**Dr. Khushbu**

**Associate professorr**

**SGT University**

**CODE OF ETHICS IN NURSING**

**INTRODUCTION:** Ethics are a set of guiding principles that help us distinguish between right and wrong conduct. They focus on moral duties and obligations, aiming to protect human rights. While closely related to morals, which are personal beliefs about right and wrong, ethics provide a more structured framework for determining what is good and bad in various situations.

**MEANING OF ETHICS:**

The word Ethics comes from the Greek word **ETHOS** this means customs, guiding beliefs, good conduct and sharing of values.

**DEFINITION OF CODE:**

Characteristics of a profession are called CODE.

**DEFINITION OF ETHICS:**

According to **BERNARD HARDING**; “Comprising of distinctive attitudes which characterize the cultural attitudes of a professional group.

OR

Ethics refers to the science of moral duty, ideal character and moral principles of practice of a profession.

OR

Ethics is the study of good conduct, character and motives which concerned with determining what is good or valuable for all people.

**CODE FOR NURSES:** (Ethical concepts applied to nursing in 1973)

A nurse's core duties encompass four key areas: promoting wellness, preventing sickness, restoring health, and easing suffering.

**PURPOSES OF CODE OF ETHICS:**

Ethical organizations should:

**CRETERIA OF GOOD CODES:**

LIEBERMAN has identified seven criteria for good codes as follows:

A good code of ethics should possess the following qualities:

1. Clarity: Like a good law, it must clearly distinguish between ethical and unethical actions.
2. Practicality: It should promote efficient service by setting reasonable and achievable standards.
3. Respect for Diverse Views: It shouldn't assume consensus on professional policies where differing opinions exist.
4. Focus on Professional Conduct: It should primarily address professional behavior, and only address non-professional conduct when directly related to professional duties.
5. Enforceability: It must differentiate between undesirable behaviors and genuinely unethical ones, and include mechanisms for enforcement with appropriate consequences for violations. It must avoid conflating less serious infractions with serious ethical breaches.
6. Protection of Competent Professionals: It should shield competent practitioners from unwarranted criticism and abuse, prioritizing professional integrity and competence over public opinion.
7. Prioritization of Service: It should consistently prioritize efficient and effective service above all else, avoiding compromises for the sake of individual or collective professional gain.

**HOW TO WRITE A CODE OF ETHICS:** (Chris Mac Donald)

Let's break down why organizations create codes of ethics, how to write them, and key considerations during the process.

1. Why Have a Code of Ethics?

i. A code of ethics serves several important purposes:

* Defines Acceptable Behavior: It clarifies the boundaries of ethical conduct within the organization.
* Promotes High Standards: It encourages and reinforces ethical practices among members.
* Provides a Benchmark: It offers a standard for self-evaluation and professional development.
* Establishes a Framework: It creates a foundation for responsible professional conduct.
* Builds Occupational Identity: It contributes to a shared sense of professional purpose.
* Demonstrates Maturity: It signals a commitment to ethical principles and accountability.

2. Guidance for Writing a Code of Ethics:

ii. Crafting an effective code requires careful planning:

* Define the Purpose: Determine if the code's primary goal is to regulate behavior or to inspire ethical conduct.
* Target Audience and Document Type: Decide if the document is intended as a guide or a set of requirements. Is a full code of ethics the right approach, or would a different document suffice?
* Tailor to the Organization: The code should reflect the specific needs and values of the organization.
* Structure: Consider a two-part structure: an aspirational preamble outlining the organization's ideals, followed by specific rules and principles.
* Enforcement: Determine if and how the code will be enforced, including what consequences will follow violations.
* Prioritize Values: Rank the organization's values in order of importance.
* Creation Process: Plan the process for developing the code, ensuring it's inclusive and thorough.
* Implementation: Outline how the code will be implemented and communicated.
* Review and Revision: Establish a schedule for reviewing and updating the code.

3. Considerations for Writing a Code of Ethics:

iii. Several key issues should be addressed when writing a code:

* Tailor-Made: The code should be unique to the organization and reflect its specific context.
* Employee Involvement: Employees should be actively involved in the code's creation to foster ownership and acceptance.
* Stakeholder Consultation: Seek input from key stakeholders like customers, suppliers, and community groups.
* Careful Outsourcing: Consultants can be helpful, but the organization should retain control over the code's content.
* Good Examples: Review existing codes for inspiration, but avoid simply copying them.
* Clear Scope: Define precisely who is covered by the code.
* Specific Implementation: Detail how the code will be integrated into policies and practices.
* Employee Education: Plan for comprehensive training and education on the code.
* Clear Enforcement: Outline the enforcement mechanisms and potential consequences for violations.
* Scheduled Review: Establish a timeframe for reviewing and updating the code to ensure its continued relevance.

