

NURSING CODE OF ETHICS

Published by the American Nurses Association and adapted by AAPACE©, the Nursing Code of Ethics¹ is the profession's statement of the nonnegotiable ethical obligations and duties of every individual who enters the nursing profession.

PROVISION 1

THE NURSE, IN ALL PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS, PRACTICES WITH COMPASSION AND RESPECT FOR THE INHERENT DIGNITY, WORTH, AND UNIQUENESS OF EVERY INDIVIDUAL, UNRESTRICTED BY CONSIDERATIONS OF SOCIAL OR ECONOMIC STATUS, PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES, OR THE NATURE OF HEALTH PROBLEMS.

Nurses take into account the needs and values of all persons in all professional relationships. The need for health care is universal, transcending all individual differences. The worth of the person is not affected by disease, disability, functional status, or proximity to death. Nursing care is directed toward meeting the comprehensive needs of patients and their families across the continuum of care.

PROVISION 2

THE NURSE'S PRIMARY COMMITMENT IS TO THE PATIENT, WHETHER AN INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY, GROUP, OR COMMUNITY.

Nursing holds a fundamental commitment to the uniqueness of the individual patient; therefore, any plan of care must reflect that uniqueness. Nurses strive to resolve conflicts that arise from competing loyalties in the workplace in ways that ensure patient safety, guard the patient's best interests and preserve the professional integrity of the nurse. Nurses must collaborate, which requires mutual trust, recognition, and respect among the healthcare team, shared decision-making about patient care, and open dialogue among all parties who have an interest in and a concern for health outcomes.

PROVISION 3

THE NURSE PROMOTES, ADVOCATES FOR, AND STRIVES TO PROTECT THE HEALTH, SAFETY, AND RIGHTS OF THE PATIENT.

The nurse advocates for an environment that provides for sufficient physical privacy, including privacy for discussions of a personal nature and policies and practices that protect the confidentiality of information. The rights, well-being, and safety of the individual patient should be the primary factors in arriving at any professional judgment concerning the disposition of confidential information received from or about the patient, whether oral, written or electronic. As an advocate for the patient, the nurse must be alert to and take appropriate action

¹ American Nurses Association. (2015). *Code of ethics for nurses with interpretive statements*. <https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/nursing-excellence/ethics/code-of-ethics-for-nurses/coe-view-only/>

regarding any instances of incompetent, unethical, illegal, or impaired practice by any member of the healthcare team or the healthcare system or any action on the part of others that places the rights or best interests of the patient in jeopardy.

PROVISION 4

THE NURSE IS RESPONSIBLE AND ACCOUNTABLE FOR INDIVIDUAL NURSING PRACTICE AND DETERMINES THE APPROPRIATE DELEGATION OF TASKS CONSISTENT WITH THE NURSE'S OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE OPTIMUM PATIENT CARE.

Nurses are accountable for judgments made and actions taken in the course of nursing practice. The nurse must make reasonable efforts to assess individual competence when assigning selected components of nursing care to other healthcare workers. This assessment involves evaluating the knowledge, skills, and experience of the individual to whom the care is assigned, the complexity of the assigned tasks, and the health status of the patient.

PROVISION 5

THE NURSE OWES THE SAME DUTIES TO SELF AS TO OTHERS, INCLUDING THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PRESERVE INTEGRITY AND SAFETY, TO MAINTAIN COMPETENCE, AND TO CONTINUE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH.

In all nursing roles, evaluation of one's own performance, coupled with peer review, is a means by which nursing practice can be held to the highest standards. Each nurse is responsible for participating in the development of criteria for evaluation of practice and for using those criteria in peer and self-assessment. Nurses are required to have knowledge relevant to the current scope and standards of nursing practice, changing issues, concerns, controversies, and ethics.

PROVISION 6

THE NURSE PARTICIPATES IN ESTABLISHING, MAINTAINING, AND IMPROVING HEALTH CARE ENVIRONMENTS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT CONDUCIVE TO THE PROVISION OF QUALITY HEALTH CARE AND CONSISTENT WITH THE VALUES OF THE PROFESSION THROUGH INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE ACTION.

All nurses have a responsibility to create, maintain, and contribute to environments that support the growth of virtues and excellences and enable nurses to fulfill their ethical obligations. The nurse is responsible for contributing to a moral environment that encourages respectful interactions with colleagues, support of peers, and identification of issues that need to be addressed.

PROVISION 7

THE NURSE PARTICIPATES IN THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE PROFESSION THROUGH CONTRIBUTIONS TO PRACTICE, EDUCATION, ADMINISTRATION, AND KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT.

Nurses should advance their profession by contributing in some way to the leadership, activities, and the viability of their professional organizations. Ongoing scholarly activities are essential to fulfilling a profession's obligations to society.

PROVISION 8

THE NURSE COLLABORATES WITH OTHER HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND THE PUBLIC IN PROMOTING COMMUNITY, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO MEET HEALTH NEEDS.

The nurse has a responsibility to be aware not only of specific health needs of individual patients but also of broader health concerns such as world hunger, environmental pollution, lack of access to health care, violation of human rights, and inequitable distribution of nursing and healthcare resources. Through support of and participation in community organizations and groups, the nurse assists in efforts to educate the public, facilitates informed choice, identifies conditions and circumstances that contribute to illness, injury and disease, fosters healthy life styles, and participates in institutional and legislative efforts to promote health and meet national health objectives.

PROVISION 9

THE PROFESSION OF NURSING VALUE, FOR MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY OF THE PROFESSION AND ITS PRACTICE, AND FOR SHAPING SOCIAL POLICY.

Nurses can work individually as citizens or collectively through political action to bring about social change. Health is understood as being broader than delivery and reimbursement systems, but extending to health-related sociocultural issues such as violation of human rights, homelessness, hunger, violence, and the stigma of illness.