

Narrative Assignment

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While shadowing Dr. Rosenberg in the emergency department for my capstone project, I observed her preparing to tell Mrs. Booker that her son had passed away. Reflecting on what I learned in this course, I noticed how she began by introducing herself to each person in the room with a handshake and a calm demeanor, helping to build rapport and trust. When she sat at eye level and spoke softly, she used Empathizing Mode by practicing empathetic listening, allowing silence, maintaining open body language, and acknowledging the mother's feelings without judgment. This approach demonstrates the therapeutic use of self by recognizing that the family is grieving and at a crisis point. Once trust and rapport are established, shifting to the Advocating Mode is essential because it enables the family to be fully informed while feeling supported and understood. This might include providing access to support resources, helping the family feel guided while allowing practitioners to focus on their needs during a vulnerable time. Ultimately, this experience exemplified that empathy, emotional engagement, and the therapeutic use of self are essential for being fully present during difficult conversations about adverse outcomes.

References

Rosenberg, N. (2016, September 4). How to Tell a Mother Her Child Is Dead. *The New York Times*.

Taylor, R. R. (2020). *The intentional relationship: Occupational therapy and use of self*. F.A. Davis Company.