**ETHICAL PRINCIPLES:**

Ethical principles actually control professionalism nursing practice much more than to ethical theories. Ethical principles that the nurse should consider when making decisions are as follows:

1. Respect for Persons: This principle extends beyond clinical settings, emphasizing treating everyone, including oneself, with dignity and respect. In nursing, this translates to valuing each patient's inherent worth.
2. Respect for Autonomy: Autonomy recognizes an individual's right to self-determination. It means respecting a person's capacity to make their own decisions about their health and treatment.
3. Respect for Freedom: This principle underscores the patient's right to make choices about their health goals without undue external control. Nurses advocate for greater patient freedom within the healthcare system.
4. Respect for Beneficence: Beneficence requires actions that promote good and well-being. In healthcare, this involves balancing potential benefits against potential harms or risks to the patient's health and welfare.
5. Respect for Non-Malfeasance: This principle, closely related to beneficence, dictates avoiding harm. Nurses must consider emotional and social harm, in addition to physical injury. For example, nurse managers should focus on positive feedback and guidance during performance evaluations.
6. Respect for Veracity: Veracity emphasizes truthfulness. Healthcare providers should be honest and provide patients with accurate and realistic information about their health, care, and treatment options.
7. Respect for Justice: Justice concerns fairness and equitable treatment. In healthcare, this means fair allocation of resources, ensuring that those with similar needs receive similar care.
8. Respect for Rights: A right is an entitlement to certain behaviors or circumstances. It can refer to moral or legal entitlements.
9. Key patient rights include:Confidentiality of medical records and communications.
10. Reasonable responsiveness to requests for services within the hospital's capacity.
11. Continuity of care.
12. Examination and explanation of their bill, regardless of payment source.
13. Knowledge of applicable hospital rules and regulations.
14. Fidelity: Fidelity involves keeping promises and commitments. Healthcare professionals have a duty to fulfill their obligations to patients.
15. Confidentiality: Confidentiality is the duty to protect privileged information. Healthcare providers should respect patient privacy and only use personal information to enhance care

**CODE OF ETHICS IN NURSING ACCORDING TO INDIAN NURSING COUNCIL (INC):**

his outlines the ethical responsibilities of nurses in several key areas:

1. Nurses and People:

A nurse's top priority is the well-being of those needing nursing care.

Nurses provide care in a way that respects individual values, customs, and spiritual beliefs.

Nurses maintain confidentiality regarding personal information and exercise discretion when sharing it.

Nurses ensure individuals have enough information to make informed decisions about their care and treatment.

2. Nurses and Practice:

Nurses are accountable for their nursing practice and maintain competency through continuous learning.

Nurses strive to provide the highest possible standard of care within the constraints of each situation.

Nurses use sound judgment when accepting and delegating responsibilities, considering individual competence.

Nurses maintain professional conduct that reflects positively on the profession and builds public trust.

Nurses ensure that technology and scientific advancements are used in a way that respects human dignity, rights, and societal values.

3. Nurses and Society:

Nurses share with other citizens the responsibility to address the health and social needs of the public.

4. Nurses and Co-workers:

Nurses maintain cooperative relationships with colleagues in nursing and other fields.

Nurses take action to protect individuals when their care is jeopardized by a co-worker or anyone else.

5. Nurses and the Profession:

Nurses play a key role in shaping and implementing high standards for nursing practice and education.

Nurses actively contribute to building a body of professional knowledge.

Nurses, through professional organizations, participate in establishing and maintaining fair social and economic working conditions for nurses.

**CODE OF ETHICS FOR NURSES ACCORDING TO AMERICAN NURSES ASSOCIATION (ANA):**

**This outlines the core principles guiding nursing practice and professional conduct:**

1. Respect and Compassion: Nurses provide care with compassion and respect for each individual's dignity, worth, and unique qualities, regardless of their background, status, or health condition.
2. Patient-Centered Care: The nurse's primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, or community.
3. Advocacy and Protection: Nurses promote, advocate for, and protect the health, safety, and rights of their patients.
4. Accountability and Delegation: Nurses are responsible and accountable for their practice and for appropriately delegating tasks to ensure optimal patient care.
5. Self-Care and Growth: Nurses have a duty to care for themselves, maintaining integrity, safety, competence, and pursuing personal and professional development.
6. Improving Healthcare Environments: Nurses contribute to creating and maintaining positive healthcare environments that support quality care and align with professional values, through both individual and collective action.
7. Advancing the Profession: Nurses participate in the advancement of nursing through contributions to practice, education, administration, and research.
8. Collaboration and Public Health: Nurses collaborate with other healthcare professionals and the public to address health needs at the community, national, and international levels.
9. Professional Responsibility: Nursing associations and their members are responsible for articulating nursing values, upholding the profession's integrity, and influencing social policy related to healthcare.

**CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT ACCORDING TO INDIAN NURSING COUNCIL (INC):**

**CARL M. WILLIAMS** Director of INC given these codes of professional conduct.

The directors, owners, and staff of INC are committed to the following ethical principles:

* Service to Families: We are dedicated to serving each family with professionalism, care, and respect. We will honor their wishes and maintain confidentiality, acting honestly and fairly in all our interactions, and showing compassion for those with limited financial means.
* Care of the Deceased: We are ethically bound to treat every deceased person with the utmost respect and dignity. We will handle, prepare, and shelter the remains in a professional, caring, and conscientious manner.
* Obligations to the Public: We have an ethical obligation to the public to provide services and operate our business with the highest principles of honesty, fair dealing, and professionalism.
* Obligations to the Government: We are ethically committed to strict adherence to all applicable government laws and regulations that affect funeral consumers, the funeral profession, and public health.

**ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**:

Ethical considerations are crucial in nursing research and practice, as they protect human values, rights, and relationships. Here's a breakdown of key ethical principles for nurses:

1. Respecting Individual Uniqueness: Nurses provide care without bias based on factors like caste, creed, religion, culture, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, or personal attributes. They individualize care, considering beliefs, values, and cultural sensitivities, and involve family and community in care decisions. Nurses build trust and adapt interventions based on individual responses.
2. Respecting Rights and Informed Choices: Nurses uphold individuals' rights to make informed decisions about their care. They provide accurate information, respect choices, protect the public from misinformation, and advocate for vulnerable individuals/groups.
3. Respecting Privacy and Confidentiality: Nurses protect the privacy of personal information, maintain confidentiality (except in life-threatening situations), and use discretion when sharing information. They obtain informed consent and maintain anonymity for quality assurance, academic, or legal purposes, and restrict access to personal records.
4. Maintaining Competence: Nursing care is provided only by registered nurses. Nurses strive for high-quality care, uphold standards, and pursue continuing education and self-development. They value research and participate ethically.
5. Practicing Within Ethical and Legal Boundaries: Nurses adhere to the INC's code of ethics and professional conduct, and comply with relevant laws and regulations.
6. Collaborating with the Health Team: Nurses appreciate the contributions of the healthcare team and cooperate, coordinate, and collaborate to meet patient needs.
7. Reciprocating Public Trust: Nurses demonstrate appropriate personal and professional conduct in all interactions, honoring the trust placed in the nursing profession.

**CONCLUSION:**

Indian Nursing Council (INC) has published the code of ethics for nurses in India in year 2006. The code of ethics for nurses is critical for building professionalism and accountability. Code of professional conduct is necessary for providing best care to each individual. Ethical considerations are vital in any area dealing with human beings including nursing research because they represent values, rights and relationships.

**REFERENCES:**

* Basavanthappa B.T, “Textbook of nursing administration” Edition 2nd, (2009); Published by Jaypee publishers; page no.832 to 850.
* Basavanthappa B.T, “Textbook of nursing education” Edition 1st, (2003); Published by Jaypee publishers; page no.49 to 60.
* Perry Poter, “Textbook of fundamentals of nursing” Edition 6th, (2006); Published by Elsevier; page no.389 to 400.
* Pramilla R, “Textbook of nursing communication and educational technology” Edition 1st, (2010); Published by Jaypee publishers; Page no. 153 to 160.
* Sharma S.K, “Textbook of nursing research and statistics” Edition 2nd, (2011); Published by Elsevier; Page no. 40 to 43.

**INDEX**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **SR. NO.** | **CONTENT** | **PAGE NO.** |
| 1. | Introduction of code of ethics | 1 |
| 2. | Meaning of ethics | 1 |
| 3. | Definition of ethics | 1 |
| 4. | Purposes of code of ethics | 1 |
| 5. | Criteria of good codes | 1-2 |
| 6. | How to write a code of ethics | 2-5 |
| 7. | Ethical principles | 5-7 |
| 8. | Code of ethics in nursing according to Indian nursing council (INC) | 7-8 |
| 9. | Code of ethics for nurses according to American nursing association (ANA) | 8-9 |
| 10. | Code of professional conduct (INC) | 9 |
| 11. | Ethical considerations | 9-11 |
| 12. | Research study | 11 |
| 13. | Conclusion | 11-12 |
| 14. | Bibliography | 13 |