

ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT

**STUDENT BOOK SENIOR 4
ASSOCIATE NURSING PROGRAM**

First Edition

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FOREWORD

Dear Student,

The Rwanda Basic Education Board is pleased to introduce this textbook of Ethics and professional code of conduct of the Associate Nursing Program. This resource is crafted to support competence-based teaching and learning, ensuring a uniform approach to mastering the Ethics and professional code of conduct. Our educational philosophy is designed to help you realize your full potential at each level of your education, equipping you to integrate effectively into society and seize career opportunities.

The Rwandan government emphasizes the alignment of educational materials with the syllabus to enhance your learning experience. Instructional materials, activities, and engagement play a crucial role in shaping how well you learn. This textbook focuses on activities that promote idea development and discovery, whether done individually or in groups.

In a competence-based curriculum, learning is an active process where knowledge, skills, and attitude and values are developed through practical activities and real-life scenarios. To fully benefit from this textbook, you should:

- Engage in given activities which lead to the development of skills;
- Share information through presentations, discussions, and collaborative work;
- Take ownership of your learning and draw insights from your activities.

I extend my gratitude to all those who contributed to the creation of this book, including the Ministry of Health, University of Rwanda, and other institutions. Special thanks go to the dedicated faculty members, nurses, midwives, teachers, illustrators, and designers who worked diligently on this project.

Dr. MBARUSHIMANA Nelson

Director General, REB



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I would like to express my deep gratitude to everyone who contributed to the development of this student book. The project would not have succeeded without the support of numerous stakeholders. I extend special thanks to the Ministry of Health for leading the development process. My appreciation also goes to the Health Workforce development staff/MoH, REB staff, University of Rwanda, College of Medicine and Health Sciences, Staff from Health Private training institutions, Teaching hospitals, Level Two Teaching hospitals, district hospitals, National Council of Nurses and Midwives (NCNM), and Secondary schools having Associate Nursing program. Additional thanks are due to the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, and the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) for their financial support.



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Key Unit competence

Demonstrate characteristics of nursing profession while providing care to patient

1.0 Introductory activity

This section illustrates how aspects of professionalism can impact patient care, such as the importance of handover among health professionals. After reading the text, respond to the questions provided.

A study was conducted on clinical handover practices involving health professionals employed in public hospitals and community health centers in Australia. The sample included doctors, nurses, and allied health professionals, such as physiotherapists, social workers, pharmacists, dietitians, and midwives.

The survey collected information about health professionals' experiences with clinical handover, which is the process of communicating patient information to ensure continuity, quality, and safety of care.

Despite various measures to improve clinical handover processes, participants reported adverse events in seven areas: delayed or prolonged treatment, lack of monitoring information, patient deterioration, medication errors, patient falls, injuries, and risks of infection in infants.

Innovations in training and education are needed to address the complex barriers to effective handover in healthcare organizations.

Questions:

- 1) What is the importance of handover?
- 2) What are the consequences of a lack of handover?
- 3) Which health professionals were involved in the study?
- 4) What other health professionals do you know?
- 5) What qualities do you expect in a good health professional?

1.1. Concept of professionalism and profession

Learning activity 1.1

Mr. G. is admitted to the emergency ward after sustaining a serious road traffic accident. The healthcare team receives him with empathy and determination. The nurse performs a rapid assessment and immediately calls the doctor for intervention. She uses her time effectively to avoid any complications. She administers IV fluid to prevent shock due to excessive bleeding, collects blood samples for lab investigation, and sends them to the laboratory. The lab technician examines the samples. The radiologist comes immediately and performs an X-ray of the fractured bone of the lower limb. The surgeon decides that the patient will need surgery. The anesthesiologist evaluates the patient's condition to prepare him for the operation. The surgeon performs the operation. On the second day after the operation, the patient's relative receives instructions from the dietitian about the meal plan for post-operation recovery. On the third day, the physiotherapist evaluates the leg's mobility to facilitate the patient's movement without complications.

- 1) Which professionals are involved in treating Mr. G?
- 2) What activities did they perform to save the life of Mr. G?
- 3) What qualities do you expect these professionals to display for Mr. G?

Definition of concepts

A Profession is a group (vocational or occupational) that requires specialized education and intellectual knowledge.

Professionalism is an awareness of the conduct, aims, and qualities defining a given profession, familiarity with professional code of ethics, and understanding of ethical schools of thought, patient-professional interaction models and patient rights.

