

# The Effect of Nurses' Therapeutic Communication on People with Schizophrenia: A Literature Review

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Schizophrenia significantly impairs psychological functioning, behaviour, and social interaction, necessitating comprehensive nursing interventions. Therapeutic communication is considered a core nursing competency in establishing effective therapeutic relationships and optimising patient outcomes. This scoping review aimed to synthesise recent evidence on the effects of nurses' therapeutic communication in the care of patients with schizophrenia. A scoping review was conducted following the Arksey and O'Malley framework. Literature searches were performed in PubMed, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and Garuda for primary studies published between 2019 and 2025 using the keywords "therapeutic communication," "nurse," and "schizophrenia." Ten eligible studies employing quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods designs were analysed through thematic mapping. The findings consistently demonstrate that therapeutic communication contributes to measurable improvements in patient outcomes, including enhanced self-concept, reduced anxiety and anger, decreased aggressive behaviour, improved hallucination control, and strengthened therapeutic alliance. These results reinforce the role of structured, empathy-based communication strategies as an evidence-informed intervention in psychiatric nursing practice. Overall, integrating therapeutic communication into schizophrenia care supports more effective management across multiple psychiatric nursing diagnoses and strengthens the therapeutic process, highlighting its strategic value in improving clinical and psychosocial outcomes.

**Keywords:** Therapeutic communication, Nurses, Schizophrenia, Therapeutic alliance

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## 1. Introduction

Schizophrenia is a condition characterized by a decline in an individual's ability to think, feel, and behave, resulting in impaired reality orientation [1]. This disorder causes significant difficulties in communication, social interaction, and adaptive daily functioning. Symptoms such as hallucinations, delusions, and distorted perceptions of reality experienced by individuals with schizophrenia often pose substantial barriers to establishing interpersonal relationships and understanding the social environment [2].

In the context of mental health services, nurses play a pivotal role as healthcare professionals who interact directly with patients across various phases of nursing care. Therapeutic communication is a fundamental component of the nursing process, as it strengthens interpersonal relationships between nurses and patients, facilitates patients' expression of feelings, and enables nurses to understand patients' needs and subjective experiences [3]. Therapeutic communication extends beyond the exchange of information and encompasses verbal and non-verbal strategies designed to support the healing process and enhance the self-concept of patients with schizophrenia during care [4]. Patients with schizophrenia require assistance in developing trust toward others. Enhancing trust can reduce anxiety, increase self-awareness, and

promote independence in adapting to environmental conditions. Therefore, individuals with schizophrenia require effective communication approaches from healthcare providers.

Previous studies have demonstrated that effective therapeutic communication contributes positively to care outcomes in patients with schizophrenia. Research has shown a relationship between the quality of nurses' therapeutic communication and patients' adherence to personal hygiene, reflecting improvements in self-care abilities [5]. Other studies indicate that appropriate therapeutic communication strategies help reduce negative thoughts and enhance self-control in patients experiencing anxiety and fear during treatment [6].

Nevertheless, the practice of therapeutic communication in psychiatric nursing faces several challenges, including variations in nurses' communication skills, the severity of patients' symptoms, and the complexity of clinical environments. Consequently, a comprehensive literature review on the effects of nurses' therapeutic communication on people with schizophrenia is essential to provide a broader scientific perspective and to strengthen evidence-based nursing practice. This review aims to clarify how the application of therapeutic communication influences patient experiences and care outcomes in mental health service settings.

## 2. Literatur dan Problem statement

Schizophrenia is a chronic and severe mental disorder characterised by disturbances in perception, thought processes, affect, and behaviour, including the presence of positive symptoms (hallucinations and delusions), negative symptoms (blunted affect, alogia, and avolition), as well as cognitive impairment. This disorder exerts a substantial impact on social and occupational functioning and significantly diminishes individuals' quality of life [7]. The management of schizophrenia is inherently comprehensive, encompassing both pharmacological treatment and psychosocial interventions. Within the context of mental health nursing, therapeutic communication constitutes a fundamental intervention and plays a pivotal role in the patient's recovery trajectory.

