

# AN EXAMPLE OF A SELF-INSTRUCTIONAL TEACHING UNIT FOR NURSING STUDENTS

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## OPSOMMING

Die ontwerp van onderrigseenhede waarin die onderrigmetodes met die doelstellings ooreenkom en waarin hoër vlakke van denke by die student gestimuleer word, word aan die hand van 'n voorbeeld, oor motivering en verdedigingsmekanismes, geïllustreer.

## INTRODUCTION

Designing effective teaching units is a very important part of the work of the tutor. As part of a course in curriculum development at the University of the Orange Free State, tutors are given practice in this skill. Much attention is given to varying the teaching methods and adapting them according to the unit objectives, which in turn arise from a task analysis. The emphasis of the teaching methods is also on developing higher levels of thinking in the student. An example of such a teaching unit is presented here

## TEACHING UNIT

### COURSE

Introductory psychology

### TARGET GROUP

Second year students: Diploma in General Nursing

### COURSE OBJECTIVE

Students will be able to understand human behaviour in health and in illness, and be able to use this knowledge in the care of patients as individuals and in groups.

### TITLE

Human motivation and ego-defence mechanisms, and their application to nursing care.

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- Define *motivation* and identify the biological and the psycho-social forms of motives.
- Define *ego-defence mechanism* and describe the relationship between this and motivation.
- Identify, from a given description of a patient's behaviour, his felt needs, and plan for appropriate nursing care.
- Describe, in your own words in writing, without the help of your prescribed sources, the defensive behavior characteristics of each of the following Mechanisms:
  - regression
  - rationalisation
  - projection
  - displacement

identification  
sublimation.

- Identify in yourself (or in others) a lack of motivation and analyse the possible causes thereof.
- Identify situations in which the patient demonstrates excessive use of one or two defences and plan for the appropriate nursing care.
- Identify your own habitual defence mechanisms.

### RATIONALE

All behaviour is directed towards the satisfaction of a person's needs and the fulfilment of his aspirations. Nursing involves mainly helping the patient to meet his needs. The nurse must have insight into the processes involved in motivation such as why a lonely person will have difficulty in respecting himself.

Inability to handle his situation adequately affects the patient's self-image making him anxious and causing him to adopt one or other ego-defence mechanism. This is a normal reaction, but one needs to know when the patient is using defences excessively because this makes him rigid and unopen to the care planned for him.

### ENTERING BEHAVIOUR

Before the student proceeds with the learning, she must have acquired knowledge concerning

- the concept psychology and how it is applied to nursing practice;
- the organic structure of the body in relation to emotion;
- the effect of hypothalamic stimulation on the body, and its influence on behaviour.