Values are qualities or standards desirable or worthy of esteem in themselves, they are expressed in behaviours, language and standards of conduct.

Professional values are general attributes sized by a professional group. Nurses may learn about their profession's values, standards and motivations through code of ethics, formal instruction, and role modelling.

Personal values are the beliefs and attitudes held by an individual that provide a foundation for behaviour and the way the individual experiences life.

Cultural values that are specific to a people or culture are known as cultural values.

Critical thinking is a purposeful, self-regulatory judgment, resulting in interpretation, analysis, evaluation and inference.

Quality of practice is an evidence-based professional standards balanced against service user needs, satisfaction and organisational efficiency

Self-assessment 1.1

1. Define those concepts:
 - Professionalism,
 - Quality of practice
2. Differentiate professional values from personal values

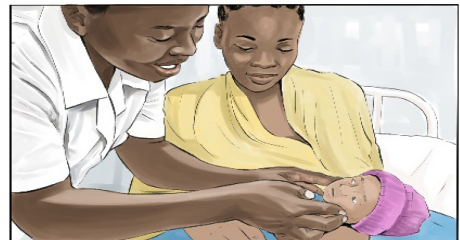
1.2. Common professions

Learning activity 1.2

Observe the following images and match each number of the image to the appropriate profession inside the table below:



1



2



3



4



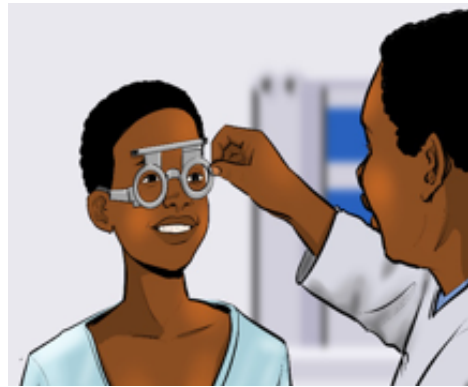
5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12

Fill in the table with corresponding number to the suitable professional

Professionals	Number of professional
Public health officer	
Ophthalmologist	
Anesthesiologist	
Dentist	
Radiologist	
Pharmacist	
Physician	
Midwife	
Nurse	
Dietician	
Physiotherapist	
Lab technician	

1.2.1. Different functions of health care professionals

Nurses constitute the largest occupation in healthcare. The specific duties of individual nurses vary based on their role, practice setting, population served, and specialty area. Regardless of these factors, all nurses are responsible for assessing patients' health, providing clinical treatment, and educating patients and their families.

Medical doctor (MD) is health care professional who has the role or function of assessing the patient, make the diagnosis and can provide medical treatment and services in any medical specialty, ranging from psychiatry to surgery. They work in a variety of settings, which include hospitals; outpatient clinics; academic institutions.

Pharmacists are the medication-use experts in the healthcare system. They provide medication therapy management, coordinate systems of medication distribution and dispensing, interface with patients and prescribers, and engage in the provision of clinical and community-based preventive services.

Dentists perform the evaluation, diagnosis, prevention and/or treatment (nonsurgical, surgical or related procedures) of diseases, disorders and/or conditions of the oral cavity, maxillofacial area and/or the adjacent and associated structures and their impact on the human body; provided by a dentist within the scope of his/her education, training and experience, and in accordance with the ethics of the profession and applicable law.

Physiotherapist can be involved in providing valuable guidance in the inpatient setting and that adherence to recommendations may lower the risk of readmission. This observation highlights the role that structured assessments and sharing of patient information in the inpatient setting have in promoting favourable patient outcomes after discharge.

They also provide expertise related to exercise prescriptions and training, physical activity recommendations, patient education, and exercise equipment. Those working in the inpatient setting are likely to have regular contact with inpatients either through formal educational sessions or by meeting one-on one with inpatients.

Midwife takes care to the mothers and their babies by providing perinatal care during pregnancy and delivery with promoting healthy practices like family planning.

Anaesthesiologist works within the operating team by giving anaesthetic drugs and cardiopulmonary intervention for operated patients.

Lab technician is responsible for testing, analysing, blood test and other body fluids of patients to confirm the diagnosis.

Radiologist is responsible for performing medical diagnosis for patients using imaging devices like X-rays, ultrasound, CT scan, MRI etc.

A dietician as a person with legally recognized qualifications in nutrition and dietetics who applies the science of nutrition to the feeding and education of groups and individuals in health and diseases.