Therapeutic communication is defined as a planned, purposeful form of interpersonal interaction centred on the client's needs, aimed at enhancing mental health and psychosocial well-being. In individuals with schizophrenia, therapeutic communication functions not only as a means of establishing trust but also as a mechanism for assisting patients in reality orientation, facilitating emotional expression, and strengthening coping capacities. Techniques such as reflection, clarification, exploration, validation of feelings, and the provision of information delivered with empathy have been shown to alleviate anxiety and attenuate patients' responses to psychotic symptoms. A case study conducted at Menur Psychiatric Hospital, Surabaya, demonstrated that the focused implementation of therapeutic communication improved patients' ability to control hallucinations following several sessions of structured therapeutic interaction [8].

Moreover, therapeutic communication strategies have been associated with the development of effective working alliances between nurses and individuals with schizophrenia. A correlational study conducted in an Indonesian psychiatric hospital identified a significant relationship between nurses' therapeutic communication strategies and a reduction in patients' negative symptoms, as well as increased engagement in the care process [9]. Further research reported an association between therapeutic communication and the risk of violent behaviour, indicating that effective communication may mitigate aggression related to psychotic symptomatology [10].

Evidence from various healthcare facilities in Indonesia further underscores the importance of therapeutic communication in the nursing care of patients with schizophrenia. A case study at Dr Radjiman Wediodiningrat Psychiatric Hospital, Lawang, found that therapeutic communication was instrumental in the management of auditory hallucinations, one of the most prevalent symptoms among individuals with

schizophrenia [11]. Other studies have demonstrated a relationship between therapeutic communication and patients' adherence to fundamental self-care practices, such as personal hygiene, which is likewise a critical indicator of quality of life in this population [12]. Collectively, the empirical evidence suggests that the quality of nurses' therapeutic communication correlates with improved clinical and psychosocial outcomes in patients with schizophrenia, thereby positioning therapeutic communication as an essential component of mental health nursing practice.

Notwithstanding its recognition as a core competency in psychiatric nursing, the implementation of therapeutic communication in the care of individuals with schizophrenia frequently encounters practical constraints, including heavy workloads, limited time, insufficient specialised training, and the complexity of patients' symptomatic responses. Although local studies have indicated that therapeutic communication can enhance hallucination control, reduce anxiety, and decrease the risk of violent behaviour, there remains a paucity of large-scale quantitative research that explicitly measures the effect of nurses' therapeutic communication on key clinical parameters, such as relapse rates, social functioning, and quality of life, across diverse healthcare settings [8].

In addition, much of the existing literature is based on case studies or descriptive designs, resulting in limited robust evidence to substantiate a causal relationship between therapeutic communication and clinical outcomes. Accordingly, more comprehensive research employing methodologically rigorous designs is required to evaluate the impact of therapeutic communication on the clinical and psychosocial outcomes of individuals with schizophrenia. Such research is essential to strengthen the empirical foundation of psychiatric nursing practice and to inform appropriate policy recommendations for nursing education and clinical practice, ultimately enhancing the quality of care and patient outcomes in schizophrenia management.

### 3. Method

#### Study Design

This study employed a scoping review approach based on the Arksey and O'Malley framework [13]. Scoping reviews are used to map key concepts, types of evidence, and research gaps in an emerging field. This approach enables a broad and comprehensive exploration of research questions.

The review process followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines [14]. The stages included: (1) identification of the research question, (2) identification of relevant literature, (3) study selection, (4) data charting, and (5) synthesis and reporting of results.

#### Eligibility Criteria

Inclusion criteria were primary research articles discussing nurses' therapeutic communication in patients with schizophrenia, employing quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods designs, published in Indonesian or English, available in full text, and published between 2019 and 2025. Exclusion criteria included review articles, editorials, opinions, case reports, studies not specifically addressing nurses' therapeutic communication, studies not focusing on schizophrenia, and articles without full-text access.

#### Data Collection Techniques and Instrument Development

Article retrieval was conducted using several electronic databases, namely Google Scholar, PubMed, ScienceDirect, and Garuda (Garba Rujukan Digital). The keywords used in the search were tailored to the research topic, as follows: "komunikasi terapeutik" OR "therapeutic communication" AND "perawat" OR "nurse" AND "skizofrenia" OR "schizophrenia".

### Study Selection

The study selection process was carried out through several sequential stages. Initially, all articles were collected based on the predetermined keywords. Subsequently, duplicate articles were removed. Titles and abstracts were then screened to assess their relevance to the research topic. Articles that met the inclusion criteria were selected, while those that were not relevant were excluded. The full texts of the remaining articles were reviewed to ensure their eligibility. Finally, articles that satisfied all the established criteria were designated as the final sources included in this literature review.