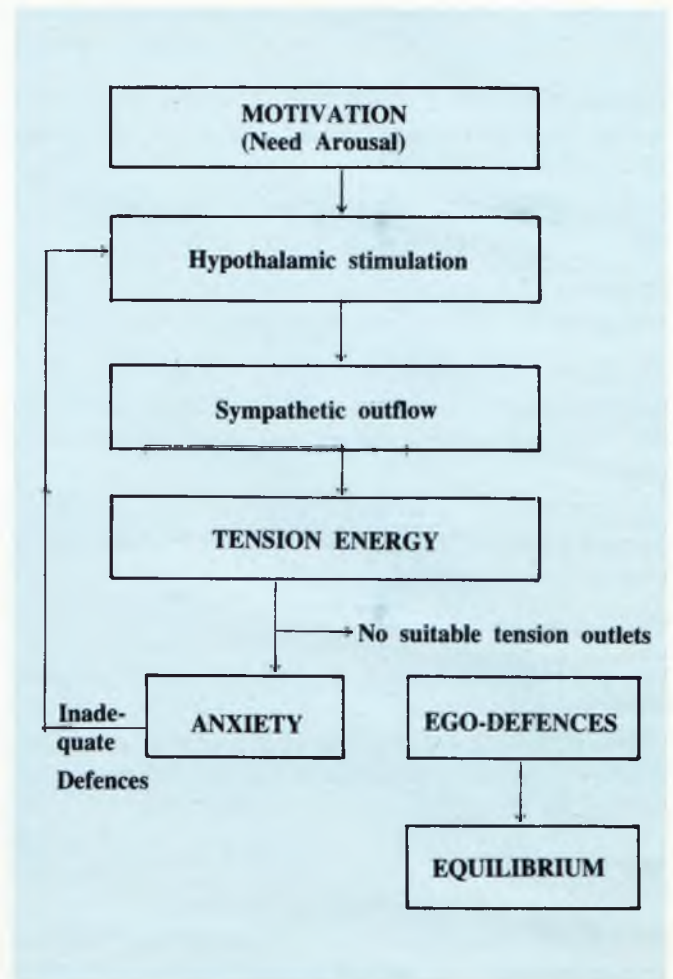


**Flow-diagram 1: Hierarchy of Human Needs (Maslow)**

(5) <b>Self-actualisation</b> achievement; attainment of goals; competence	Dominant in the convalescing patient.
(4) <b>Self-esteem</b> respect; recognition, honour, prestige, independence.	Dominant in the loss of status for the hospitalised patient; exposure to medical treatments etc.
(3) <b>Belonging needs</b> affection; friendship acceptance; interpersonal relationships.	Strongly felt by children in separating states, by the neglected patient and the homeless patient.
(2) <b>Safety needs</b> protection; familiar environment; non-fear provoking situations.	Become dominant in newly admitted patients; in disasters etc.
(1) <b>Biological needs</b> air, food, water, sleep exercise, elimination etc.	-Aroused first and become dominant if not satisfied -If adequately met needs of the higher levels are felt -Most urgent in states of shock due to dehydration or blood loss, and in respiratory distress.

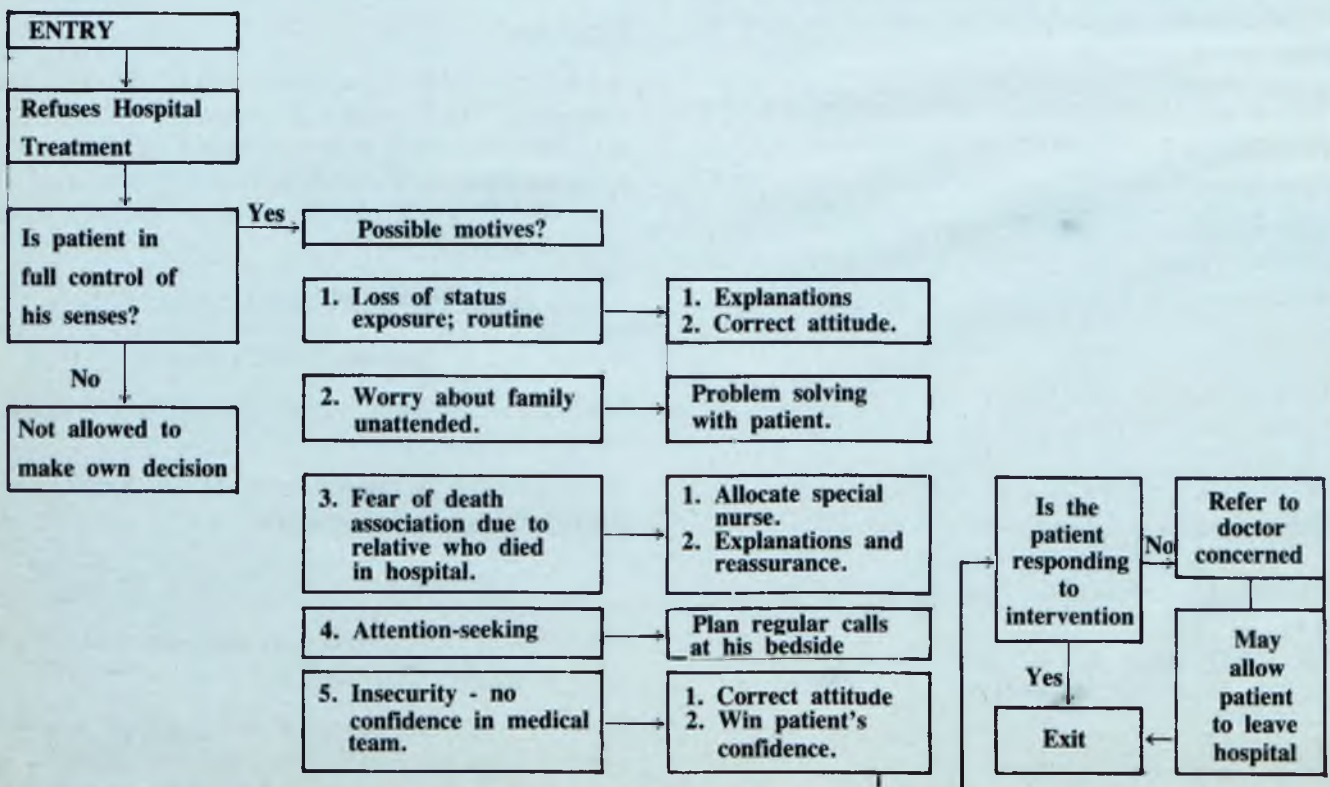
Higher level needs arise when lower ones are satisfied.  
Regression to lower needs occurs when higher needs are frustrated.

