

Defensive behavior commonly occurs in regressive states. For example, a person might demonstrate denial, unconsciously evading or negating the real factors in a situation. Regressive states also may be marked by distortions, rote habitual actions, dogmatic responses, loss of control, invalidated assumptions (jumping to conclusions), parroting, inappropriate timing, and poor judgment. These behaviors represent important components of noncaring and nontherapeutic nursing strategies.

Because therapeutic communication is essential for effective professional nursing practice, nurses should periodically evaluate their communication techniques. This includes reflecting on how and what is said during nurse–client interactions or keeping a written journal. If a pattern of nontherapeutic behaviors is identified, the nurse should seek help from a colleague or counselor, or attend classes or workshops to improve communication techniques. Nurses should let their own feelings be