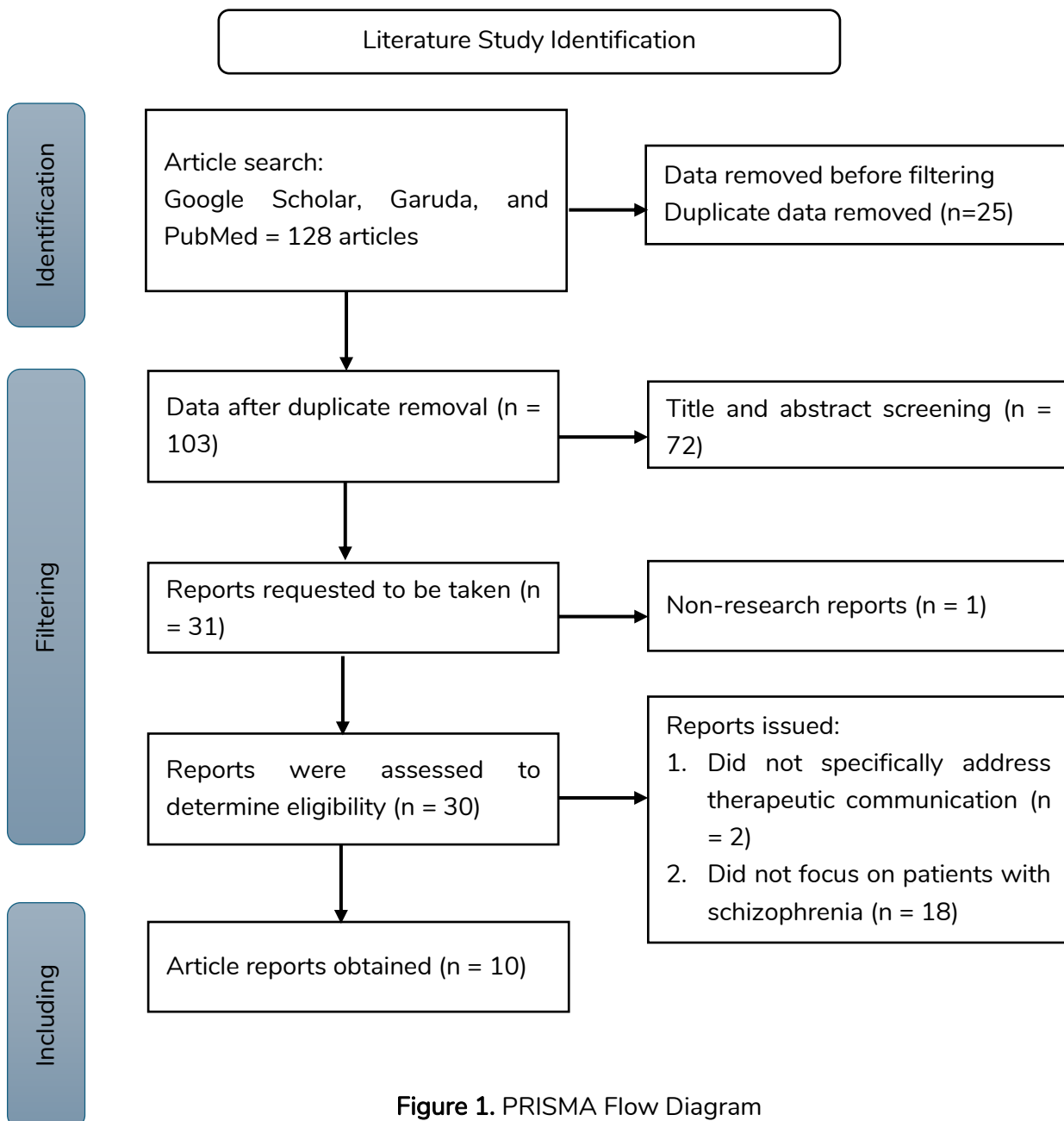


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram

### 4. Results and Discussion

Table 1 summarizes the application of therapeutic communication influences patient experiences and care outcomes in mental health service settings.

