



**Ministry of Higher Education
& Scientific Research**

University of Mosul / College of Nursing



Code of Ethics

Undergraduate Studies

BSc. in Nursing Sciences / First Stage

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Unit One: Concepts of Nursing Ethics / Values in Professional Ethics

- **Ethics** is derived from the Greek word ethos, meaning custom or character. Ethics can be defined as the branch of philosophy dealing with standards of conduct and moral judgment. It refers to a method of inquiry that assists people to understand the morality of human behavior. (i.e. it is the study of morality).
- **Moral:** is principles and rules of right conduct. It is private or personal. Commitment to principles and values are usually defended in daily life.
- **Values** are concepts or ideals that give meaning to one's life and provide a framework for one's decisions and actions.
- **Code of ethics** is formal statement of a group's ideas and values that serve as a standards and guidelines for the groups' professional actions and informs the public of its commitment. Codes of ethics are usually higher than legal standards, and they can never be less than legal standards of the profession.

Purposes of code of ethics: nursing code of ethics has the following purposes:

1. To inform the public about the minimum standards of profession and to help them understand professional nursing conduct.
2. To provide a sign of the profession's commitments to the public it serves.
3. To outline the major ethical considerations of the profession.
4. To provide general guidelines for professional behavior.
5. To guide the profession in self-regulation.
6. To remind nurses of the special responsibility they assume when caring for the sick.
7. To helps the nurse to identify the ethical issues in her work place

Types of Ethics

1. **Descriptive:** It is the description of the values and beliefs of various cultural, religious or social groups about health and illness.
2. **Normative:** a study of human activities in a broad sense in an attempt to identify human actions that are right or wrong and good and bad qualities. In nursing normative ethics addresses: scope of practice of different categories of nurses and, level of competence expected.
3. **Analytical:** analyzes the meaning of moral terms. It seeks the reasons why these action or attitudes are either wrong or right.



Common Ethical theories

Ethical theories may be compared to lenses that help us to view an ethical problem. Different theories can be useful because they allow us to bring different perspectives in to our ethical discussions or deliberations. There are four ethical theories:

- 1. Deontology**
- 2. Teleology**
- 3. Intuitionism**
- 4. The ethic of caring**

➤ **Deontology (Duty or rule-Based theory)**

This theory proposes that the rightness or wrongness of an action depends on the nature of the act rather than its consequences. This theory holds that you are acting rightly when you act according to duties and rights. Responsibility arises from these moral facts of life. The theory denotes that duties and rights are the correct measuring rods for evaluating action. One place where such factors are presented is in codes of professional ethics. E.g. informed consent, respect of patient.

➤ **Teleology (utilitarian or end based theory)**

This theory looks to the consequences of an action in judging whether that action is right or wrong. According to the utilitarian school of thought right action is that which has greatest utility or usefulness. Utilitarian hold that no action in itself is good or bad, the only factors that make actions good or bad are the outcomes, or end results that are derived from them

➤ **Intuitions**

The notion that people inherently know what is right or wrong; determining what is not a matter of rational thought or learning. For example, nurse inherently known it is wrong to strike a client, this does not need to be taught or reasoned out.

➤ **The ethic of caring (case based theory)**

Unlike the preceding theories which are based on the concept of fairness (justice) an ethical caring is based on relationships. It stresses courage, generosity, commitment, and responsibility. Caring is a force for protecting and enhancing client dignity.

➤ **Egoism**

It is a theory of ethical decision making that considers self- interest and self - preservation as the only proper goals of all human actions. Egoism is based on the innate and primitive human tendency to be self- centered. The decision maker in an ethical dilemma makes decisions based on personal comfort.



Ethical Principles

Principles are basic ideas that are starting points for understanding and working through a problem. Ethical principles presuppose that nurses should respect the value and uniqueness of persons and consider others to be worthy of high regard. These principles are tents that are important to uphold in all situations. The major principles of nursing ethics are:

- 1. Autonomy**
- 2. Beneficence**
- 3. Nonmaleficence**
- 4. Justice**
- 5. Veracity**
- 6. Fidelity**
- 7. Confidentiality**

1. Autonomy

Autonomy is the promotion of independent choice, self-determination and freedom of action. Autonomy means independence and ability to be self-directed in healthcare. Autonomy is the basis for the client's right to self-determination. It means clients are entitled to make decision about what will happen to their body.

2. Beneficence

Beneficence is doing or promoting good. This principle is the basis for all health care providers. Nurses take beneficent actions when they administer pain medication, perform a dressing to promote wound healing or providing emotional support to a client who is anxious or depressed. The principle of beneficence has three components:

- ✓ Promote good
- ✓ Prevent harm
- ✓ Remove evil or harm

3. Nonmaleficence

Nonmaleficence means to avoid doing harm. When working with clients, health care workers must not cause injury or suffering to clients. It is to avoid causing deliberate harm, risk of harm and harm that occurs during the performance of beneficial acts. E.g. Experimental research that have negative consequences on the client.

4. Justice



Justice is fair, equitable and appropriate treatment. It is the basis for the obligation to treat all clients in an equal and fair way. Just decision is based on client need and fair distribution of resources. It would be unjust to make such decision based on how much he or she likes each client.

5. Veracity

Veracity means telling the truth, which is essential to the integrity of the client-provider relationship. Health care providers are obliged to be honest with clients. The right to self-determination becomes meaningless if the client does not receive accurate, unbiased, and understandable information.

6. Fidelity

Fidelity means being faithful to one's commitments and promises. Nurses' commitments to clients include providing safe care and maintaining competence in nursing practice. In some instances, a promise is made to a client in an overt way. A nurse must use good judgment when making promises to a client. Fidelity means not only keeping commitment but also keeping or maintaining our obligation.

