3.9: Communicating with patients

There are several points to be kept in mind when communicating with patients. The first point is that you are there to provide care and support to the patient.

- Be open, respectful and gracious in all your interactions with the patient and keep his/her cultural preferences in mind.
- Answer nurses’ bells promptly.
- Make sure you have the patients’ attention when communicating.
- Use words that are non-threatening – explain what you would like to do and do not give orders to the patient.
- Use simple, understandable phrases, not medical terms as most patients do not understand these terms.
- Speak clearly and courteously.
- Use a pleasant and normal tone of voice to the hard of hearing.
- Always stand so that the patient can see the nurse’s face when communicating, as lip reading is part of all normal hearing.
- Use body language that is appropriate.
- Explain facts and procedures before donning a mask that covers the wearer’s mouth and lower face.
- Be alert to the patient’s needs. Allow time for answers to your requests and to answer patient’s questions [17].