

Video Review

Keys to Caregiving: A Self-Instructional Video Series ***(Infant State, Infant Behavior, Infant Cues, State Modulation,*** ***The Feeding Interaction, Nurse-Parent Communication)***

Executive Producer: Georgina Summers

Content Expert: Kathryn Barnard

Seattle: NCAST Productions, 1990. 6 videos ranging from 33 to 62 min.

Reviewed by Kathryn R. Sherrard

Becoming a parent can be a time of excitement and joy but also a time of bewilderment and frustration. Parents are getting to know their child while at the same time learning the complexities of providing care to a newborn.

Families look to nurses for the information they need to enjoy and feel confident in caring for their baby. Nurses in turn must take advantage of every opportunity to develop a relationship with families and to help them make a smooth transition to parenthood.

Keys to Caregiving, developed as a self-instructional package for nurses, is designed to ultimately give parents confidence and competence in caring for their child during the first days and weeks. This series could also become part of the learning process for other health professionals involved in the care of newborns and their parents.

The series comprises six videos — or classes — a self-instructional study guide, and five parent handouts. As the name suggests, each video in the series provides the key to guiding parents and caregivers through the process of understanding the newborn and using this knowledge in nurturing and caring. The complete package is learner-friendly, with clear directions for using both the video and the study guide for optimal learning.

The first three videos, *Infant State*, *Infant Behavior*, and *Infant Cues*, are sequenced and organized with a view to providing the learner with knowledge of newborn behaviour, the ways in which infants communicate and express their uniqueness, and the importance of sensitivity to newborn behaviour in providing responsive caregiving.

Video 4, *State Modulation*, focuses on recognizing the ways in which infants self-soothe and regulate their state, and using this knowledge to

master techniques for modulating their sleep/wake states. Nurses and parents alike can derive caregiving satisfaction from learning the techniques of both soothing a crying infant and bringing an infant to an alert state for feeding and interaction.

Video 5, *The Feeding Interaction*, combines the content of the first four lessons to demonstrate parent-child interplay during feeding. The Barnard model, which is based on Dr. Kathryn Barnard's years of research, is built on the notion of mother and infant as partners in the feeding experience. The learner is made aware of the complexity of this interaction, as each partner "reads" and responds to the other.

The final video, *Nurse-Parent Communication*, focuses on the ways in which nurses can share the information they have acquired in a way that makes parents feel they are being cared for and, in turn, feel confident and competent in providing care for their newborn.

The series draws on the extensive research of Dr. Barnard and her colleagues in the areas of infant states, how the regulation of states affects sleep, and feeding interactions with parents. The package is well organized. Careful attention has been given to ensuring that the learner understands the concepts to be covered: each video is preceded by a comprehensive reading in the study guide, accompanied by clear, concise references. The study guide highlights important points and observations, including nurse-parent interactions, and provides ample space for notes. It summarizes the key concepts clearly, provides questions for self-testing, and offers suggestions for further reading to keep the viewer actively involved in the learning process.

The videos themselves are presented in a captivating way. Using a range of babies and families to illustrate the points being made, the producers succeed in holding viewers' interest while at the same time directing them to what is being demonstrated. In *Infant State*, for example, the infant close-ups and the voice-over give the viewer a good understanding of the six states and how they affect the child's responsiveness to the caregiver. After viewing this first video, nurses will be able to identify the various states exhibited by the different infants in their care.

The clinical scenarios are well chosen, and the nurses who demonstrate the key concepts make excellent role models in their sensitive handling of the infants and in their caring interactions with mothers and babies. After observing the interplay of a variety of nurses, newborns, and mothers, viewers will be readily able to relate the information to their own clinical practices.

The instructor for the program, Anita Spietz, who is also one of the nurses in the parent-infant interaction segments, narrates in a calm, agreeable voice. Through her choice of positive adjectives to describe the infants and mother-nurse interactions, Spietz conveys a sense of appreciation for the uniqueness of each baby and enthusiasm for applying each lesson in clinical practice.

The segments on working with parents demonstrate the pacing and timing required in caring for a newborn. This is consistent with the entire program's measured pace of introducing and then reviewing each new idea. The careful attention to the learning process ensures that the viewer does not become overwhelmed by the amount of material presented: things appear deceptively simple, until one realizes the extent of the knowledge that has been synthesized into the package.

The series does have its shortcomings. At the outset of the program Dr. Barnard suggests it be used with high-risk families and infants, yet there is little reference to this population in the study guide or videos. By suggesting ways of adapting the various concepts for use in assessing and caring for high-risk infants and their parents, the program would have wider appeal for nurses working with such families. Also, by including a father with his infant in a feeding segment, or a nurse showing a father how to soothe and bring his infant to a lower state, the program would demonstrate to nurses how they might assist fathers in making the transition to parenthood.

Each of the videos includes examples of nurses providing both collaborative and individualized care to infants and parents. Sensitivity and respect are accorded both newborns and families throughout the six videos, particularly *Nurse-Parent Communication*, which demonstrates a model of communication that is used for parent teaching but that could be used in any nursing situation. In an atmosphere of caring, the parents become active participants in the process of identifying what they know and what they need to know and of acquiring the skills and knowledge to become confident in their role. The value and pitfalls of supplementary written information are discussed, while the parent handouts serve as good examples of printed material. This video will be useful for students learning how to recognize and build on people's strengths and how to develop collaborative approaches to working with families.

This series is highly recommended for all health professionals who provide care to new families and their infants. As stated in *Infant Cues*, nurses who already employ many of the techniques described will have a heightened awareness of what they are observing and will be able to

use this awareness in providing individualized care to the newborn. After viewing the series, all nurses will have a new appreciation for newborn babies — the ways in which they communicate their needs and their role as partner in every interaction. The outcome will be nurses who experience satisfaction with their role in helping new families to understand their child and gain the knowledge to parent effectively, and, ultimately, parents who are happy and competent caregivers, providing a healthy, growth-promoting environment for their infant.

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