Ethical Conduct
Ethics

“The systematic study of what may be called, the ‘nature of morality… It provides an organized framework to understand and discuss personal and social values, individual and social behavior, and methods for resolving conflicts between values and ethical principles in our daily lives”

(Horowitz, 2002, p. 3).
Code of Ethics for Nurses

Purposes:

1) Succinct statement of ethical obligations and duties for nurses
2) Nonnegotiable ethical standards
3) An expression of nursing’s commitment to society

(American Nurses Association [ANA], 2001, p. 5)
The Provisions

9 provisions with interpretive statements

• First 3 provisions- address fundamental values and commitments for nurses

• Second 3 provisions- address boundaries of duty and loyalty for nurses

• Last 3 provisions- address aspects of duties beyond individual patient encounters

(ANA, 2001, p. 6)
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.”

(ANA, 2001, p. 7)
Interpretive Statements
Provision 1

1.1-Respect for human dignity
1.2-Delivers care with respect for human needs and values, and without prejudice
1.3-The worth of a person is not affected by their health status
1.4-Right to self determination (Autonomy)
1.5-Respect for others

(ANA, 2001, p. 7-9)
Provision 2

“The nurse’s primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, or community”

(ANA, 2001, p. 9)
Interpretive Statements
Provision 2

2.1-Fundamental commitment to individual patients

2.2-Strive to resolve conflicts of interest.

2.3-Collaboration is more than cooperation

2.4-Professional boundaries that establish appropriate limits.

(ANA, 2001, p. 9-11)
Provision 3

“The nurse promotes, advocates for, and strives to protect the health, safety, and rights of the patient.”

(ANA, 2001, p. 12)
Interpretive Statements
Provision 3

3.1-Protects patients right to privacy
3.2-Duty to maintain confidentiality of all patient information
3.3-Protection in decisions to participate in research
3.4-Standards and review mechanisms in nursing education

(ANA, 2001, p. 12-13)
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.”

(ANA, 2001, p. 16)
4.1-Responsible for their nursing care and are individually accountable for their own practice.

4.2-Accountable for nursing judgment and action

4.3-Responsible for assessing their own competence.

4.4-May not delegate responsibilities; they may delegate tasks.

(ANA, 2001, p. 16-17)
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”

(ANA, 2001, p. 18)
Interpretive Statements

Provision 5

5.1-Moral self-respect

5.2-Professional growth and maintenance of competence

5.3-Personal and professional identities that are neither entirely separate, or merged, but integrated

5.4-Integrity an aspect of character

(ANA, 2001, p. 18-19)
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.”

(ANA, 2001, p. 20)
Interpretive Statements
Provision 6

6.1- Influence the environment on moral virtues and values; to do what is right.

6.2- Influencing the environment on ethical obligations

6.3- Responsible for contributing to a moral professional environment

(ANA, 2001, p. 20-21)
Provision 7

“The nurse participates in the advancement of the profession through contributions to practice, education, administration, and knowledge development.”

(ANA, 2001, p. 22)
Interpretive Statements
Provision 7

7.1-Advancing the profession through involvement in nursing and health care policy

7.2-Advancing the profession by developing, maintaining, and implementing standards in clinical, administrative, and education

7.3-Promoting the profession through education

(ANA, 2001, p. 22-23)
Provision 8

“The nurse collaborates with other health professionals and the public in promoting community, national, and international efforts to meet health needs.”

(ANA, 2001, p. 23)
Interpretive Statements
Provision 8

8.1-The profession of nursing is concerned with the promotion of health, welfare, and safety of all people

8.2-Knowledgeable about health status and threats to health status of the community

(ANA, 2001, p. 23-24)
Provision 9

“The profession of nursing, as represented by associations and their members, is responsible for articulating nursing values, for maintaining the integrity of the profession and its practice, and for shaping social policy.”

(ANA, 2001, p. 24)
Interpretive Statements
Provision 9

9.1-Professional associations need to assert values

9.2-The profession carries out its collective responsibility through professional associations

9.3-Professional associations have a responsibility to express and promote the professions values and ethics.

9.4-Nurses can work independently/groups to make a social change.

(ANA 2001 24-25)
Ethical Rules

4 commonly used rules in ethics

- **Fidelity** - loyalty, faithful, and accountable to responsibilities.
- **Veracity** - honesty
- **Confidentiality** - prohibits the disclosure of information without consent of the individual providing the information
- **Privacy** - “the right of limited physical or informational inaccessibility” (Cooper, 2010, p. 156)

(Cooper, 2010)
Ethical Principles

“Principles are defined as general rules that can guide judgment across a wide variety of situations.” (Ullmann, Pizarro, & Ditto, 2009, p. 476)

- **Autonomy**- addressed by ANA in code of ethics (Provision 1; interpretive statement 1.4) Freedom in decision making and right to self-determination (Cooper, 2010)
Principles continued

• **Beneficence** - doing good for patients balanced with risk

• **Nonmaleficence** - to do no harm

• **Justice** - equal treatment and the act of being fair to everyone

(Cooper, 2010)
What is Informed Consent?

• An agreement to do something or to allow something to happen, made with complete knowledge of all relevant facts: risks involved, available alternatives, and risks involved in rejecting the treatment.

• Information must be provided in a language understandable by patient/representative

(United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2009)
Nurses and Informed Consent

Nurses may be liable for professional negligence or battery when they know or should have known that a physician did not obtain informed consent and the nurse did nothing about it.

(Thomas, 2007)
Nurse as a witness

- Obtaining the **signature** on the consent form is not the same as obtaining the consent.
- An administrative duty by the nurse only.
- It is done after the informed consent is obtained by physician.
- The signature means that the Nurse **witnessed** the patient sign the form.
- Informed consent is **NOT** the form.

(Thomas, 2007)
References


Ethical Post-test

1. The code of ethics serves which purpose?
   a) Ethical obligations for nurses
   b) Ethical standards
   c) Nursings’ commitment to society
   d) All of the above
2. The first 3 provisions in the Nursing Code of Ethics addresses:

a) Boundaries of duties and loyalties of nurses

b) Fundamental values and commitments for nurses

c) Aspects of duties beyond patient encounters

d) None of the above
3. Which provision in the Nursing Code of Ethics specifically addresses the ethical principle of Autonomy?

a) Provision 9
b) Provision 2
c) Provision 5
d) Provision 1
4. A nurse as a witness, is signing the consent form as an administration duty only. Stating they witnessed the patient sign the consent form.

a) True  
b) False
5. The terms nonmaleficence, beneficence, and justice are:
   a) Legal terms
   b) Rules
   c) Obligations
   d) Ethical principles