**Flow-diagram 2: Relationship between motivation, anxiety and ego-defence mechanisms.**



**Flow-diagram 3: Identifying motives underlying behaviour and planning care**

Possible motives underlying the behaviour of an adult patient who refuses hospital treatment and wishes to sign the *Refusal of Hospital Treatment* form, and the care which can be provided



## Concepts to be learned

### On motivation

biological drives  
emotional drives  
psycho-social needs  
hierarchy of human needs (Maslow's theory)  
unconscious motivation.

### On ego-defence mechanisms

the concept ego-defence and the processes involved  
displacement  
identification  
projection  
rationalisation  
regression  
sublimation

## Principles to be learned

### On motivation

- \* All behaviour is motivated, that is based on need-  
arousal.
- \* Much of our behaviour has unconscious motivation.
- \* Need-arousal puts the individual in a state of tension  
and readiness to meet the felt need.
- \* Needs that cannot be met puts the individual in a  
state of disequilibrium or **anxiety**.
- \* Motivation is inferred from the individual's behav-

our and, in the case of the patient, assists in the plan-  
ning of nursing care.

### On ego-defence mechanisms

- \* In most people anxiety is dealt with by the adoption  
of appropriate ego-defence mechanisms.
- \* Inability to cope imposed by illness renders the  
patient more predisposed to anxiety, and makes him  
adopt defensive behaviour.
- \* Overuse of one or two ego-defence mechanisms  
makes the individual rigid and it is difficult for him to  
enter into meaningful relationships with others.

### Skills

The nurse is able to  
identify the patient's needs and compile a compre-  
hensive care plan to meet those needs;  
create situations that encourage a hopeless patient to  
identify with, and therefore gain support from, other  
patients who are facing illness bravely;  
create a ward atmosphere which provides tension-  
outlets for the patients, for example suitable indoor-  
games and cheerful conversation;  
recognise, in the patients' behaviour, excessive use of  
defences, or inability to formulate defences, and plan  
for the necessary support systems.

# PRESENTATION TECHNIQUE

The student is given the specific objectives, the entering  
behaviour and the task description with the following  
instructions.

1. Study the diagram depicting Maslow's hierarchy of  
needs (flow diagram 1) and test yourself with the few  
questions below.

1. Define the concept *hierarchy of needs*. Confine your  
answer to about 20 words.

ANSWER:

The lower (biological) needs dominate and the  
higher needs emerge only when the lower ones  
have been met.

2. When the needs in level 1 are unsatisfied, how can  
you explain the patient's condition in a few words  
with regard to the higher level needs?

ANSWER:

All other higher level needs recede. For example,  
if there is no water, nothing else matters.