7. Confidentiality

Confidentiality in the health care context is the requirement of health professionals (HPs) to keep information obtained in the course of their work private. Professional codes of ethics (and conduct) will often have statements about professions maintaining confidentiality, but confidentiality is often qualified. Confidentiality is non-disclosure of private or secret information with which one is entrusted. Legally, this requirement applies to HPs and others, who have access to information about patients, and continues after the patient's death.

- **The Nursing Code of Ethics** is a set of guiding principles that outline the moral and ethical obligations of nurses to provide compassionate, respectful, and equitable care. It serves as a foundational framework for nurses to uphold integrity, protect patients' rights, ensure confidentiality, and promote health and wellness. The code is typically developed by professional nursing organizations, such as the American Nurses Association (ANA), and includes provisions on patient autonomy, non-maleficence (doing no harm), beneficence (promoting good), and justice. The purpose of the Nursing Code of Ethics is to help nurses navigate complex situations, make ethical decisions, and maintain professional standards in all aspects of care.



Nursing Ethic

It is a branch of applied ethics that concerns itself with activities in the field of nursing. It refers to ethical standards that govern and guide nurses in every day practice, such as being truthful with clients, respecting client confidentiality, and advocating on behalf of the client.

1. Ethics are system of valued behaviors and beliefs that govern proper conduct to ensure the protection of an individual's rights.
2. Ethics involve judgments that help to differentiate right from wrong or indicate how things ought to be.
3. Ethics are associated with individuals, small groups or society

Ethical Dilemmas & ethical decision making in Nursing

A dilemma is a situation in which two or more choices are available; it is difficult to determine which choice is best and the needs of all these involved cannot be solved by the available alternatives. The alternatives in a dilemma may have favorable and unfavorable features. Ethical dilemmas in health care involve issues surrounding professional actions and client care decisions. They can lead to discomfort and conflict among the members of the health care team or between the providers and the client and family.

Nursing Practice Act: Nursing practice act or act for professional Nursing practice regulate the practice of nursing. Legally define and describe the scope of nursing practice, which the law seeks to regulate, there -by protecting the public as well. It protects the use's professional capacity. Each country may have different acts but they all have common purpose: to protect the public. It grants the public a mechanism to ensure minimum standards for entry in to the profession and to distinguish the unqualified.

Legal issues in nursing

Involve various aspects of healthcare law that impact nursing practice, patient rights, and the nurse's professional responsibilities. Here are some key legal issues that nurses often encounter:

1. Patient Confidentiality and Privacy (HIPAA): Nurses are required by law to protect patients' personal health information (PHI). Unauthorized sharing of patient information, even inadvertently, can lead to legal consequences.



2. Informed Consent

Nurses play a role in ensuring that patients or their representatives understand the procedures, treatments, risks, and benefits before giving consent. Administering care without proper informed consent may be seen as battery or assault.

3. Professional Negligence and Malpractice

This occurs when a nurse fails to provide the standard of care, resulting in harm to the patient. Common malpractice claims involve medication errors, misdiagnosis, and improper documentation.

4. Duty to Report

Nurses are legally obligated to report certain situations, such as child or elder abuse, infectious disease, and unsafe practices by other healthcare professionals. Failing to report can lead to legal ramifications and patient harm.

5. Scope of Practice

Nurses must practice within the scope defined by their state's Nurse Practice Act. Performing duties beyond one's qualifications or license can result in penalties, license suspension, or legal action.

6. Patient Advocacy

Nurses have a legal and ethical duty to advocate for patients' best interests. This includes situations where patients are unable to speak for themselves or when their rights are being compromised.

7. Documentation and Record Keeping

Accurate and thorough documentation is essential for patient safety and legal protection. Incomplete, inaccurate, or falsified records can lead to legal issues and liability.

8. Medication Administration Errors

Nurses are responsible for the safe administration of medications, following the "five rights" (right patient, medication, dose, route, and time). Errors in this area can have serious legal and patient care implications.

9. End-of-Life Care and Advance Directives

Nurses must respect patients' wishes related to end-of-life care, including advance directives and Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) orders. Failing to adhere to these directives can lead to legal issues and ethical dilemmas.

10. Workplace and Employment Issues

Legal issues can also arise in employment settings, such as discrimination, harassment, and safe staffing levels. Nurses have rights under labor laws and are protected from unsafe or unfair working conditions.



Unit Two: The Nurse and the Nursing Profession

- **Nursing** is a dynamic, caring, and professional practice aimed at promoting health, preventing illness, and providing care to individuals, families, and communities. The nurse's primary role is to promote and maintain the well-being of patients through direct care, education, and advocacy.
- According to the **American Nurses Association (ANA)**, nursing is defined as “the protection, promotion, and optimization of health and abilities, prevention of illness and injury, alleviation of suffering through the diagnosis and treatment of human responses, and advocacy in the care of individuals, families, communities, and populations.”

B. Core Roles and Responsibilities

- **Patient Care Provider:** Nurses are directly responsible for assessing patient needs, developing care plans, and providing both routine and specialized care. This includes administering medications, assisting with daily activities, and monitoring patients' health conditions.
- **Advocate:** Nurses act as advocates for patients, ensuring that their voices are heard in decision-making processes, and that their rights and preferences are respected.
- **Educator:** Nurses educate patients and families about health conditions, medications, and lifestyle changes that can improve health outcomes.
- **Collaborator:** Nurses collaborate with other healthcare professionals, such as physicians, physical therapists, and social workers, to ensure comprehensive care for patients.
- **Researcher and Innovator:** Nurses are also involved in research to improve patient care and contribute to evidence-based practices that shape the future of healthcare.



