Although quality communication has been identified as a necessary component to cancer care, communication skills training programs have yet to focus on the unique role of nurses. This study explored communication barriers as reported by seven nurse managers to better identify communication skills needed for oncology nurses to practice patient-centered care. Thematic analysis of transcripts was used to identify barriers to patient and family communication and desirable patient-centered nursing communication skills. Overall, the nurse managers reported that nurses experience patient and family communication difficulties as a result of inconsistent messages to patients and family from other healthcare staff. Physician assumptions about nursing left nurses feeling uncomfortable asking for clarification, creating a barrier to team communication processes. Patient-centered communication and care cannot be actualized for nurses unless team roles are clarified and nurses receive training in how to communicate with physicians, patients, and family. Therefore, the authors of this article created the COMFORT communication training protocol, and key concepts and resources for nurse communication training through COMFORT are detailed in this article.

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