

families. There are a number of factors to consider before disclosing this information to children. Parents should be comfortable with their own sexual preference and should discuss this with the children as they become old enough to understand relationships. Discussions should be planned and take place in a quiet setting where interruptions are unlikely.

Nurses need to be nonjudgmental and to learn to accept differences rather than demonstrate prejudice that can have a detrimental effect on the nurse-child-family relationship (Blackwell, 2007). Moreover, the more nurses know about the child's family and lifestyle, the more they can help the parents and the child.

Family Strengths and Functioning Style

Family function refers to the interactions of family members, especially the quality of those relationships and interactions (Bomar, 2004). Researchers are interested in family characteristics that help families to function effectively. Knowledge of these factors guides the nurse throughout the nursing process and helps the nurse to predict ways that families may cope and respond to a stressful event, to provide individualized support that builds on family strengths and unique functioning style, and to assist family members in obtaining resources.

Family strengths and unique functioning styles are significant resources that nurses can use to meet family needs (Box 2-3). Building on qualities that make a family work well and strengthening family resources make the family unit even stronger. All families have strengths as well as vulnerabilities.

Box 2-3

Qualities of Strong Families

- A belief and sense of commitment toward promoting the well-being and growth of individual family members, as well as the family unit
- Appreciation for the small and large things that individual family members do well and encouragement to do better