2. The Evolution of the Nursing Profession

A. Historical Overview of Nursing

- **Early Nursing (Pre-19th Century):**

In ancient times, nursing was often carried out by family members or religious orders. In many cultures, women cared for the sick as part of their familial or social roles.

- **Florence Nightingale and Modern Nursing (19th Century):**

The profession of nursing was significantly shaped by **Florence Nightingale**, who is considered the founder of modern nursing. Nightingale's contributions during the Crimean War, where she improved sanitation and patient care, established nursing as a profession based on scientific principles. She also founded the first secular school of nursing in London in 1860, which laid the foundation for formal nursing education.

- **20th Century and Beyond:**

The 20th century saw significant advancements in the field of nursing, including the establishment of professional organizations like the **American Nurses Association (ANA)** and the development of advanced practice roles, such as nurse practitioners and nurse anesthetists. The scope of nursing practice has expanded to include roles in leadership, research, policy-making, and education.

B. The Growth of Nursing Education

Nursing education has evolved from apprenticeship-based training to formalized academic programs offered at universities and colleges. Today, nurses can pursue undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees, preparing them for a wide range of roles in the healthcare system. Nursing schools across the world adhere to recognized educational standards, ensuring that nurses are well-prepared to meet the needs of patients and families.

3. The Core Values of the Nursing Profession

Nursing is built upon a foundation of core values that guide the practice and behavior of nurses. These values shape the nurse-patient relationship and the delivery of care.



A. Compassion and Caring

Compassion is the cornerstone of nursing practice. Nurses are expected to demonstrate empathy, kindness, and a genuine concern for the well-being of their patients. Caring involves understanding the emotional, psychological, and physical needs of patients and providing holistic care that encompasses all aspects of their health.

B. Professionalism

- Professionalism in nursing involves adhering to ethical standards, demonstrating accountability for one's actions, maintaining patient confidentiality, and continuously improving knowledge and skills.
- Nurses must respect the dignity of each patient, treating them with respect, regardless of their background or circumstances.

C. Integrity and Accountability

Nurses must practice with integrity, ensuring that their actions are consistent with professional standards and ethical guidelines. Accountability involves taking responsibility for the care provided, making sure patients receive the best possible treatment, and acknowledging and learning from any errors.

D. Respect for Autonomy

Respect for patient autonomy is a fundamental value in nursing. Nurses must honor a patient's right to make decisions regarding their own healthcare. This includes ensuring informed consent and providing patients with the information they need to make choices about their treatment.

E. Advocacy

Nurses advocate for their patients by ensuring their rights are respected, promoting fair access to care, and voicing concerns when necessary. Advocacy can also involve lobbying for changes in healthcare policies that benefit patients and improve the overall healthcare system.



5. Legal Aspects of Nursing Practice

Nurses also have legal responsibilities, which are distinct from ethical obligations but often overlap. These legal responsibilities are grounded in laws and regulations that govern nursing practice in various jurisdictions.

A. Legal Standards for Nursing Practice

- Nurses are legally accountable for their actions, which means that they must practice within the scope of their education and licensure. This includes adhering to regulations regarding patient confidentiality, informed consent, and professional boundaries.
- **Examples of legal issues in nursing practice** include malpractice, negligence, and failure to provide the standard of care.

B. The Nurse's Role in Documentation

Accurate documentation is critical in nursing practice, both for legal reasons and for maintaining high standards of patient care. Nurses must document all aspects of patient care, including assessments, interventions, and patient responses, to protect themselves legally and ensure continuity of care.

6. The Future of Nursing:

The nursing profession continues to evolve, responding to changes in healthcare needs and technological advancements. Nurses are becoming more involved in leadership roles, policy-making, and healthcare reform. With increasing emphasis on **preventive care**, **patient-centered approaches**, and **interdisciplinary collaboration**, nurses are well-positioned to shape the future of healthcare. Advanced practice nurses, including nurse practitioners, nurse anesthetists, and nurse educators, are assuming more responsibilities in diagnosing, treating, and managing patient care. This expansion of roles reflects the growing demand for highly skilled nursing professionals in all areas of healthcare.



Unit Three: The Nurse and the Community

Community Health Nursing Definition:

Community health nursing, also known as public health nursing, focuses on promoting and protecting the health of populations. It is different from traditional nursing practice because it aims to improve health at a community or population level, rather than focusing on individual care in a hospital setting.

Key Points:

- Community health nurses assess the health needs of communities.
- They provide care, education, and interventions that address public health concerns.
- They collaborate with other healthcare providers, policymakers, and community leaders to develop strategies that improve community health.

➤ **Goals of Community Health Nursing:**

1. **Health Promotion:** Nurses in the community work to enhance the health of individuals and groups through education and resources.
2. **Disease Prevention:** Nurses play a key role in preventing the spread of infectious diseases and managing chronic conditions.
3. **Health Education and Advocacy:** Nurses empower individuals and families by providing them with the knowledge and tools to make healthy lifestyle choices.
4. **Access to Healthcare Services:** Nurses help ensure that underserved populations have access to care and resources.

➤ **The Role of the Nurse in the Community**

A. Health Promotion and Education: Nurses educate the public on health-related topics such as nutrition, exercise, smoking cessation, maternal health, and chronic disease management. **Example:** A nurse may organize a health fair in a community center to provide information on preventative care, such as cancer screenings or vaccinations.



B. Disease Prevention: Nurses help prevent the spread of diseases, particularly infectious diseases, by promoting vaccinations, hygiene, and safe practices. **Example:** Nurses often work in immunization campaigns, ensuring that children and adults receive appropriate vaccinations to prevent diseases like flu, measles, or polio.