Public health officer is in charge of policy making and decision making for the health of populations.

Ophthalmologists diagnose and give treatment to patients with eye diseases or unhealthy condition. Assess symptoms, diagnose conditions, prescribe medication, provide follow-up care of patients.

Notice: Apart from Ophthalmology, Radiology and Anesthesiology, here are other Major medical specialties including dermatology, emergency medicine, family medicine, general surgery, internal medicine, neurology, obstetrics and gynecology, orthopedics, otolaryngology (ENT), pediatrics and psychiatry. Each specialty focuses on different aspects of patient care and treatment, allowing physicians to develop expertise in specific areas of medicine.

Self-assessment 1.2

Explain the functions of the following health professionals:

Nurse

Doctor

Dentist

Ophthalmologist,

Physiotherapist

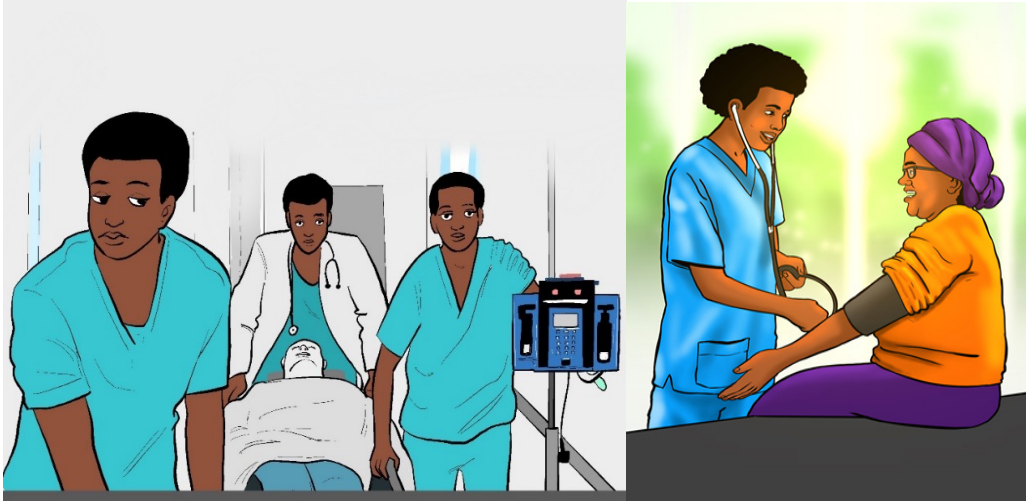
Dietitian

Lab technician, Radiologist

Midwife

1.3. Characteristics of a model associate nurse

Learning activity 1.3



Mr. N., 70 years of age, is a patient admitted to the medical-surgical unit with pneumonia. The patient complains of fatigue and shortness of breath, and cannot finish a short sentence before his respiratory rate increases above normal. He presents with blue coloration on his body extremities and is using accessory muscles, with a weak cough reflex. His vital signs are: blood pressure 90/50 mm Hg, heart rate 101 bpm, respiratory rate 28 breaths/min, and temperature 39.5°C.

The nurse, Mr. G., performs an assessment to establish a nursing care plan for Mr. N., which includes: monitoring vital signs, completing the patient file, entering patient data into the computer system, providing a bed bath and bed making, administering analgesics and antimicrobial drugs, and administering respiratory medications using proper devices. The nurse also observes the patient and records any changes, positions the patient appropriately, administers oxygen, provides health education to the patient's relative, evaluates results, discusses treatment modalities with the doctor, and communicates with other healthcare workers about the patient's condition.

- 1) Which nursing procedures will be performed by an associate nurse to help this patient?
- 2) Which nursing procedures will not be done by an associate nurse to help this patient?

1.3.1. Definition of terms

A nurse is a person educated and trained to care for sick or disabled. She/he has completed a program of basic, general nursing education and is authorized by the appropriate regulatory body to practice nursing in his/her country.

A nurse in Rwanda is a licensed person who is registered with the National Council of Nurses and Midwives based on completion of a recognized education and training program to take care of, assist and treat the client, who can be an individual, family or group, sick or well.

Nursing is the protection, promotion, and optimization of health and abilities, prevention of illness and injury, facilitation of healing, alleviation of suffering through the diagnosis and treatment of human response, and advocacy in the care of individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations” (ANA, 2017).

