/family members/relatives or group of people. Addressing should be friendly routine round to be made when they are waiting and admitting. Each contact should be regarded as contact rather than routine one.

Correspondence

A significant proportion of the contact of an organisation is made through correspondence. During correspondence one should be very careful and should give special attention with going to out going correspondence. Organisation should have a written practice of

Audio-visual Methods

Radio and television are the significant means of public education and entertainment. So careful programming is needed. People are very much fond of entertainment. So soundless entertainment programme with different types of information about services, procedures of the institution and the support that **organisation** wants from public to be shown when they are waiting in reception, OPD, Emergency and in the ward.

Media

May be the customer or worker of that organisation or community play a greater role in public relation.

4.3.2 Tools and Techniques of Public Relation

No definite technique and device build up public relation. The key of a successful programme of public relation is the desire to sell the organisation and its programme and not the individual. Each community consists of public of different casts, rich, poor, age, sex, so different approach, and tool to be followed. .

Co-ordination

Co-ordination is a significant tool of good public relation. Public relation requires joint efforts of the Government Institution and non Government Institution and different departments of the Institution. All should feel member of one family. It helps in maintaining discipline. Arrangement of monthly and quarterly meeting is needed for co-ordination.

Spirit of Competition

A spirit of competition has to be built in among the workers of different sections, which . will be helpful for establishing good public relation. Worker must **recognise** that it is a tool or device to provide effective quality care.

Interpersonal Relationship

It has **tremendus** effect on good public relation. Vertical and horizontal boss and subordinate relationship with patient and public. I.P.R. creates a win situation and brings co-operation, creates harmony in the relationship between all staffs and public.

Involvement of Public

Involvement brings oneness or we feeling. **Public** can identify and understand their problem and also find out the way of solving problem.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Describe the important methods of public relation.

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2) Enlist the tool and techniques of public relation.

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4.4 BARRIERS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Though we know that public relation has the tremendous effect on quality care but to establish **public** relation we often face barriers. Let us see what are the barriers in **public**

Lack of Technique and Skill

It is well known that a sword when it is in the hands of a soldier in the field it acts as a weapon but if it is in the new hands invites not only problem but also creates hazards. We may think sophistication, advanced technology will influence the customer but in fact if workers are not skilled enough about human relation, then it is quite impossible to establish good public relation.

Lack of Awareness about Different Languages

Language is another most important barrier of public relation we can reach to the people through interaction. Mastery in the language is very much needed to maintain public relation sometimes even use of small word creates misunderstanding. So understanding of colloquial is also very important.

Physical Environment

It provides comfort not only to the customer but also to the workers. Unfavorable physical environment like inadequate light, lack of supplies and equipments, too many patients and visitor hindrance work – reflects on public good relation.

Attitude

For the success of any type of work need 98% attitude and 2% mechanics. Often professionalism clouded over human factor. Attitude is another main criteria to win the good will of others, so commitment to win the good will of customer play a crucial role for good public relation.

Misunderstanding

Hospital deals with different types of customer with different religion and culture. So chance of misunderstanding is very high. Misunderstanding reflects hostility creates lot of problem.

Check Your Progress 4

Identify the barriers of public relation.

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4.5 ROLE OF A NURSE IN DEVELOPING PUBLIC RELATION

As you know nurses spent more time and interact with patients, their relatives or visitors, so they have greater role, scope and responsibility in establishing and sustaining an excellent relationship with public. They play different role in different time and in different situation.

As a Care Provider

As a care provider nurse should be very careful to satisfy the patient need. Need vary from one individual to another. Need also vary according to time and situation. Holistic approach to be applied. She has to keep in mind the following things while she will be on duty:

- Understanding of human relationship.
- Build up good interpersonal relationship.
- Provide care to the patient with empathy and love.
- Create a comfortable and cheerful atmosphere.

- Patient treated as human being considering as an unique individual.
- Warm feeling and send off.

As a Communicator

Fundamental to any **form** of communication are its underlying purposes and the value of ideas or information that is transmitted to public of that community which it serves. Periodic communication about illness and recovery is very essential to the:

- Patient
- Friends and Relatives
- Other hospital staff
- Nurses and student nurses

Effective communication depends upon influence, past and present experience, social organisation, cultural patterns and existing condition and situation.

As a Liaison Officer

Nurses do not work in isolation. They are the part of team. One of the important task of good public relation is the co-ordination among different categories of staff of that hospital and member of other agencies.

- Local Representatives.
- Communication Media.

Co-ordination and co-operation minimise the conflicts for **optimal function**. Periodical meetings should be arranged for exchange of views and ideas and sharing of opinions.

As an Educator and Counsellor

Training and counselling is very much essential to make optimal utilization of the human resources and to gain the confidence. Training and counselling is essential for all categories of staff – How to talk and behave with the customer at various point of Institution arrangement of periodic classes to assess at various points, what are the problems faced by the public and how to solve them.

As an Administrator

Nurse as an administrator plays a crucial role in developing and to sustain public relation to get the co-operation from customer. Counselling also have same importance for demotivated staff and customer.

- Participation in decision **making**
- Cleanliness of the hospital
- Cost of care
- Registration
- Billing system
- Recording system

Reception counter should be manned with responsible and skilled people. Device should develop for periodic assessment of the needs, wishes, understanding and motivational inclination of the customer and also worker.

Feedback from customer should be taken.

Check Your Progress 5

List the role of nurse in developing public relation.

4.6 LET US SUM UP

This unit deals with public relation, factors, method related to public relation. Nurse is in close contact with patient, relatives or visitors. So she can contribute a lot in establishing public relation, helping, assisting and attitude of welcoming visitors.

Overall objective of public relation is the development of fruitful, mutual understanding and co-operation for smooth running of the institution. Public relation should be established from the inception of the organisation, not to be developed in the stress situation. It is duty of all categories of staff of the organisation and public of that community it serves. It is expected that after completing this unit you will apply in your working place in hospital or an institution.

4.7 KEY WORDS

Correspondence	: Exchange of letters.
Philosophy	: Motto thinking and belief about the service of the institution.
Policies	: Guiding Principles.
Programme	: Sequence of activities designed to implement policies and accomplish objectives.
P.R.O.	: Public Relation Officer.
Transactional Analysis	: It is a method of analysing and understanding the behaviour of an individual.

4.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

Please refer sub-section 4.2.2.

Check Your Progress 2

- Organisation and Management factors
- Appearance
- Behaviour
- Complaint
- Training of employer
- Competency
- Transactional analysis

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) ● Personal contact
- Correspondence
- Audio-visual Aids
- 2) ● Co-ordination

Communication

- I.P.R.
- Involvement of Public

Check Your Progress 4

- Lack of technique and skill
- Lack of awareness about different language
- Physical Environment
- Attitude
- Misunderstanding

Check Your Progress 5

- As a Care provider
- As a Communicator
- As a liaison officer
- As an educator and counsellor
- As an administrator

4.9 FURTHER READINGS

Avasthi, A. and Maheswari, S., *Public Administration*, Educational Publisher, Agra, 1995, p. 247.

Goyal, B.C., *Hand Book of Hospital Administration*, p. 58.

Class Note of Prof. Mukherjee, S.P., Social Institute of Business and Management, Kolkatta.