C. Chronic Disease Management: Nurses manage chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and asthma by providing education, coordinating care, and offering emotional support to patients and families. **Example:** Nurses in community health settings often follow up with patients who have chronic conditions to monitor their health and ensure they are following their prescribed treatment plans.

D. Advocacy for Vulnerable Populations: Nurses advocate for underserved populations, such as low-income families, the elderly, refugees, and individuals with disabilities, ensuring they have access to necessary healthcare resources. **Example:** A nurse may work with a local housing organization to ensure that homeless individuals have access to basic health services and shelter.

➤ **Ethical Responsibilities of Nurses in the Community**

As community health nurses, you will be working with diverse populations, often in vulnerable situations. Therefore, it is essential to uphold high ethical standards:

A. Confidentiality and Privacy: Nurses must respect the confidentiality of all patients, even when working in the community setting. This includes protecting sensitive health information and ensuring that patients' privacy is maintained. **Example:** A nurse working in a public health campaign must ensure that personal health information is shared only with authorized individuals.

B. Informed Consent: Nurses must obtain informed consent from individuals when providing care or interventions, ensuring they understand the potential risks and benefits of their choices. **Example:** A nurse providing a vaccination in a community setting must explain the vaccine's benefits and potential side effects, obtaining consent from the patient or their guardian.



C. Cultural Sensitivity: Community health nurses must be sensitive to the cultural beliefs, practices, and needs of the populations they serve. Understanding cultural differences is key to providing effective care and building trust. **Example:** A nurse may need to consider a family's religious beliefs when discussing healthcare options or medication.

D. Advocacy: Nurses advocate for the health and rights of individuals and communities. This can involve advocating for healthcare resources, policies, and interventions that benefit the community. **Example:** A nurse may advocate for better healthcare access for rural populations or work to address environmental factors affecting public health.

➤ **Nurses and people**

1. The nurse's primary responsibility is to those people who require nursing care.
2. The nurse, in producing care, promotes an environment in which the values, customs and spiritual beliefs of the individual are respected.
3. The nurse holds in confidence personal information and uses judgment in sharing this information.



Unit Four: Components of the Nursing Profession

Key Components of the Nursing Profession

1. Knowledge and Competence

- **Foundational Knowledge:** Nurses must possess a strong base of medical and clinical knowledge, achieved through education, training, and continual learning.
- **Competence in Practice:** Competence involves applying this knowledge effectively in practice. Nurses must stay updated on advancements, evidence-based practices, and changes in healthcare regulations.
- **Critical Thinking:** The ability to assess, diagnose, and intervene with sound judgment is a hallmark of professional nursing practice.

2. Ethical Practice

- **Adherence to a Code of Ethics:** The nursing profession adheres to ethical guidelines, such as the ANA Code of Ethics, which outline responsibilities to patients, colleagues, and the community.
- **Respect for Patients:** This includes maintaining confidentiality, promoting patient autonomy, and delivering culturally sensitive care.
- **Advocacy:** Nurses advocate for patients' rights, access to care, and overall well-being, acting as their voice when necessary.

3. Accountability and Responsibility

- **Professional Accountability:** Nurses are accountable for their actions, ensuring they meet legal and ethical standards.
- **Responsibility for Outcomes:** Nurses take ownership of their contributions to patient outcomes, recognizing areas for improvement when necessary.
- **Commitment to Self-Reflection:** Evaluating one's own practice and seeking ways to improve are essential components of growth and responsibility.



4. Communication Skills

- **Interpersonal Communication:** Effective verbal and non-verbal communication with patients, families, and healthcare team members fosters trust and collaboration.
- **Documentation:** Accurate and timely documentation ensures continuity of care and legal accountability.
- **Team Collaboration:** Nurses work closely with other healthcare professionals, requiring clear and respectful communication to ensure optimal patient care.

5. Professional Appearance and Behavior

- **Dress and Grooming:** A neat, appropriate appearance reflects professionalism and fosters confidence in patients.
- **Punctuality and Reliability:** Consistently meeting commitments demonstrates professionalism.
- **Professional Demeanor:** Maintaining composure, showing empathy, and exhibiting respect for others are key aspects of professional behavior.

6. Commitment to Lifelong Learning

- **Continuing Education:** Nurses are required to pursue ongoing education to maintain licensure and stay updated on healthcare trends.
- **Professional Development:** Attending workshops, conferences, and seminars helps nurses acquire new skills and knowledge.
- **Personal Growth:** Developing emotional intelligence, stress management techniques, and leadership skills enhances professionalism.

7. Leadership and Mentorship

- **Leadership Skills:** Professional nurses often take on leadership roles, whether managing teams or spearheading quality improvement initiatives.
- **Mentoring New Nurses:** Supporting and guiding less experienced colleagues strengthens the profession as a whole.
- **Role Modeling:** Demonstrating professionalism inspires others and sets a standard of excellence.



8. Cultural Competence and Diversity Awareness

- **Understanding Diversity:** Recognizing and respecting cultural, social, and individual differences is integral to providing patient-centered care.
- **Cultural Sensitivity Training:** This ensures nurses can effectively address the unique needs of diverse populations.
- **Inclusive Practices:** Professional nurses create environments where all patients and colleagues feel valued and respected.

9. Professional Values

- Professional values are the core beliefs that guide nurses in their practice. These include human dignity, integrity, altruism, and justice. These values shape the identity of the nursing profession and influence decision-making in clinical settings.
- The cultivation of these values is essential for fostering a strong professional identity among nursing students. Research indicates that ethics education plays a significant role in developing these values throughout nursing education.

10. Cultural Competence

- Cultural competence is vital in nursing, as it enables nurses to provide care that respects the diverse backgrounds and values of patients. The Code of Ethics encourages nurses to be aware of and sensitive to cultural differences.
- This competence is essential for building trust and rapport with patients, ultimately leading to better health outcomes.