Nursing: a profession focusing on assisting individuals, families, and communities who are healthy or sick to attain, recover, and maintain optimum health and function from birth to old age (Taylor et al 2011). The use of conducive environment (fresh air, pure water, cleanness, light) for the patient to assist him/her recovery (Florence Nightingale 1860). Nursing consists in assisting the individual sick or well, in the performance of those activities contributing to health or its recovery or a peaceful death (Virginia Henderson, 1966).

An associate nurse is a member of the nursing team that helps bridge the gap between health and care assistants and registered nurses. Associate nurses work with people of all ages, in a variety of settings in health and social care. Their role contributes to the core work of nursing, freeing up registered nurses to focus on more complex clinical care. It’s a stand-alone role that also provides a progression route into graduate level nursing. Some personal qualities that make a good associate nurse are :

1.3.2. Qualities of a good associate nurse

1) **Caring** and **compassion** are fundamental qualities in healthcare that significantly impact patient well-being and the overall patient experience.

Caring refers to the actions and behaviors that demonstrate concern and attention to the needs of others. In healthcare, caring involves providing physical and emotional support, being attentive to patients’ needs, and ensuring their comfort and safety. It encompasses a wide range of activities, including listening to patients, responding promptly to their requests, and delivering high-quality, personalized care.

Compassion is the emotional response to another person’s suffering, coupled with a desire to help alleviate that suffering. It involves empathy, understanding, and a genuine concern for others. In the healthcare setting, compassion means being

sensitive to patients' emotions and experiences, offering reassurance and comfort, and showing kindness and respect. Compassionate care can help to ease patients' anxiety, build trust, and improve overall health outcomes.

2) Excellent communication skills

Strong communication skills are an important nurse characteristic. Good nurses rely on the ability to effectively communicate with other nurses, physicians, and clinicians in other units and with patients and their families.

3) Empathy

A good nurse is one who shows empathy for every patient, making a true effort to put themselves in their patients' shoes.

By practicing empathy, nurses are more likely to treat their patients as individuals, focusing on a person-centered care approach rather than strictly following routines and guidelines.

4) Organization and attention to detail

A good nurse knows the stakes are high and that unlike most other industries, they're responsible for peoples' well-being and — more importantly — their lives. Being organized, accurate, and attentive to details are nursing traits that determine how successful they'll be in their role.

5) Problem-solving skills

Problem-solving skills are essential to nursing, as nurses generally have the most one-on-one time with patients and are often responsible for making decisions about issues that arise with their care. Even seemingly small decisions can proactively improve outcomes — or conversely, cause major adverse impacts if incorrectly made.

6) Stamina and endurance

The physical demand on nurses is perhaps one of the most underestimated aspects of their role. In one shift, a nurse lifts an average of 1.8 tons (roughly the weight of a hippo) by lifting and adjusting patients. Additionally, studies have found that nurses walk an average of four to five miles per shift.

7) Sense of humor and resilience

Having a good sense of humor also helps spread positivity to other nurses, patients, and their families. A good sense of humor is not only a characteristic of a nurse leader but reminds patients and their families that nurses are people too and ultimately increases their trust and openness to sharing feedback and concerns.

8) Commitment to patient advocacy

As one of the leading qualities of a nurse, patient advocacy is a mindset that a good nurse must practice every day with every patient, throughout every stage of the care continuum. Many patients enter a hospital or healthcare setting feeling disoriented, confused, and unable to advocate for their own safety. A nurse who empowers patients through education and engagement will help them get the best care.

9) Willingness to learn and grow

With constant technological improvements and breakthroughs in science, the healthcare industry and its workers must successfully adapt. Nurses' willingness to develop themselves — and put their new knowledge into practice — is one of the leading traits of a good nurse.

10) Strong critical thinking

While having the willingness to learn is an important skill, putting that knowledge into successful practice requires the ability to think critically — especially in high-stress situations. A nurse with high-functioning critical thinking has one of the most important characteristics of a professional nurse.

11) Good time management

Balancing multiple patients, stressful care settings, and competing priorities is no small feat during a 12-hour shift. Having effective time management is a key personality trait for nursing, as is being able to concentrate on the most critical issues first — and not necessarily the most demanding patient or family.

12) Cultural sensitivity and awareness

With today's diverse patient populations, every nurse needs to understand the importance of being culturally inclusive of others. Communication, customs, and expectations for medical treatment may vary depending on patients' cultural backgrounds. A good nurse takes these factors into consideration when treating patients to better understand their needs and provide culturally sensitive care.

