3.4: Purpose of Communication

The purpose of communication is to inquire, inform, persuade, entertain, request and investigate. A single message can have one or more of the following purposes:

- To convey information/opinion, for example, “I have headache” or “I am here to give you medication”.
- To request information/opinion/behavior, for example, “Are you allergic to penicillin?” or “Tell me more about the injury”.
- To give social acknowledgement, for example, “Hello” or “Good morning”.

These three primary types of messages can be combined in many ways so that they form an interaction (conversation). The goals of the interaction can be comprehensive. Nurses strive to make all their communication with patients therapeutic, that is, their communication is purposefully and consciously planned to promote the patient’s health and wellbeing.