Challenges in Ethical Nursing Practice

- Balancing limited resources with quality care.
- Addressing cultural and religious differences in patient preferences.
- Navigating advances in technology, such as electronic health records and AI tools.



Unit Five: Responsibilities of Patients and Their Families

The Role of Patients and Families in Healthcare

1. Informed Consent

- One of the primary responsibilities of patients and their families is to provide informed consent for treatments and procedures. This involves understanding the nature of the treatment, potential risks, benefits, and alternatives. Patients must be given adequate information to make informed decisions about their care.
- Nurses play a critical role in facilitating this process by ensuring that patients comprehend the information provided and feel empowered to ask questions. This aligns with the ethical principle of autonomy, which emphasizes the right of patients to make decisions about their own healthcare.

2. Communication

- Effective communication between patients, families, and healthcare providers is essential for quality care. Patients and their families are responsible for sharing accurate and complete information about their medical history, symptoms, and concerns.
- Open communication fosters trust and collaboration, enabling healthcare providers to tailor care plans that meet the specific needs of patients. It is also vital for addressing any ethical dilemmas that may arise during treatment.

3. Adherence to Treatment Plans

- Patients and families have a responsibility to adhere to the treatment plans developed by healthcare providers. This includes following prescribed medications, attending follow-up appointments, and engaging in recommended lifestyle changes.
- Adherence is crucial for achieving positive health outcomes and minimizing the risk of complications. When patients do not follow treatment plans, it can lead to ethical challenges for nurses, who must navigate the implications of non-compliance while respecting patient autonomy.

4. Participation in Care Decisions



- Patients and their families should actively participate in care decisions. This involvement is not only a right but also a responsibility that enhances the quality of care. Engaging in discussions about treatment options allows patients to express their values and preferences, which should be considered in the decision-making process.
- The Code of Ethics emphasizes the importance of collaboration between healthcare providers and patients, recognizing that patients are experts in their own experiences and preferences.

5. Respect for Healthcare Providers

- Just as healthcare providers are expected to treat patients with respect and dignity, patients and their families are also responsible for respecting the healthcare team. This includes acknowledging the expertise of nurses and other professionals and understanding the challenges they face in providing care.
- Mutual respect fosters a positive healthcare environment, which is essential for effective communication and collaboration. It also helps to mitigate conflicts that may arise during the care process.

6. Advocacy for Their Own Health

- Patients and families have a responsibility to advocate for their own health and well-being. This includes seeking clarification on medical information, voicing concerns about care, and ensuring that their rights are upheld.
- Advocacy is a critical component of patient engagement and empowerment. When patients take an active role in their healthcare, they contribute to better health outcomes and enhance the ethical practice of nursing.

❖ Responsibilities of Patients

A. Providing Accurate Information

- **Honesty in Communication:** Patients are responsible for providing truthful and complete information about their medical history, symptoms, and medications.



- **Importance of Transparency:** Inaccurate information can lead to misdiagnosis or inappropriate treatment.

B. Adherence to Treatment Plans

- **Following Medical Advice:** Patients should strive to follow prescribed treatments, medications, and lifestyle recommendations.
- **Open Dialogue:** If they cannot adhere to a plan, patients should communicate with their healthcare provider to find alternative solutions.

C. Respect for Healthcare Professionals

- **Mutual Respect:** Patients must treat nurses and other healthcare workers with dignity and courtesy.
- **Understanding Professional Boundaries:** Respecting the professional roles and expertise of the healthcare team is crucial for trust and collaboration.

D. Active Participation in Care

- **Engagement in Decision-Making:** Patients should actively participate in discussions about their care to make informed decisions.
- **Seeking Clarifications:** It is their responsibility to ask questions if they do not understand a procedure or recommendation.

E. Ethical Responsibility to Other Patients

- **Sharing Resources:** Patients must respect the needs of others in shared healthcare settings by avoiding unnecessary delays or resource misuse.
- **Maintaining Privacy:** Respecting the confidentiality of other patients is an ethical obligation.

❖ Responsibilities of Families

A. Supporting the Patient

- **Emotional and Practical Support:** Families play a critical role in helping patients navigate their care journey.



- **Advocacy:** Family members may act as advocates, ensuring the patient's needs and preferences are communicated effectively.

B. Respecting Healthcare Providers

- **Civility in Interactions:** Families must maintain respectful and constructive communication with healthcare professionals.
- **Trust in Expertise:** Respecting the clinical judgment and expertise of nurses and doctors is essential.

C. Upholding Ethical Standards

- **Honesty and Transparency:** Families should provide accurate information about the patient when the patient is unable to do so.
- **Support for Patient Autonomy:** Family members must honor the patient's right to make their own decisions, even if they disagree.

D. Collaborating with the Care Team

- **Sharing Relevant Information:** Families should provide insights into the patient's preferences, habits, and history to support personalized care.
- **Following Guidelines:** Families must respect institutional policies and guidelines to ensure smooth care delivery.

E. Promoting a Culture of Mutual Respect

- **Two-Way Responsibility:** The healthcare relationship thrives on mutual trust, respect, and communication between patients, families, and professionals.
- **Avoiding Conflict:** Disputes can hinder care; families and patients should address concerns respectfully and through appropriate channels.



Unit Six: Responsibilities of the Nursing Association and Nurses' Rights

Key Responsibilities of the Nursing Association

1. Development and Revision of the Code of Ethics

- The ANA's Code of Ethics was last revised in 2015, incorporating contemporary issues and challenges faced by nurses in practice. This revision process is essential for maintaining the relevance and applicability of the Code in a rapidly changing healthcare environment.