Cultural awareness also factors in when working as part of a clinical team. Nurses must work with a continuously changing staff of providers and clinicians who may have different communication or work styles. Being prepared for diversity in healthcare settings ensures that a nurse can work productively with everyone and contribute to a workplace that fosters teamwork, collaboration, and a sense of belonging for all.

1.3.3. The functions of an associate nurse

According to the ministerial order, the associate nurses usually take care of patients basing on their physical and psychological needs.

1. Provide basic patient care by maintaining patient hygiene, nutrition and comfort.
E.g.: bed making, bed-bath, position changing, feeding ...
2. Monitor the patient's condition and reports as necessary.
E.g.: taking vital signs, carrying samples taken by the nurse, to the laboratory for exam
3. Perform sterile and clean procedures with specific focus on prevention and control of infection in the health facility environment according to established standards and protocols.
E.g.: simple wound dressing
4. Administer diligently medication within his/her scope of practice according to prescription and monitor the patient response.
E.g.: provide oral drugs under supervision of registered nurse
5. 5° Carry out pre and post-operative nursing care within his/her scope of practice.
E.g.: wound dressing
6. Educate and advise the client and other people on continued care and prevention of recurrence of the health problem.
E.g.: provide educational session on hygiene
7. Facilitate patient discharge and where necessary refers him/her to other health care providers.
E.g.: register discharged patients
8. Transmit verbal and written report and shares information with colleagues and the direct supervisor on the patient and care provided.
E.g.: fill the vital signs chart
9. Contribute to physical and nutritional rehabilitation in preparation for patient discharge.
E.g.: Facilitate in patient feeding
10. Provide comprehensive care according to his/her scope of practice to chronically and terminally ill patients who are referred back.
E.g.: provide support to patient living with HIV or NCDs (hypertension, diabetes...) reminding or encouraging them to take oral drugs

1.3.4. Comparison of roles between associate nurse and registered nurses

The respective roles of both associate nurses and registered nurses are to deliver quality healthcare services to their clients. Although clients benefit from the care given by associate nurses in a range of settings, associate nurses will contribute to most aspects of care, including health care delivery and monitoring. Registered Nurses will take the lead to assessment, planning and evaluation. Registered Nurses will also lead to managing and coordinating health care with full contribution from the associate nurses within the integrated care team.

Table3: Comparison between roles of associate nurse vs registered nurse

ASSOCIATE NURSE	REGISTERED NURSE
Be an accountable professional	Be an accountable professional
Promoting health and preventing illness	Promoting health and preventing ill
Promote and monitor care	Provide and evaluate care
Working in teams	Working in teams with responsibility of leading and managing nursing care
Improving safety and quality of care	Improving safety and quality of care
Contributing to integrated care	Coordinating care
Reporting needs for planning care	Assessing needs and planning care

Self-assessment 1.3

Mr N., a 70 years male patient, is admitted to the medical-surgical unit with pneumonia. The patient complains of fatigue and shortness of breath and cannot finish a short sentence before the respiratory rate increases above the normal, and presents blue colour on his body extremities. The patient is using accessory muscles, coughs weakly, without any sputum.

The vital signs are: blood pressure 90/50 mm Hg, heart rate 101 bpm, respiratory rate 28 breaths/ minute, and temperature 39.5°F.

The nurse do an assessment to establish a care plan with the following nursing care to give for Mr. G. : monitoring of vital signs, filling the patient file, entering patient data in computer system, bed bath and bed making, administration of analgesics, antimicrobial drugs, and, drug for respiratory system using a proper device, observation of the patient and record any change occurring to the patient, put the patient in suitable position, provide oxygen, provide health education to the patient relative, evaluate the results and discuss with the doctor about modalities of treatment, communicate with other health workers about the patient condition.

1. Describe the activities that will be performed by an associate nurse to respond to the patient's need?
2. Give three activities that will be performed by a registered nurse to provide nursing care to this patient?

1.4. Professionalism

Learning activity 1.4

Mrs. D. works in the surgical ward. She arrives for her duty on time, organizes her ward, always assesses the patients' needs, and ensures the ward is clean and ventilated. She speaks to patients' families and provides health education. She promptly communicates any abnormal findings to the doctor and always documents the care provided. She follows up on patients' lab results and contacts the lab if the results are not available in a timely manner. She encourages her colleagues and reminds them to take responsibility for their tasks.

