SUPPORTING DANCE CONVERSATIONS WITH CLIENTS

Introducing DANCE to Clients

Typically, the DANCE will be introduced to clients early in the program (during pregnancy) as part of the Maternal Role domain information. Nurses will discuss how they will partner with the client to help her understand how her baby communicates and how the client’s responses to her child lay the foundation for the child’s growth and development. In this discussion nurses will share that they use a number of resources to do this, one of which is the DANCE.

During pregnancy, the DANCE serves as a foundation for discussing the 18 “things” caregivers can do to support their children’s healthy growth and development. Nurses can use the DANCE Cards to support conversations with clients about caregiving behaviors by sharing a single card (one dimension) at each visit, and reviewing the behaviors on each card.

Following the birth of the child, the DANCE behaviors and DANCE cards will provide a framework and common language to discuss how the client supports her child. Other tools for promoting positive parenting include conversations with the parent, the use of parenting facilitators, Keys to Caregiving, PIPE, and Ages and Stages Questionnaires.

From the beginning of the program, nurses should share that part of their job is to record what is happening during visits and that some of the tools are filled out during the visit and some are completed after the visit. Nurses will use all of these tools to guide their observation, assist in their reflection, inform their practice, and in collaboration with the client set agendas around aspects of child care and caregiving that are of greatest interest and importance to the client.

Introducing DANCE to clients during Pregnancy

What can you say to your pregnant clients (early in the program) to let them know about your role as a nurse home visitor and the support you will offer?

- Discuss that the role of the nurse is to offer support to help the client to learn about her baby and to be the best parent possible
- Share that there are many things in the program that will support the client in developing her role as a parent. This includes:
  - Handouts
  - PIPE lessons
  - Assessments: ASQ, etc.
  - Opportunity to practice activities with her child and reflect with the nurse on what the experience is like for her and her child
  - Ability to ask questions
- Share that one tool the nurse uses is the DANCE.
  - DANCE is a tool that helps the nurse and client think about ways to support the child’s growth and development.
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DANCE consists of 18 behaviors that caregivers do to support their children to grow and learn.

As the nurse you think about DANCE behaviors considering the child’s current stage of development and individual child characteristics.

To support the client to learn about her child and how she provides support, at times you will have them share time together during the home visit and then you will share your observations with the client.

Sample Script for Introducing DANCE During Pregnancy:

As your nurse, one of the things that I will do during our time together is to support you to know how your child communicates and how your responses to your child support his/her growth and development. There are lots of things I will talk about with you during our visits including activities, handouts, and my thoughts on how you and your child communicate. One of the things I will share with you is the DANCE. The DANCE is a tool that I use to think about the things you are doing to support your child as he/she communicates and grows. The DANCE has 18 “things” that you can do to help your child grow and learn. Sometimes, during our visits, I will give the two of you time to play or share time together. Then, we will talk about all the things you are doing to support your child and new things you might think about as your child is growing. Over the next few visits I want to share the 18 DANCE behaviors with you. I have four DANCE cards. Each card has different DANCE behaviors on them and we can briefly talk about how each behavior supports your child. Let’s start with the “Sharing Emotions” card.

Introducing DANCE to Existing Clients

What can you say to other clients (who are at various points in the program) after returning from this education session to talk about DANCE in general terms and the support you will offer?

- In addition to the information below you can talk about a new parenting tool you learned about and are excited to share with the client
- May use the DANCE Cards to explain the tool (in chunks and not all the cards/behaviors at one time)
- Also can begin to set expectations for the child to be at some visits (especially with clients who don’t typically have their children present during visits) so that you can see how the child is changing and growing
- Set aside time during visits for the caregiver and child to share time together. This can be undressing/weighing/dressing the child, PIPE supervised parent/child interaction, completing an Ages and Stages Questionnaire together, feeding, play activity, etc.

Sample Script for Introducing DANCE to Existing Clients:

Supporting you to learn about your child and talk about ways you can support his/her growth is something we have been doing throughout the program. I have a new way to think about how you support your child and I want to share it with you. This new tool is
called DANCE [share acronym or analogy if you want]. *The DANCE is a tool that I use to think about how your child is communicating and growing and the things you are doing to support your child as he/she communicates and grows.* *The DANCE focuses on 18 “things” that you can do to help your child grow and learn.* Over the next few visits I want to share the 18 DANCE behaviors with you. I have four DANCE cards. Each card has different DANCE behaviors on them and brief explains how the behaviors support your child. *Let’s start with the “Sharing Emotions” card.* [After reviewing Sharing Emotions Card] Sometimes during our visits I will give the two of you time to share time together and then we can talk about the things you are doing to support your child and new things you might think about as your child is growing. I would love to hear which DANCE behaviors you want to learn more about and which ones you already enjoy doing to support your child.