2. Education and Dissemination

- Nursing associations are responsible for educating nurses about the Code of Ethics and its implications for practice. This includes providing resources, training, and workshops that help nurses understand ethical principles and how to apply them in their daily work.

3. Advocacy for Ethical Practice

- Nursing associations advocate for ethical practice at both the individual and systemic levels. This includes promoting policies and practices that uphold ethical standards in healthcare settings and advocating for the rights of patients and nurses.

4. Support for Ethical Decision-Making

- Nursing associations provide support for nurses facing ethical dilemmas in their practice. This support may include access to ethics committees, consultation services, and resources that guide nurses in making informed ethical decisions.

5. Monitoring and Enforcement of Ethical Standards

- Nursing associations play a role in monitoring compliance with the Code of Ethics and addressing violations. This includes establishing mechanisms for reporting unethical behavior and providing guidance on ethical conduct.



6. Research and Development of Ethical Guidelines

- By staying informed about current trends and issues in healthcare, nursing associations can provide relevant guidance and resources to support ethical nursing practice.

7. Collaboration with Other Healthcare Organizations

- Nursing associations collaborate with other healthcare organizations to promote ethical standards across the healthcare continuum. This collaboration is essential for addressing systemic issues that impact ethical practice and patient care.
- By working together with interdisciplinary teams, nursing associations can advocate for comprehensive approaches to ethical practice that benefit both patients and healthcare providers.

Overview of Nurses' Rights

1. Right to a Safe Working Environment

- Nurses have the right to work in an environment that is free from hazards, including physical, psychological, and emotional risks. This includes protection from workplace violence, exposure to harmful substances, and inadequate staffing levels.

2. Right to Fair Compensation

- Nurses have the right to receive fair and equitable compensation for their work. This includes salary, benefits, and opportunities for professional development. Fair compensation reflects the value of nurses' contributions to healthcare and promotes job satisfaction and retention.
- The principle of justice is evident in this right, as it emphasizes the need for fairness in compensation practices across the healthcare system. Nurses should be compensated in a manner that reflects their education, experience, and the demands of their role.



3. Right to Professional Development

- Professional development opportunities, such as training, workshops, and conferences, empower nurses to enhance their skills and knowledge. This aligns with the ethical principle of beneficence, as it ultimately benefits patients by improving the quality of care provided.

4. Right to Participate in Decision-Making

- Nurses have the right to be involved in decision-making processes that affect their practice and the care of their patients. This includes participating in policy development, quality improvement initiatives, and interdisciplinary team discussions.
- Engaging nurses in decision-making promotes a sense of ownership and accountability, fostering a collaborative work environment. This right is grounded in the principle of autonomy, allowing nurses to express their professional insights and advocate for best practices.

5. Right to Respect and Dignity

- Nurses have the right to be treated with respect and dignity by their colleagues, supervisors, and patients. This includes being acknowledged for their expertise and contributions to patient care.
- Respectful treatment is fundamental to a positive workplace culture and is essential for maintaining professional relationships. Upholding this right aligns with ethical principles of respect for persons and the intrinsic worth of individuals.

6. Right to Whistleblower Protection

- Nurses have the right to report unsafe or unethical practices without fear of retaliation. Whistleblower protections are essential for fostering an environment where nurses can advocate for patient safety and quality care.



- This right is rooted in the ethical obligation to protect patients from harm. Nurses must feel empowered to speak up about unsafe practices, knowing that they will not face negative consequences for doing so.

7. Right to Mental Health Support

- Nurses have the right to access mental health support and resources to address the emotional and psychological challenges associated with their work. Given the high-stress nature of nursing, mental health support is crucial for maintaining well-being and preventing burnout.

Implications for Nursing Practice

1. Advocacy for Rights

- Nurses must advocate for their own rights as well as the rights of their colleagues. This advocacy can take many forms, including participating in professional organizations, engaging in collective bargaining, and raising awareness about workplace issues.
- By advocating for their rights, nurses contribute to a culture of safety and respect within healthcare organizations, ultimately benefiting both staff and patients.

2. Creating a Positive Work Environment

- Upholding the rights of nurses contributes to the creation of a positive work environment. When nurses feel safe, respected, and valued, they are more likely to be engaged and committed to their work, leading to improved patient outcomes.
- Organizations should prioritize policies and practices that support nurses' rights, fostering an environment where nurses can thrive professionally.

3. Ethical Decision-Making

- Understanding their rights empowers nurses to engage in ethical decision-making. When nurses are aware of their rights, they can better advocate for themselves and their patients in complex clinical situations.



- Ethical decision-making frameworks can assist nurses in navigating dilemmas while considering their own rights and the rights of patients.

4. Collaboration with Interdisciplinary Teams

- Nurses' rights should be recognized and respected within interdisciplinary teams. Collaboration among healthcare professionals is essential for providing holistic patient care and addressing ethical issues collectively.
- Promoting nurses' participation in decision-making enhances teamwork and ensures that diverse perspectives are considered in patient care.



Unit Seven: Patient Rights in Ethics

What Are Patient Rights?

Patient rights are the basic human rights that patients hold in relation to their healthcare. These rights are grounded in ethical principles such as autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice. They serve as a framework for ensuring that patients receive respectful and fair treatment within healthcare systems. The following are some of the fundamental patient rights recognized universally:

1. Right to Informed Consent

- Patients have the right to receive adequate information about their diagnosis, treatment options, and potential risks before making a decision. Informed consent is a key ethical obligation for healthcare providers, ensuring that patients can make knowledgeable choices about their care.
- As nurses, it is essential to facilitate this process by providing clear, understandable information and encouraging patients to ask questions. This right emphasizes the ethical principle of autonomy, allowing patients to participate actively in their healthcare decisions.