**Table 1.** Results of Analysis of Articles on Therapeutic Communication in People with Schizophrenia

No	Author and Year	Title	Research Design, Sample, Intervention	Conclusion	Findings
1.	Dewa GD Putra Jatmika, Komang Yogi Triana, 2020 [15]	The relationship between therapeutic communication and the risk of violent behavior in people with schizophrenia	Correlational quantitative, 35 schizophrenia patients, Therapeutic communication against aggression with patient implementation strategy	Therapeutic communication is associated with a reduced risk of violent behavior.	The intervention was carried out using therapeutic communication techniques from nurses in accordance with hospital standard operating procedures. The interventions were carried out daily for one month and monitored using observation sheets. This demonstrates the detailed procedures and monitoring, which will yield more valid results. A longer period of intervention implementation can also enhance behavioral change.
2.	Apriliyanti et al., 2021 [4].	Nurses' therapeutic communication to improve the self-concept of schizophrenia patients	Descriptive quantitative, 78 schizophrenia patients, Application of therapeutic communication	Therapeutic communication improves the patient's self-concept and social interactions.	The Conversation Analysis (CA) method was used in this study to examine specific human social behaviors in conversations and conduct naturalistic observations. The nurses' conversations were concretely presented as outcomes, thus providing more valid evidence for the intervention.
3.	Siregar, Rahmadiyah, Firiska, & Siregar, 2021 [16]	Therapeutic communication strategies in nursing process of angry, anxious, and fearful schizophrenic patients	Descriptive qualitative, 25 schizophrenia patients, Nurses' therapeutic communication strategies in the nursing process	The implementation of structured therapeutic communication helps reduce patient anxiety, anger and fear, as well as increase patient safety and	The therapeutic communication approach used with patients uses communication strategies to address the risk of violent behavior. These strategies provide behavioral changes that

No	Author and Year	Title	Research Design, Sample, Intervention	Conclusion	Findings
				cooperation during treatment.	lead to emotional control and emotional regulation.
4.	Apriadi, 2023 [17]	The effect of therapeutic communication on controlling violent behavior in schizophrenia patients at ernaldi bahar hospital, south sumatra province	Quantitativ quasi-experimental, 15 schizophrenia patients, Application of therapeutic communication	Violent behavior can be done verbally, directed at oneself, others, and the environment, has an impact both verbally and nonverbally, providing a positive response from the patient with violent behavior.	Therapeutic communication with strategies for treating patients with violent behavior was applied in this study. Specifically, it has been shown to reduce levels of violent behavior. However, this study was only applied to 15 samples.
5.	Umar et al., 2023 [18]	The relationship between therapeutic communication and personal hygiene compliance in schizophrenia patients in the limboto community health center work area	Quantitative cross-sectional, 57 schizophrenia patients, Application of therapeutic communication	Caring for schizophrenia patients need a good level of therapeutic communication to increase the patient's trust and provide influence and suggestions that improve the patient's psychological condition.	Therapeutic communication with implementation strategies for patients experiencing personal hygiene issues. Educational and persuasive communication are key to the application of therapeutic communication in nursing. This differentiates it from other research on the subject.
6.	Humolungo, 2023 [19]	Application of therapeutic communication in violent behavior patients	Case study, 2 schizophrenia patients, Application of therapeutic communication	Therapeutic communication has a very strong relationship with reducing the risk of violent behavior in patients with violent behavior, the better the communication implemented by nurses, the lower the risk of violent behavior.	The application of therapeutic communication to two patients in this case study was deemed insufficient to provide sufficient data.
7.	Hidayah et al., 2024 [20]	The impact of therapeutic communication on schizophrenia	Qualitative phenomenology, 3 nurses caring for schizophrenia	Effective therapeutic communication techniques are important in	The study subjects were four nurses treating patients with violent behavior. The

