3.10: Communicating by Phone

Nurses often communicate over the phone with patients, family members and colleagues and this can lead to misunderstandings. The way in which the phone is answered and a message is interpreted needs special skills because the body language of the person at the other end of the phone line cannot be seen. When answering the phone or making a call:

- Always speak clearly into the mouthpiece of the phone.
- Offer a greeting for example, good morning or good afternoon.
- Identify the unit or place of work.
- Identify yourself by indicating who you are and where you are phoning from.
- Identify the person to whom you are speaking.
- Politely listen to the message and make notes if you think you may not remember all the information.
- If you are asked to call another person, note the date, time, caller’s name and telephone number together with the message.
- Date and sign the message [17].