2. Right to Privacy and Confidentiality

- Patients have the right to privacy regarding their health information. This includes the ethical obligation of healthcare providers to maintain confidentiality and protect sensitive patient data from unauthorized disclosure.
- Nurses must be vigilant in safeguarding patient information and ensuring that discussions about care take place in private settings. Breaching confidentiality can have serious consequences for patient trust and wellbeing.

3. Right to Access Healthcare

- Every patient has the right to access healthcare services without discrimination. This includes the right to receive care that is appropriate, timely, and respectful of their cultural and personal values.



- The ethical principle of justice underscores this right, emphasizing fairness and equity in healthcare access. Nurses play a crucial role in advocating for patients who may face barriers to care due to socioeconomic status, language differences, or other factors.

4. Right to Participate in Care Decisions

- Patients have the right to be involved in decisions about their healthcare. This includes understanding treatment options, being informed of their rights, and having their preferences considered in care planning.
- Encouraging patient participation aligns with the ethical principles of autonomy and beneficence, as it empowers patients to take an active role in their health and promotes positive health outcomes.

5. Right to Receive Safe and Quality Care

- Patients have the right to receive care that meets established standards of quality and safety. This includes the right to be treated by qualified professionals and to have their care monitored for effectiveness and safety.
- Nurses are instrumental in upholding this right by adhering to evidence-based practices, reporting safety concerns, and advocating for continuous quality improvement within healthcare organizations.

6. Right to Complain and Seek Redress

- Patients have the right to voice concerns or complaints about their care without fear of retaliation. This right is essential for maintaining accountability within the healthcare system.
- Nurses should encourage patients to express their concerns and guide them on how to file complaints when necessary. This process is critical for improving patient care and organizational practices.

Ethical Principles Underpinning Patient Rights

Understanding the ethical principles that support patient rights is essential for nurses. These principles include:



1. Autonomy

- Autonomy emphasizes the importance of respecting patients' rights to make decisions about their own care. This principle supports informed consent and the involvement of patients in their treatment plans.

2. Beneficence

- Beneficence refers to the ethical obligation to act in the best interests of patients. This principle underlines the importance of providing quality care and ensuring that patients receive interventions that will benefit them.

3. Non-Maleficence

- Non-maleficence is the duty to do no harm. Nurses must strive to protect patients from harm and avoid actions that could compromise their safety or well-being.

4. Justice

- Justice focuses on fairness and equality in healthcare. It emphasizes that all patients should receive equitable treatment and access to care, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Implications for Nursing Practice

1. Advocacy

- Nurses are advocates for patient rights, ensuring that patients are informed and empowered to make decisions about their care. This advocacy includes recognizing and addressing any violations of patient rights within the healthcare system.

2. Education

- Nurses play a critical role in educating patients about their rights. Providing information about informed consent, privacy, and access to care helps patients understand how to navigate the healthcare system effectively.

3. Ethical Decision-Making



- Nurses are often faced with complex ethical dilemmas that involve patient rights. Utilizing ethical frameworks and guidelines can assist nurses in making sound decisions that uphold patient rights while considering the best interests of the patient.

4. **Collaboration**

- Collaborating with interdisciplinary teams ensures that patient rights are respected throughout the care continuum. Effective communication among healthcare providers is essential for addressing patient concerns and promoting ethical practices.



Unit Eight: Ethical Characteristics / Specifications of Ethical Nursing Care

A. Definition of Ethical Nursing Care

- Ethical nursing care refers to the delivery of patient-centered care guided by moral principles, professional standards, and legal regulations.
- It ensures respect, dignity, and rights of patients while maintaining professional integrity.

B. Importance of Ethics in Nursing

- Builds trust between nurses and patients.
- Enhances quality of care and patient safety.
- Upholds the profession's reputation.

Core Ethical Characteristics of Nursing Care

A. Respect for Autonomy

Definition: Acknowledging patients' rights to make informed decisions about their care.

Application: Informed consent, truth-telling, and respecting refusal of treatment.

B. Beneficence (Doing Good)

Definition: Acting in the best interest of the patient.

Application: Providing evidence-based care, advocating for patient needs.

C. Non-Maleficence (Do No Harm)

Definition: Avoiding actions that may cause harm.

Application: Proper medication administration, preventing errors, and minimizing risks.

D. Justice (Fairness in Care)

Definition: Equitable distribution of healthcare resources.

Application: Non-discriminatory care, prioritizing based on need.

E. Fidelity (Loyalty & Commitment)

Definition: Keeping promises and maintaining professional obligations.

Application: Following through with care plans, maintaining confidentiality.



F. Veracity (Truthfulness)

Definition: Honest communication with patients and colleagues.

Application: Transparent documentation, avoiding deception.

G. Confidentiality

Definition: Protecting patient information.

Application: Adhering to HIPAA (or local regulations), secure record-keeping.

Ethical Decision-Making in Nursing

A. Steps in Ethical Decision-Making

1. Identify the ethical issue.
2. Gather relevant information.
3. Consider ethical principles involved.
4. Explore alternatives.
5. Make a decision and implement it.
6. Evaluate the outcome.

B. Case Study Analysis (Group Discussion)

- Scenario: A patient refuses life-saving treatment due to religious beliefs.
- Question: How should the nurse respond while respecting autonomy and ensuring beneficence?

Challenges in Upholding Ethical Nursing Care

- Moral distress (e.g., when personal beliefs conflict with professional duties).
- Workplace constraints (short staffing, resource limitations).
- Cultural and religious differences in care expectations.



