

Be courteous, calm, honest, and open minded.

Try not to overreact. If you do, take a break.

Avoid judging or criticizing.

Avoid the “third degree” of continuous questioning.

Choose important issues when taking a stand.

After taking a stand:

- Think through all options.
- Make expectations clear.

Communication Techniques

Nurses use a variety of verbal techniques to encourage communication. Some of these techniques are useful to pose questions or explore concerns in a less threatening manner. Others can be presented as word games, which are often well received by children. However, for many children and adults, talking about feelings is difficult, and verbal communication may be more stressful than supportive. In such instances, use several nonverbal techniques to encourage communication.

Box 4-3 describes both verbal and nonverbal techniques. Because of the importance of play in communicating with children, play is discussed more extensively in the next section. Any of the verbal or nonverbal techniques can give rise to strong feelings that surface unexpectedly. Be prepared to handle them or to recognize when issues go beyond your ability to deal with them. At that point, consider an appropriate referral.

Box 4-3

Creative Communication Techniques with Children

Verbal Techniques