No	Author and Year	Title	Research Design, Sample, Intervention	Conclusion	Findings
		patients on nurses at the barokah bhakti mental rehabilitation center in Sumedang	patients, Application of therapeutic communication	establishing a good relationship between nurses and schizophrenic patients and have a significant impact on nurses, both internally and externally.	interventions were not specifically explained, only indicating significant changes in the patients. Therefore, further research into the application of therapeutic communication is needed.
8.	Lika Ralini, Erita Gustina, 2024 [21]	Therapeutic communication of mental health care for patients with hallucinations	Case study, 2 schizophrenia patients, Application of therapeutic communication with patient implementation strategy	Therapeutic communication provides a sense of security and calms the patient.	The research was conducted using a case study method on two patients. Therapeutic communication was applied through nursing care to patients with hallucinations. Communication strategies for patients with hallucinations were implemented from 1 to 5. The results showed a decrease in the level of sensory perception disturbance. However, it was only applied to two subjects and requires more patients to strengthen the research results.
9.	Aura et al., 2025 [22]	Application of therapeutic communication to reduce the risk of violent behavior in schizophrenic clients	Case study, 3 schizophrenia patients, Application of therapeutic communication	Therapeutic communication can reduce the risk of violent behavior in schizophrenia study subjects.	The study was conducted on two patients using nursing care methods. Implementation strategies 1-4 were provided through therapeutic communication therapy, in accordance with the Indonesian Nursing Intervention Standards (SIKI) guidelines, and were administered over 10 days with four sessions. Further research is needed to

No	Author and Year	Title	Research Design, Sample, Intervention	Conclusion	Findings
10.	Djoko Witojo, Arif Widodo, 2025 [23]	The effect of therapeutic communication on reducing the level of violent behavior in schizophrenia patients at the surakarta regional mental hospital	Quantitativ quasi-experimental, 60 schizophrenia patients, Application of therapeutic communication	Mild violent behavior decreased less after therapeutic communication compared to moderate and severe violent behavior.	provide more valid results with a larger sample size. The applications of this study included therapeutic communication and standard operating procedures for nursing care for violent behavior. The study was conducted on 60 patients, thus providing more valid results.

The analysis of five selected studies demonstrated that nurses' therapeutic communication positively influences psychological well-being, behavior, and therapeutic relationships in patients with schizophrenia. Across the reviewed literature, consistent patterns emerged regarding the benefits of therapeutic communication in psychiatric nursing practice.

### Psychological Aspects and Patients' Self-Concept

The findings consistently indicate that nurses' therapeutic communication exerts a significant positive influence on patients' psychological well-being, particularly in relation to self-concept and emotional regulation. The improvement in self-concept reported by Apriliyanti and Widiani [4] suggests that structured interpersonal engagement enables patients with schizophrenia to reconstruct a more coherent and positive self-identity. Given that schizophrenia is frequently associated with social withdrawal, diminished self-esteem, and internalised stigma, therapeutic communication may function as a corrective relational experience in which patients feel acknowledged, validated, and respected. The reduction in anxiety, anger, and fear observed by Witojo and Widodo [23], further reinforces the regulatory function of therapeutic communication. Through techniques such as reflection, clarification, and emotional validation, nurses assist patients in identifying and processing distressing affective states. This aligns with Nompo's findings, which demonstrated improvements in self-esteem and stress reduction. Collectively, these outcomes suggest that therapeutic communication operates not merely as a supportive conversational tool but as a structured psychosocial intervention that facilitates emotional stabilisation and adaptive coping. Importantly, these psychological improvements appear to extend beyond short-term emotional relief. Enhanced self-concept and improved social interaction indicate a broader psychosocial impact, including strengthened interpersonal confidence and increased willingness to engage in therapeutic activities. Thus, therapeutic communication may contribute to long-term recovery processes by promoting self-efficacy and social reintegration-key dimensions in contemporary recovery-oriented mental health care.

### Effects on Aggressive Behavior

The reviewed studies also demonstrate that therapeutic communication plays a crucial role in behavioural regulation, particularly in reducing aggressive and violent behaviour among patients with schizophrenia. Aura et al. [22] identified a significant association between therapeutic communication and decreased risk

of violent behaviour. This finding is corroborated by Witojo and Widodo [23] who reported reductions in the intensity of patient aggression following structured communication interventions.

From a clinical perspective, aggression in schizophrenia is often linked to unmanaged psychotic symptoms, heightened anxiety, or perceived threats. Therapeutic communication may mitigate these triggers by fostering a sense of understanding and emotional containment. When patients perceive nurses as empathetic and trustworthy, defensive reactions and hostility are less likely to escalate into overt aggression. In this sense, therapeutic communication functions as both a preventive and de-escalation strategy. Additional evidence by Febi and Erita [24], demonstrating reductions in the frequency of aggressive incidents highlights the broader implications for ward safety and risk management. The capacity of therapeutic communication to regulate external behavioural manifestations underscores its dual impact: it addresses internal psychological distress while simultaneously influencing observable behaviour. This dual mechanism strengthens its value as a non-pharmacological intervention within psychiatric settings, particularly in environments where safety is paramount for both patients and healthcare providers.