**Conducting Observation**

Nurses inherently observe their client’s interacting with their children during home-visitation. The DANCE offers nurses the opportunity to organize observations around a framework that will facilitate work around aspects of parenting most meaningful to the client. Nurses will observe clients during a home visit at specified developmental periods (see Recommended Times to Complete DANCE Observations on page 6.3 of the DANCE Manual) or at times when a challenge in the parent-child dyad or a change in the client or child’s life occurs. After completing a DANCE observation, review the coding sheet, and using the guidance on page 1.5 of the DANCE STEPS Handbook, identify behaviors which are Areas of Strength, Areas for Enhancement, and Areas of Growth for the client.

In addition, nurses will routinely use the DANCE framework for continuous informal observations during home visits. The visit information may be included in the nursing note for the visit or in other site documentation.

**Sharing DANCE Findings with Clients**

Information from the DANCE is shared with care, concern, and support. There are various ways the nurse might guide a conversation based on her observations of the dyad including beginning a discussion with a global remark such as “I have been thinking a lot about you and your baby” or “As we have talked about there are many different ways that you and your baby communicate with each other and I thought we might talk about some of those today. What do you enjoy most when you and your baby spend time together?” These comments open a conversation that facilitates the client’s expressed beliefs, joys, and concerns about her interactions with her child and allows the nurse to integrate her own reflections obtained through her use of the observation tool in to this conversation.

Nurses have several resources in the DANCE STEPS manual to support conversations with clients about DANCE observations including the DANCE Cards, “What My Child says” client handout, Bubble Sheets, and other resources.
DANCE Cards

The DANCE Cards can be used to share reflections on a recent observation. The DANCE Cards are particularly helpful when nurses have introduced them to clients previously and now reintroduce them to share their thoughts on a recent interaction between a client and her child.

Sample Script for Using the DANCE Cards to Share DANCE Findings:

“I really enjoyed watching Kindra eat peas for the first time last visit. What do you think she thought about them?” .... “Remember when we talked about the DANCE Cards and the different ways that you and your baby communicate with each other? I thought we might talk about one of those cards again today. [Nurse takes out Sensitivity and Responsivity DANCE Card.] If we look at the DANCE cards again and think about when you were feeding Kindra last week, I noticed that you were in a position to see her [Positioning] and you kept watching her expression the whole time [Visual Engagement]. This helps you know how she feels about the peas. When she eats new foods does she typically take that slowly or does she like to really gobble things up [Pacing]?

“What My Child Says….=” Worksheet

Another resource nurses have to share DANCE findings with clients is the worksheet found in Appendix E of the DANCE STEPS manual and on the Supervisor Integration CD titled “What My Child Says”. Completing this worksheet based on DANCE observations allows the nurse to share Areas of Strength with the client (“Mom, you are great at” section of the handout) and if desired also support conversations of areas for growth through identifying what the child might need to support their current developmental phase (“And it would help me a lot if you” section of the handout) based on Areas of Enhancement and Areas of Growth. Focusing DANCE discussions on how the behaviors support the child’s growth and learning connects to the client’s desire to support her child and creates a safe and supportive entry point for conversations about DANCE behaviors.

Sample Script for Using the “What My Child Says” Worksheet to share DANCE Findings:

I really enjoyed seeing you and Jordyn build with blocks last visit. I was thinking about how the two of you were playing and if Jordyn could talk he would want you to know a few things. [Share the completed “What My Child Says” worksheet focusing on the top section “Mom you are great at…”].

[Following discuss above] I was also thinking that as he starts to learn more words and begins using them he would like you to know that it would really help him if you “used your words to help him stay connected with you and that using your words teaches him language.” [Share the completed “What My Child Says” worksheet focusing on the bottom section “And it would help me a lot if you”]. Children this age get excited about learning words but they might also get frustrated when they don’t have all the words they
want or sometimes we can’t understand what they are saying. I thought we might talk about this a little more…[Move discussion to options for DANCE STEPS to support Verbal Connectedness].

Discussions of observations should reflect the strength’s based approach already used in the program. This framework is nonthreatening to the client and flows easily into the current structure of home visits.

**Planning and Implementing Caregiving Support**

Following a conversation with the client discussing her thoughts about her interactions with her child, the nurse and client will work together to agenda match and identify those aspects of the child’s and/or caregiver’s behavior that they would like to explore in greater depth. Asking clients to share their parenting goals, joys, and concerns outlines their expectations and beliefs. Reflection, on the part of the nurse, allows definition of the nurse home visitor role and identifies ways to support and guide parents. Using the DANCE STEPS the nurse and the client will review various options for how they might like to work toward greater understanding of the identified DANCE behaviors. These conversations can be supported either through the DANCE STEPS bubble sheets, DANCE Cards or other NFP materials. Document your discussions with the client along with the selected behaviors to target using the DANCE STEPS nursing notes or your current method of nursing documentation.