HLTEN509A
Apply legal and ethical parameters to nursing practice

Learner resource
Version 2

Training and Education Support
Industry Skills Unit
Meadowbank

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Writers:
Irene Hancock
Rhonda Albani
TAFE NSW

Reviewers:
Liz Bougaardt
Amanda Culver
Sherryl Dismorr
TAFE NSW

Project Manager:
Amanda Culver
Project Coordinator
Health and Aged Services

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Enquiries
Enquiries about this and other publications can be made to:
Training and Education Support Industry Skills Unit, Meadowbank
Meadowbank TAFE
Level 3, Building J,
See Street,
MEADOWBANK NSW 2114
Tel: 02-9942 3200  Fax: 02-9942 3257


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Section 1  Competencies/legislation

Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (ANMC) competencies

Competency standards have been developed for both registered and enrolled nurses as the core competency standards by which your performance may be assessed. They provide you with the framework for assessing your own competence. You will find the ANMC competencies in your Learner Information Book. These will be used for class discussion.

Activity 1

Using related nursing text or the internet, define the following terms:

(i) ethics

(ii) bioethics

(iii) nursing ethics
### Code of Ethics for Nurses in Australia

#### Activity 2

Define the following terms using any nursing textbook or the internet.

1. **accountability**
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   - 
   - 

2. **individual/individuals**
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   - 
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   - 

3. **moral agent**
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4. **responsibility**
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   - 
   - 

5. **ethical problem**
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**SAMPLE**

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The following information is taken from the ANMC website: www.anmc.org.au

Background

The Code of Ethics for Nurses and the Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses in Australia, and the Code of Ethics for Midwives and the Code of Professional Conduct for Midwives in Australia, together with other practice standards and codes including the National Competency Standards, ‘provide a framework for legally and professionally accountable and responsible nursing practice in all clinical, management, education, and research domains. The Codes of Ethics and Conduct communicate to both the professions and to the public, defining what is expected of nurses and midwives to practice ethically. Until 2008, nurses and midwives both practiced according to the same codes of ethics and professional conduct. However, in recognition of the differences between the two professions, in 2008 new codes were developed for each profession. (http://www.anmc.org.au/Modules/Module_4)

The Code of Ethics for Nurses in Australia was first developed in 1993 under the auspices of the Australian Nursing Council Inc., Royal College of Nursing, Australia and the Australian Nursing Federation and has been revised in 2002 and 2008. It is recognised that the Code of Ethics could not have been realised without the participation of nurses and nursing organisations in Australia, whose many submissions and comments are acknowledged and appreciated.

The Code of Ethics outlines the nursing profession’s commitment to respect, promote, protect and uphold the fundamental rights of people who are both the recipients and providers of nursing care. The Code of Ethics is complementary to the International Council of Nurses (ICN) Code of Ethics for Nurses (2000).

ANMC Code of Ethics for Nurses (2008)

The value statements are:

1. Nurses value quality nursing care for all people.
2. Nurses value respect and kindness for self and others.
3. Nurses value the diversity of people.
4. Nurses value access to quality nursing and health care for all people.
5. Nurses value informed decision making.
6. Nurses value a culture of safety in nursing and health care.
7. Nurses value ethical management of information.
8. Nurses value a socially, economically and ecologically sustainable environment promoting health and wellbeing.

The purpose of the Code of Ethics is to:

- identify the fundamental moral commitments of the profession
- provide nurses with a basis for professional and self reflection on ethical conduct
- act as a guide to ethical practice
- indicate to the community the moral value which nurses can be expected to hold.

The nurse’s primary professional responsibility is to people requiring nursing care. In fulfilling this responsibility nurses provide care and support before and during birth and throughout life, and alleviate pain and suffering during the dying process. Nurses enable individuals, families and groups to maintain, restore or improve their health status, or to be cared for and comforted when deterioration of health has become irreversible.

A traditional ideal of nursing is the concern for the care and nurture of human beings giving just and due consideration to their ethnicity, culture, gender, spiritual values, sexuality, disability, age, economic, social or health status, or any other grounds. Nurses respect and uphold the rights of Australian Indigenous peoples. The profession also acknowledges the cultural diversity in contemporary Australian society.

Nursing care is based on the development of a therapeutic relationship and the implementation and evaluation of therapeutic processes. Therapeutic processes include health promotion and education, counseling, nursing interventions and empowerment of individuals, families or groups to exercise maximum choice in relation to their health care.

Nursing practice is undertaken in a variety of settings. Any particular setting will be affected to some degree by processes which are not within a nurse’s control or influence. The processes affecting nursing practice can include government policies, laws, resource constraints, institutional policies, management decisions, and the practice of other health care providers. Nurses also recognise the potential for conflict between one person’s needs and those of another, or of a group or community. Such factors may affect the degree to which nurses are able to fulfill their moral obligations and/or the number and type of ethical problems they may face.

The Code contains eight broad value statements. Nurses are encouraged to use these statements as a guide in reflecting on the degree to which their practice demonstrates those values. As a means of assisting in interpretation of the six values, a number of explanatory statements are provided. These explanatory statements are not intended to cover all the aspects a nurse should consider, but can be used to assist further exploration and consideration of ethical concerns in nursing practice.

Nurses are also encouraged to undertake discussion and educational opportunities in ethics in order to clarify for themselves issues related to the fulfillment of their moral obligations. This Code of Ethics is not intended to provide a formula for the resolution of ethical problems, nor can it adequately address the definitions and exploration of terms and concepts which are part of the study of ethics.