

Supplement Table 1: Summary of Therapeutic Goals and Medical Clowning Skills Used to Achieve Them

Therapeutic goal	Explanation	Main skills
<p><b>Connecting to patients and to their wishes</b></p>	<p>MCs emphasized their intention to connect with patients and families, and truly to be there for them. They mentioned their role as “Being a friend,” “just” offering the opportunity to share their experience and perception with someone else and creating an initial bond. The MC is an attentive companion</p>	<p>Connecting to patients and their wishes throughout the entire interaction. We identified 15 different skills to achieve these goals, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Anchoring</b> an initial bond through a patient’s object, feeling, or behavior</li> <li>✓ Immediately <b>accepting and connecting to the patient’s wishes</b></li> <li>✓ <b>Emphasizing the patient’s experience</b> through precise <b>repetition or echoing</b></li> <li>✓ Saying <b>something that the patient wants to say but does not verbally communicate</b></li> <li>✓ <b>Humorously exaggerating the patient’s struggle</b></li> <li>✓ <b>Standing behind or in front of the patient</b> – as a patient’s advocate, e.g., <b>joining</b> the patient and/or <b>using the plural</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Dealing with patients’ emotions and</b></p>	<p>Medical encounters are filled with various difficulties and emotions, such as stress, fear,</p>	<p>MCs use various direct and indirect skills to deal with emotions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Acknowledging the emotion or pain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Mirroring</b></li> <li>○ <b>Asking about the emotion</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p><b>difficulties</b></p>	<p>helplessness, loneliness, anxiety, and anger. MCs focused on relieving patients' emotions, trying to help them overcome their difficulties and improve their coping with their hospital stay</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Physical touching</b></li> <li>✓ <b>Reflecting and discussing the patient's feelings or asking a direct question about the emotion</b></li> <li>✓ <b>Providing the space to share emotions and gain catharsis by music, acting out their difficult feelings and just being, listening</b></li> <li>✓ <b>Distraction:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Changing the topic/main issue of conversation</b></li> <li>○ <b>Asking an embarrassing question</b></li> <li>○ Using <b>accessories and gimmicks</b> to capture the patients' attention</li> <li>○ Using <b>puns, metaphors, images</b>, or <b>changing the context of a word</b></li> <li>○ Using <b>humor</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Enhancing excitement and motivation to adhere to treatment</b></p>	<p>MCs see themselves as part of the medical team, emphasizing their professional role in the healing process, including enhancing patients' willingness to adhere to the planned treatment: "<i>We are not</i></p>	<p>Promoting treatment included various skills, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Attempting to help ease the medical procedures, e.g., through <b>distraction, turning it into a game</b></li> <li>✓ <b>Mediating between the medical team and the patient</b></li> <li>✓ Enhancing patient's motivation for treatment, e.g., by "<b>volunteering</b>" to do the exercise</li> </ul>

	<p><i>there to please the children. I come to work in collaboration with the medical team... to help, to take a part in procedures, to be part of the medical team.”</i></p>	<p><b>instead of the patient</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Using <b>competition</b></li> <li>✓ <b>Acknowledging the negative emotion and reality of pain during treatment</b></li> <li>✓ <b>Negotiating the process on behalf of the patient</b></li> <li>✓ <b>Movement in space</b> e.g., to change the atmosphere and allow them to move forward with treatment</li> <li>✓ <b>Elevating</b> the patient</li> <li>✓ <b>Assuming an inferior position</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Enhancing sense of control, caring, and encouraging</b></p>	<p>MCs see their role as intended to help patients (their family members and sometimes medical teams) “to improve their hospitalization experience, make it better, more acceptable and fun.”</p>	<p><b>Creating a different atmosphere</b>, by altering a negative emotion, using <b>humor, the arts, imagination, and playfulness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Creating a calmer, playful environment.</b></li> <li><b>Using fantasy, imagination, accessories, and games</b></li> <li>✓ <b>Providing support and encouragement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Creating an environment of success</b></li> <li>○ <b>Loud encouragement</b></li> <li>○ Using various <b>supportive statements</b></li> <li>○ <b>Physical contact</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Reestablishing patients’ sense of control and autonomy over their lives in hospital by <b>allowing them to choose</b></li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <b>Invitation and opportunity to act in whatever way the patient chooses</b></li><li>✓ <b>MC assuming an inferior position</b></li></ul>
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