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Sleep disturbance in hospital Comfort & daily function

Nursing Foundation | Comfort & daily function

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Fictional educational example. Individualize using verified patient findings, authorized treatment and current local protocols. No real patient record or observed outcome is claimed.

Patient profile and history

44-year-old woman on a stable medical ward. Care stage: During supported recovery and essential daily activity.

Medical history: Sleep was usually satisfactory at home. Noise, worry and symptoms during admission are the reported new contributors. No known drug allergy is reported in this fictional interview; this does not replace medicine-by-medicine verification in real care.

Surgical history: No previous major operation is reported in this fictional interview. Confirm procedure details, complications and any relevant devices when applying the exercise.

Personal and family assessment: The patient wants to regain the usual level of independence. Review available support, daily activities, treatment access and preferred language rather than assuming these are the same for every person.

Scenario: The patient or caregiver asks how to manage essential daily care without provoking symptoms or unsafe fatigue.

Clinical assessment

Subjective: Cannot sleep because of noise, worry and discomfort.

Objective findings and required checks: Frequent awakenings and daytime fatigue without acute confusion.

Physical examination and investigations: Review sleep history, pain, breathing symptoms, medicines and delirium risk.

Supply actual values, units, timing and trends during supervised application. Do not invent missing clinical data.

Clinical focus and pathophysiology

Sleep disturbance in hospital: Illness symptoms and environmental interruption disrupt normal sleep patterns.

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Medical / surgical management

Treat symptom triggers, cluster non-urgent care and support a calm sleep routine.

Illustrative drug and treatment study

Medicine / treatment	Purpose	Nursing checks
Prescribed analgesic	Relieve assessed pain that interrupts sleep	Reassess effect
sedative review	Avoid assuming every sleep problem needs a sedative	Monitor falls and respiratory risks if prescribed.

Treatment examples are not a prescription. Verify the authorized product, dose, route, timing, contraindications and current local product information.

Nursing process - ADPIE

Assessment

Cannot sleep because of noise, worry and discomfort. Frequent awakenings and daytime fatigue without acute confusion. The patient or caregiver asks how to manage essential daily care without provoking symptoms or unsafe fatigue.

Nursing diagnosis

Prioritize sleep disrupted by symptoms or the care environment; emotional distress affecting participation in care; pain interfering with rest or activity; learning needs about the condition and care plan. Validate each concern against assessment. For an actual problem, link the problem, contributing factors and observed cues; for a risk problem, document the risk factors without invented symptoms.

Planning

During the next agreed care or activity session: document a patient-specific baseline and measurable target. Agree short- and longer-term outcomes with the patient/caregiver; physiological safety takes priority over teaching and discharge tasks.

Implementation

Treat symptom triggers, cluster non-urgent care and support a calm sleep routine. Identify the safest achievable activity or comfort goal without overlooking the underlying illness. Document care, prescribed treatment, consent and escalation.

Evaluation

Compare reassessment with each stated outcome. Mark met, partly met or not met using observed evidence, document the review time and revise the plan. This vignette provides no completed patient outcome.

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Nursing care plan

Nursing diagnoses use original clinical problem wording. They are not the licensed NANDA-I classification. Verify any formal label or code against your institution's licensed current edition; select actual or risk diagnoses only when supported by assessment.

Context task: Identify the safest achievable activity or comfort goal without overlooking the underlying illness.

Set individualized measurable targets and an exact review time. Select actual or risk statements only when supported by assessment.

Assessment: subjective / objective	Nursing diagnosis: original problem wording	Short- and longer-term goals	Nursing interventions with rationale	Evaluation
Ask: Ask about usual sleep, current disruption and daytime fatigue. Assess: Record sleep pattern, symptom triggers and environmental disturbance.	Sleep disrupted by symptoms or the care environment. Possible factors: discomfort, anxiety or interrupted routines. Validate against the patient's assessment.	Short-term: During the next agreed care or activity session: Reports improved rest during the next planned sleep period. Longer-term: Before the clinically approved transition or agreed follow-up: Identifies practical sleep-supporting routines for recovery.	1. Identify pain, breathlessness, anxiety and medicine-related causes of poor sleep. Rationale: Treating contributors is more useful than assuming a single cause. 2. Cluster non-urgent care and reduce light and noise when safe. Rationale: A predictable environment protects opportunities to sleep. 3. Use relaxation strategies and review prescribed sedating medicines carefully. Rationale: Rest should improve without avoidable oversedation or falls. 4. Treat symptom triggers, cluster non-urgent care and support a calm sleep routine. Rationale: Illness symptoms and environmental interruption disrupt normal sleep patterns. The condition-specific plan addresses the underlying problem while response is monitored.	Record the baseline and reassessed finding, the time and whether this goal is met, partly met or not met. If not met, reassess causes and revise or escalate. Do not record an unobserved improvement.

