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## **Development of the Nursing Self and the “Feel” for others in BSN Students**

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Nursing in general and psychiatric/mental health nursing in particular requires knowledge of self and a “feel” for the other. Nursing is a hands on profession and requires the development of a sense of the other to enable the practice of a safe, effective, caring nursing practice. During the pandemic, we utilized online classes/clinical. When we were cleared to go back to the actual clinical setting in psychiatry, the students were somewhat shy of approaching and interacting with patients. They were also missing out on cues which require distancing for safety of self and others.

Clearly the pandemic contributed to the loss of the close interactions that we normally have experienced in nursing and nursing education. However, the focus on good therapeutic communication and reflection assisted in helping students get their footing when back in the actual clinical sphere.

Although the students learned about therapeutic communication and reflected on their interactions with their classmate partners, they talked about not knowing what to do and what to say when in the presence of a patient on an actual unit. When the student focused and reflected on their actual on unit therapeutic communication, growth and an increasing confidence could be noted. A sense of self as a developing nurse ensued, they could be seen in actual, involved engagement with patients. They expressed a sense of comfort in being in the presence of the other and expressed concern and caring.

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