### **Sense of Safety and Patient Calming**

Another critical dimension emerging from the analysis concerns the role of therapeutic communication in fostering a sense of safety and emotional calmness. Ralini, Gustina, and Yuda [25] reported that patients experiencing hallucinations felt more secure and emotionally stable when nurses applied structured therapeutic communication. This finding is clinically significant, as hallucinations often generate fear, confusion, and behavioural disorganisation. Through grounding techniques, reassurance, and reality orientation, therapeutic communication may reduce perceptual distress and enhance patients' sense of control. The findings of Raisi, et al. [26] further demonstrate that effective communication enhances patient comfort and contributes positively to treatment outcomes. Comfort in psychiatric care is not merely a subjective experience; it is closely linked to adherence, engagement, and overall therapeutic effectiveness. When patients experience psychological safety, they are more likely to disclose symptoms, participate in interventions, and maintain cooperation throughout the care process. Moreover, the strengthening of the therapeutic alliance facilitated by empathy, attentiveness, and trust [27]. Emerges as a central mechanism underlying these outcomes. The therapeutic alliance has long been recognised as a predictor of treatment success in mental health care. Qualitative findings by Ralini et al. [28], further suggest that the depth of interpersonal connection, including mutual trust and family involvement, enhances the perceived authenticity and effectiveness of communication. This underscores that therapeutic communication is not solely technique-driven but relationally grounded.

Therapeutic communication was found to enhance patients' self-concept, reduce anxiety and anger, and promote social interaction [19]. Additionally, it contributed to a significant reduction in aggressive behavior and increased patients' sense of safety and cooperation during treatment [17]. Empathy, attention, and trust were identified as key elements in establishing effective therapeutic alliances. These findings align with previous studies emphasizing that therapeutic communication not only addresses immediate emotional needs but also supports long-term psychosocial development and behavioral regulation in individuals with schizophrenia.

Taken together, the reviewed evidence indicates that therapeutic communication influences multiple interrelated domains: psychological regulation, behavioural control, and relational engagement. It enhances self-concept, reduces anxiety and anger, decreases aggressive behaviour, and fosters safety and cooperation during treatment. The convergence of these findings suggests that therapeutic communication functions as a multidimensional intervention that simultaneously addresses emotional needs, behavioural manifestations, and interpersonal dynamics.

Importantly, the identified core elements (empathy, attention, and trust) serve as foundational principles rather than optional attributes. These components underpin effective therapeutic alliances and appear to mediate the positive clinical and psychosocial outcomes observed across studies. Consequently, therapeutic communication should be conceptualised not merely as a complementary skill but as a strategic, evidence informed intervention integral to schizophrenia care.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this literature review, nurses can implement therapeutic communication in the care of patients with schizophrenia across a range of psychiatric nursing diagnoses, including risk of violent behaviour, disturbed sensory perception (hallucinations), self-care deficit, and violent behaviour. The integration of therapeutic communication into nursing care appears to facilitate a more efficient and timely achievement of the primary objectives in the management of schizophrenia. Improvements in patients' psychological condition, behavioural responses, and the quality of the therapeutic nurse-patient relationship tend to occur more rapidly when structured therapeutic communication strategies are employed. Furthermore, patients demonstrate enhanced self-concept, reduced levels of anxiety and aggression, and a strengthened therapeutic alliance.

Notwithstanding these findings, several limitations must be acknowledged. The existing body of evidence is characterised by relatively small sample sizes, predominantly descriptive and correlational study designs, and limited generalisability due to context-specific settings. Consequently, nurses must consistently apply structured therapeutic communication strategies that emphasise empathy, trust-building, and active patient engagement as core components of psychiatric nursing practice.

Future research should adopt experimental or longitudinal designs with larger sample sizes and objective outcome measures in order to more rigorously evaluate the causal effects of therapeutic communication in the management of schizophrenia. In addition, nurses should obtain formal certification demonstrating competence in the application of therapeutic communication prior to assuming responsibility for the care of patients with schizophrenia.

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