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Assessment: subjective / objective	Nursing diagnosis: original problem wording	Short- and longer-term goals	Nursing interventions with rationale	Evaluation
Ask: Ask what worries the patient most and how they prefer to receive information. Assess: Observe distress, attention and ability to engage without making assumptions.	Emotional distress affecting participation in care. Possible factors: uncertainty, symptoms or unfamiliar treatment. Validate against the patient's assessment.	Short-term: During the next agreed care or activity session: Identifies one immediate concern and participates in an agreed next step. Longer-term: Before the clinically approved transition or agreed follow-up: Describes helpful support and coping strategies before transition of care.	1. Listen without judgment and acknowledge specific concerns. Rationale: Feeling heard supports trust and therapeutic engagement. 2. Explain one step at a time and use teach-back with permission. Rationale: Manageable information reduces uncertainty and checks understanding. 3. Offer culturally appropriate support and refer when distress persists or safety concerns arise. Rationale: Additional support may be needed beyond bedside reassurance.	Record the baseline and reassessed finding, the time and whether this goal is met, partly met or not met. If not met, reassess causes and revise or escalate. Do not record an unobserved improvement.
Ask: Ask about pain site, onset, severity, quality and the patient's acceptable pain level. Assess: Observe guarding, expression and effect on movement; use an appropriate pain scale.	Pain interfering with rest or activity. Possible factors: tissue irritation, injury or the underlying condition. Validate against the patient's assessment.	Short-term: During the next agreed care or activity session: Pain decreases toward the patient-agreed target after reassessment. Longer-term: Before the clinically approved transition or agreed follow-up: Uses agreed comfort strategies and explains when new or worsening pain needs review.	1. Assess pain and associated red flags before and after treatment. Rationale: Changing pain may signal a complication and helps evaluate relief. 2. Provide comfortable positioning, reassurance and appropriate non-drug measures. Rationale: Comfort measures can reduce distress and complement prescribed treatment. 3. Give prescribed analgesia and monitor sedation, breathing and other adverse effects. Rationale: Relief should improve function without creating medication-related harm.	Record the baseline and reassessed finding, the time and whether this goal is met, partly met or not met. If not met, reassess causes and revise or escalate. Do not record an unobserved improvement.
Ask: Ask what the learner already knows and wants to understand. Assess:	Learning needs about the condition and care plan. Possible factors: new	Short-term: During the next agreed care or activity session: Explains the most	1. Assess language, literacy, hearing, vision and preferred learning method. Rationale: Accessible teaching improves understanding. 2. Teach a few	Record the baseline and reassessed finding, the time

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Assessment: subjective / objective	Nursing diagnosis: original problem wording	Short- and longer-term goals	Nursing interventions with rationale	Evaluation
Use teach-back or demonstration to identify specific gaps.	information, complex treatment or limited prior teaching. Validate against the patient's assessment.	important immediate action in their own words. Longer-term: Before the clinically approved transition or agreed follow-up: Demonstrates the agreed care skills and names follow-up and warning signs.	condition-specific points using plain language and demonstration. Rationale: Focused information is easier to retain and apply. 3. Use teach-back, correct misunderstandings and provide an accessible written plan. Rationale: Checking understanding supports safer self-management. 4. Discuss realistic sleep routines, daytime activity and avoiding unapproved sedating medicines. Rationale: Condition-specific teaching connects the treatment plan to safe continuing care.	and whether this goal is met, partly met or not met. If not met, reassess causes and revise or escalate. Do not record an unobserved improvement.

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Health education and continuing care

Discuss realistic sleep routines, daytime activity and avoiding unapproved sedating medicines.

Transition only after clinical readiness is confirmed. Reconcile medicines, check access and caregiver support, and document who will review the patient and when.

Urgent warning signs

Acute confusion, new breathlessness or excessive sedation warrants prompt assessment.

Evaluation and conclusion

For each goal, document met, partly met or not met using observed evidence and the review time. Reassess and revise if progress is inadequate. Individual assessment, prioritized care and coordinated review guide this topic.

Quick Revision

- Illness symptoms and environmental interruption disrupt normal sleep patterns.

- Priority concerns: Sleep disrupted by symptoms or the care environment; Emotional distress affecting participation in care; Pain interfering with rest or activity; Learning needs about the condition and care plan.

- Acute confusion, new breathlessness or excessive sedation warrants prompt assessment.

- Discuss realistic sleep routines, daytime activity and avoiding unapproved sedating medicines.

Exam / viva: How can care preserve independence while staying within the patient's assessed limits?

References

Nursing Fundamentals, 2e - Ernstmeyer & Christman (editors), Open RN / WisTech Open, 2024
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