3. Name any three ways to help the patient fulfil the  
needs in level 2.

ANSWER:

- a) Teach him how to use hospital equipment (eli-  
minate anxiety)
- b) Show skill when carrying out procedures on  
him.
- c) Keep patient and ward environment very  
clean.
- d) Assist him with domestic problems.

If not satisfied with your own answers, study flow-  
diagram 1 again.

2. Study the flow-diagrams 2 and 3.

Attend the film *Anger at work* which demonstrates a  
case of displacement of anger.  
(Running time = 19½ minutes.)

OR

The film *Neurotic Behaviour* which includes illustra-  
tions of some classical ego-defence mechanisms.  
(Running time = 19 minutes)

Attend the film *Angry Boy* which illustrates how un-  
conscious motivation affects the behaviour of both chil-  
dren and adults.

(Running time = 31 minutes)

Study ego-defence mechanisms in Vlok (1973: 327-  
341); or any other relevant literature.



(The college time-table on **FILMS** shows students when and where the above films will be showing.)

### PROCEED TO TEST YOURSELF WITH THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

(First write down your own answer before consulting the one provided. Study again the areas in which you gave a wrong answer.)

1. Define the concept **motivation** and support your definition with a suitable example.

ANSWER:

Motivation is the arousal of an internal stimulus, which may be conscious or unconscious, which energises the individual and makes him behave in a certain way.

**Example:** A thirsty person is motivated to drink water.

2. Describe, in a paragraph of not more than 120 words, the process by which ego-defence mechanisms occur.

ANSWER:

A person meets a situation which he cannot handle, experiences threats in his environment or encounters any other impediment which makes him uncomfortable. His energy levels rise to help him overcome the handicap by direct means (e.g. fight or flight) and this makes him tense. If no suitable means are available, he becomes anxious. Because anxiety cannot be relieved by physical fear-reducing measures, the person unconsciously develops psychological mechanisms which bury his anxiety in unconsciousness, and make him comfortable with himself again.

These mechanisms are ego-defensive in that they prevent the lowering of the person's self-esteem and prevent disintegration of his person.

3. For each of the behaviours described here, identify the ego-defence mechanism employed.

- 3.1. The patient states that she could not seek medical advice early because she had nobody to remain with her children when she was, in fact, afraid of the possible outcome of the consultation.
- 3.2. Nurse Judy is concerned about a patient in her ward who appears lonely and never seems to get visitors. So, whenever nurse Judy gets the chance, she spends a few minutes engaging the patient in conversation.
- 3.3. Peter is a sixteen-year-old boy. His parents often scold him for his poor performance at school. Peter spends most of his time playing football. His club-members call him *Pele* after the Brazilian football star whose style and mannerisms Peter has adopted.
- 3.4. A student constantly accuses her group-mates of untidiness and says they are always throwing tissues about. But looking at her own behaviour one can say that hers is worse than theirs.

ANSWER:

- 3.1. — Rationalisation
- 3.2. — Identification
- 3.3. — Identification
- 3.4. — Projection

4. Name the steps that must be covered in the process of providing nursing care for the patients.

ANSWER:

1. Assessment of patient
  - general condition
  - prevailing needs.
2. Devise a plan to provide the patients' needs.
3. Use the plan and observe patients' response to care.
4. Evaluate patients' condition and decide whether further intervention is necessary.

## PROGRESS-TEST

The student must obtain full marks in this test, if not she must follow the instructions at the end of this test. It is in the student's own interest to do so.

### Instructions:

- Write down in your exercise book the answer(s) to each item without looking at the answers which are provided at the back of the unit.
- Do not consult your references while answering the questions.

### Item 1

Indicate (✓) whether the following statements are true or false:-

1. The nurse can help to reduce the patient's anxiety by leaving the patient to sort out things for himself.  
TRUE/FALSE
2. The so-called *difficult* patient may be motivated to escape from pain.  
TRUE/FALSE
3. The patient who complains that nobody loves him

and that he feels alone in the world can be helped to overcome this feeling by assuring him that the doctor attending him is very experienced in his job.

