

Process of Building Patient-Nurse Relationships in Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Inpatient Care

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Introduction

Nurses play important roles in psychiatric inpatient care for children and adolescents, and their care can affect every facet of the patients' daily lives. The efficacy of treatment depends upon the nurses' ability to build intimate patient-nurse relationships.

Purpose

This paper reports on the process of building closer patient-nurse relationships in child and adolescent psychiatric inpatient care.

Method

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 18 "expert" nurses and a child psychiatrist. Collected data were analyzed using a constant comparative method based on Grounded Theory.

Ethical Considerations

The research protocol was approved by an ethics committee of a leading institution. All participants were informed orally and in writing about the study's purpose and methods. They were assured that neither they nor their places of work would be identified. They were also informed that participation in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw without penalty at any time for any reason. All participants provided their consent in writing.

Results

A core category of "**Developing emotional attachment**" was identified and substantiated by the following

1) 'Preparing to be a target of attachment'

watching over the children
creating a fun environment
playing with the children
having an understanding
of proxemics and haptics

3) 'Forming an attachment'

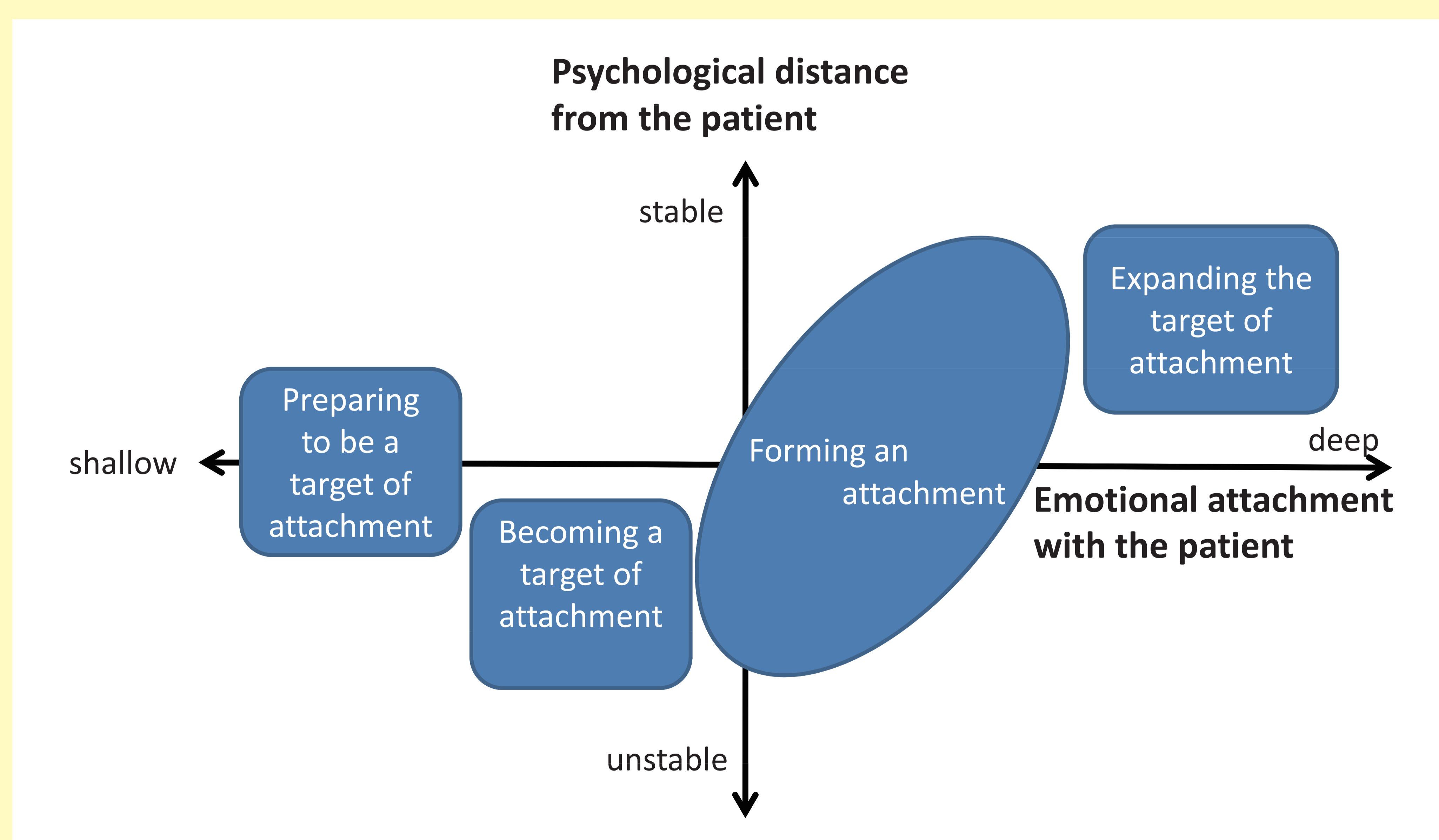
show love for the children
engage in one-on-one interaction
conduct constant observations
make assessments regarding
the children's attachment formations
engage the children in solving problems
together
practice individual nursing

2) 'Becoming a target of attachment'

become an important figure
become a supporter
do not take the place of a parent

4) 'Expanding the target of attachment'

include other staff members
provide same support with teams
solve problems with the help of
other staff members
form affirmative feelings toward
the children



Conclusion

To develop an emotional attachment with a child or adolescent patient, nurses must achieve a good balance between appropriate psychological distance from -and their own increased attachment to- the patient.

In conclusion, in child and adolescent inpatient psychiatric care, nurses conducting interventions would greatly improve the quality of their care, if they built more intimate relationships with patients.

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