

5. Outline the stages of nurse–client relationship development.
6. Identify the mutuality in helping relationships.
7. Differentiate therapeutic from nontherapeutic communication strategies and relationships.
8. Discuss how nurses use relationships to promote client healing.
9. Explain how health care team members can develop meaningful professional partnerships.
10. Describe strategies that health care team members can use to enhance quality and safety when delivering health care.

REAL-LIFE REFLECTIONS

Marcia, an emergency department nurse, has just arrived at work and is assigned to be the triage nurse. A Latino middle-aged man with severe chest pain and dyspnea arrives with his family. Marcia gets immediate help for the man, who is rushed to the cardiac catheterization lab. Marcia notices that the family members seem very anxious and distressed. When she asks them if they would like anything, they reply, “No,” but the wife tries to hold back tears as she wrings her hands, the daughter’s hands shake, and the son paces. Marcia notes that the nonverbal behavior of the family seems to be incongruent with their verbal messages. As she interacts with the family, Marcia wonders what would be the best course of action to help this distressed family.

Most nurses enter the profession with a desire to help others, and they do so in many ways.

Assisting clients in meeting basic physical, psychological, and spiritual needs

Alleviating pain and suffering

Imparting health care information

Doing things for clients that they are incapable of doing for themselves

Guiding clients and families through the complex health care delivery system

Advocating for clients

Helping clients achieve maximal health potentials

Keeping clients safe

Using clinical, cognitive, and communication skills to deliver high-quality health care services

Along with helping clients, families, and communities, professional nurses also help each other and other team members. —the sharing of information, thoughts, and feelings—is an essential element of helping others. The verbal and nonverbal messages exchanged during human relationships determine the structure and function of interpersonal relationships. This chapter focuses on communication as a key factor for effective nursing practice and an essential element of helping relationships.

COMMUNICATION AS INTERACTION

Nurses establish relationships with clients, each other, and members of the health care team. To participate effectively in all these relationships, nurses must understand the structure and the functions of communication.