Unit Nine: Qualities of a Nurse

Key Qualities of an Ethical Nurse

1. Compassion and Empathy

- Compassion and empathy are foundational qualities for nurses. Compassion involves recognizing the suffering of others and taking action to alleviate it, while empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. These qualities foster a therapeutic nurse-patient relationship and enhance patient care.
- Nurses who demonstrate compassion and empathy are better equipped to support patients through difficult times, leading to improved patient satisfaction and outcomes. This aligns with the ethical principle of beneficence, which emphasizes the importance of acting in the best interest of patients.

2. Integrity

- Integrity is the adherence to moral and ethical principles, ensuring that nurses act honestly and transparently in their practice. This quality is vital for building trust with patients and colleagues.
- Nurses with integrity are more likely to advocate for their patients and uphold ethical standards, even in challenging situations. This commitment to ethical practice is essential for maintaining the credibility of the nursing profession.

3. Accountability

- Accountability refers to the responsibility nurses have for their actions and decisions in clinical practice. This quality involves being answerable for the care provided and the outcomes of that care.
- An accountable nurse reflects on their practice, learns from mistakes, and seeks to improve continuously. This quality is crucial for ethical practice, as it ensures that nurses take ownership of their professional responsibilities and strive for excellence in patient care.



4. Advocacy

- Advocacy is a critical quality for nurses, as it involves speaking up for patients' rights and needs. Nurses often serve as the voice for patients who may be unable to advocate for themselves due to illness or other factors.
- Ethical nursing practice requires that nurses advocate for equitable access to care, informed consent, and the protection of patient rights. This aligns with the ethical principles of autonomy and justice, emphasizing the importance of respecting patients' choices and ensuring fair treatment.

5. Cultural Competence

- Cultural competence is the ability to understand, respect, and effectively interact with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. This quality is increasingly important in today's multicultural healthcare environment.
- Nurses who are culturally competent can provide care that is respectful of and tailored to the cultural beliefs and practices of their patients. This quality enhances patient trust and satisfaction, aligning with the ethical principle of respect for persons.

6. Professionalism

- Professionalism encompasses a range of behaviors and attitudes that reflect the values of the nursing profession. This includes maintaining a high standard of practice, adhering to ethical guidelines, and demonstrating respect for patients and colleagues.
- Professionalism is essential for fostering a positive work environment and ensuring that nurses are seen as credible and trustworthy healthcare providers. This quality supports ethical practice by promoting a culture of respect and accountability within healthcare teams.

7. Critical Thinking and Clinical Judgment

- Critical thinking and clinical judgment are vital qualities for nurses, enabling them to assess situations, analyze information, and make informed decisions about patient care.



These skills are essential for navigating complex ethical dilemmas that may arise in clinical practice.

- Nurses who employ critical thinking can evaluate the implications of their actions and consider the ethical dimensions of their decisions. This quality is crucial for ensuring that patient care is both effective and ethically sound.

8. Commitment to Lifelong Learning

- A commitment to lifelong learning is essential for nurses to stay current with advancements in healthcare and evolving ethical standards. This quality involves seeking out opportunities for professional development and education.
- Nurses who engage in lifelong learning are better equipped to provide high-quality care and adapt to changes in the healthcare landscape. This commitment aligns with the ethical principle of beneficence, as it ensures that nurses are knowledgeable and competent in their practice.

Implications for Nursing Practice

Understanding and embodying these qualities is essential for ethical nursing practice. Nurses who demonstrate compassion, integrity, accountability, advocacy, cultural competence, professionalism, critical thinking, and a commitment to lifelong learning are better positioned to provide high-quality care and navigate the ethical complexities of their profession.

1. Enhancing Patient Care

- By embodying these qualities, nurses can enhance the quality of care they provide, leading to improved patient outcomes and satisfaction. Ethical nursing practice fosters trust and collaboration between nurses and patients, which is essential for effective healthcare delivery.

2. Promoting a Positive Work Environment

- Nurses who exemplify these qualities contribute to a positive work environment, fostering teamwork, respect, and collaboration among healthcare professionals. This



positive culture is essential for reducing burnout and improving job satisfaction among nurses.

3. Advocating for Ethical Standards

- Nurses play a crucial role in advocating for ethical standards within their organizations and the broader healthcare system. By embodying these qualities, nurses can influence policies and practices that promote ethical care and protect patient rights.

4. Preparing for Ethical Challenges

- The healthcare environment is fraught with ethical challenges, and nurses must be prepared to navigate these complexities. By developing the qualities outlined in this lecture, nurses can enhance their ethical decision-making skills and better advocate for their patients.

❖ Essential Qualities of a Nurse

Quality	Definition	Why It Matters	Example in Practice
Compassion	Deep awareness of suffering + desire to alleviate it.	Builds trust, improves patient outcomes.	Holding a dying patient's hand while providing palliative care.
Competence	Mastery of clinical skills + evidence-based practice.	Ensures patient safety and quality care.	Accurately calculating drug dosages to prevent errors.
Communication	Clear, empathetic exchange with patients/team.	Prevents errors, enhances teamwork.	Explaining a procedure in simple terms to an anxious patient.
Critical Thinking	Analyzing situations to make sound judgments.	Vital in emergencies and complex cases.	Recognizing sepsis symptoms early and acting swiftly.
Adaptability	Adjusting to changing environments/needs.	Essential in fast-paced settings (ER, pandemics).	Switching roles during a sudden hospital surge.
Integrity	Honesty, ethics, and accountability.	Upholds trust in the profession.	Reporting a medication error despite fear of consequences.
Resilience	Coping with stress and recovering from adversity.	Prevents burnout, sustains long-term careers.	Managing emotional fatigue after a traumatic code blue.
Cultural Sensitivity	Respecting diverse beliefs/practices.	Promotes equitable care and reduces disparities.	Adapting dietary plans for a Hindu patient's religious needs.