TRUE/FALSE

4. To make the patient develop the urge to get well the nurse should use threats to force him to co-operate in his own treatment.

TRUE/FALSE

5. The patient who is constantly seeking the attention of the nurse for no apparent reason can be said to be using the mechanism of regression.

TRUE/FALSE

## Item 2

Indicate with a ring around the alternative which best describes the behaviour:-

1. If the patient behaves rudely towards the nursing staff as a result of his anxiety about his illness, which of the following ego-defences would suit this behaviour?
  - 1.1. Sublimation
  - 1.2. Projection
  - 1.3. Displacement
  - 1.4. None of the above
2. When a person is very critical of others and always finding fault, it can be assumed that he is using the mechanism of:-
  - 2.1. Projection
  - 2.2. Aggression
  - 2.3. Sublimation
  - 2.4. Displacement
3. The mother who punishes her child and justifies her action by saying that it is for the child's own good whereas she may in fact be relieving her own anger is using the mechanism of:
  - 3.1. Displacement
  - 3.2. Sublimation
  - 3.3. Projection
  - 3.4. Rationalisation
4. When an elderly patient shows regressive behaviour by soiling her bed-linen and refusing to use the bedpan, the nursing staff should:
  - 4.1. Tell the patient that the nurses have a big workload, and unless she *behaves* they will ask the doctor to discharge her.
  - 4.2. Not scold her at all.
  - 4.3. Give her love and attention
  - 4.4. Wash the patient with cold water so that she will not soil her bed again.
  - 4.5. Let the patient do as much for herself as possible to prevent total dependence.
  - 4.6. (4.2; 4.3; and 4.5)
  - 4.7. (4.3; 4.5)
  - 4.8. All of the above.
5. To plan for nursing care, the nurse must assess the needs of the patient. This can be done by:
  - 5.1. Asking the patient how he feels.
  - 5.2. Telling the patient that you will not help him unless he tells you the truth.
  - 5.3. Observing the behaviour of the patient.
  - 5.4. Examining the patient physically to determine his nutritional state.

5.5. (5.2; 5.4.)

5.6. All of the above.

5.7. (5.1; 5.3; 5.4.)

## Item 3

Fill in the missing words. Do not rewrite the whole sentence; simply write down the word(s):

1. Ego-defence mechanisms are behaviour patterns used to reduce or remove . . . which cannot be handled by physical means.
2. The ego-defence mechanisms make the individual comfortable with himself and better able to adapt to the requirements of society. Therefore, they play an important part in interpersonal. . . .
3. To motivate a person is to . . . needs in him, and we can see whether or not a person is motivated by his . . .
4. When a patient is dyspnoeic, he becomes restless and fidgety, refuses to co-operate with the nurse who comes to change her bed-linen because at this moment the . . . . is dominant and the patient cannot be motivated to do anything else.

## FINAL INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Determine your performance: . . . . out of 15
2. Full marks? You have mastered the task! Very good.
3. Any mistakes made require you to refer back to the *Presentation technique* and study the areas in which your answers were wrong. Then re-answer the questions which were answered incorrectly until you have all the answers correct.

## ANSWERS TO PROGRESS-TEST

### Item 1

Number	Answer
1.	False
2.	True
3.	False
4.	False
5.	True

### Item 2

Number	Answer
1.	1.3
2.	2.1
3.	3.4
4.	4.6
5.	5.7

### Item 3

Number	Answer
1.	anxiety
2.	relations
3.	arouse; behaviour
4.	biological (physical) need.

## SOURCES

1. Altschul, A. *Psychology for nurses* Bailliere Tindall. London 1975 4th Ed.
2. Fisher, E.E. *Psychology for nurses and the health team* Juta & Company Cape Town 1981 4th Ed.
3. McNaught, A.B.; Callander, R. *Nurses illustrated physiology* E. & S. LIVINGSTONE London 1971 2nd Ed.
4. Vlok, *Manual of Advanced Nursing* Juta & company Johannesburg.