

What factors in your clinical practice setting prevent you from being truly present with clients?
How could you proceed with changing the clinical practice setting?

TABLE 4.1 Presence: Characteristics of Four Ways of “Being There”

, the ability to understand, sense, share, and accept the feelings of another (Keegan, 1994), enables the nurse to develop helping relationships with clients. Therapeutic, helping relationships focus on change. Understanding the potential impact of change on clients enables the nurse to identify obstacles for clients to change behaviors and attitudes. When using an empathetic approach, the nurse becomes more tolerant of behaviors, attitudes, and values that differ and could impede progress toward goal attainment. Wiseman (1996, p. 1165) identified four defining attributes of empathy: seeing the world as others see it, being nonjudgmental, understanding another’s feelings, and communicating the understanding.

Nurses who possess empathy show awareness of the uniqueness and individuality of clients. They listen and