On the other hand, Mrs. Z. arrives late to her duties, frequently asks for permissions, and often finds reasons not to come to work. She has even falsified medical leave to attend to her own business.

When she is in the ward, there is a lot of disorganization; the patients' beds are not clean, lab results are not documented in the patients' files, and the charts are not properly filled out. She speaks rudely to patients and their relatives, despises her colleagues, and ignores their advice.

The unit manager writes her an explanation letter, but she does not provide any explanation for her conduct. Instead, she goes to the medical director, complains that everyone hates and despises her, and claims that she was not sent to the HIV management training. She points out that the nurse in charge of HIV in the maternity ward was trained, and when that nurse called a meeting to share the knowledge, Mrs. Z refused to attend, claiming that all nurses should be trained. The manager had suggested that three nurses be trained each trimester so that the patients would not be neglected.

Mrs. Z frequently calls her friends during working hours and complains that nobody cares about her even though she claims to always care for patients alone and goes home late due to the high patient volume. She complains that the hospital is poor and does not provide enough materials for patient care; however, she never reports to the unit manager about the drugs and consumables, which are required to be reported every week. She even calls her cousin, who is a manager of a big company, to ask for another job because she is unhappy being a nurse.

Compare the behavior of Mrs. D. and Mrs. Z. regarding their nursing profession

Professionalism is an idea relating to the word “profession” which is almost synonymous with “occupation”, the same author indicated the following six characteristics of professionals:

1. The professional has skills or expertise proceeding from a broad knowledge base.
2. The professional provides a service based on a special relationship with those whom he or she serves. This relationship involves a special attitude of beneficence tempered with integrity. To the extent that the public recognises the authority of the professional, he or she has the social function of speaking out on broad matters of public policy and justice, going beyond duties to specific clients.
3. Professionals must be independent of the influence of the state or commerce.
4. The professional should be educated rather than trained and should continue to develop her or his knowledge and skills within a framework of values.
5. A professional should have legitimised authority and credibility in the eyes of the general public.
6. A good understanding of bioethics and the ability to apply ethics principles and skills in the healthcare context is vitally important for all healthcare practitioners:

- i. **Responsibility:** is an obligation or duty. Condition, quality, fact, or instance of being responsible; obligation, accountability, dependability, ...
- ii. **Self-determination** is defined as the personal decision to do something or think a certain way, without outside influence.
- iii. **Accountability** is the quality or state of being accountable, especially : an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions, it is taking or being assigned responsibility for something that you have done or something you are supposed to do.
- iv. **Integrity** should be regarded as the primary virtue in the healthcare context. Healthcare practitioners often support their actions to act or not, on the base that it would undermine or violate their integrity and/or core beliefs if acting otherwise.
- v. **Trust** involves an assurance that another will act with the right intentions and in agreement with fitting moral norms.
- vi. **Confidentiality** the ethical principle or legal right that a physician or other health professional will hold secret all information relating to a patient, unless the patient gives consent permitting disclosure.
- vii. **Adherence to high standards** of quality providing evidence-based healthcare services to those who need them;
- viii. **Collaboration with others** and communicative a working practice whereby individuals work together for a defined and common purpose, and enables individuals to achieve that purpose.

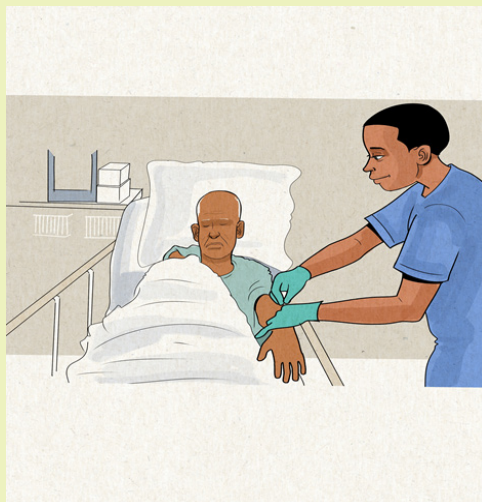
Such understanding and application should be fostered during the formal training of healthcare practitioners and it should continue as part of each practitioner's continuous professional development for as long as they practise their profession.

Self-assessment 1.4

1. Explain the authority of a professional in public
2. Describe the importance of communication in nursing profession

1.5. Characteristics of nursing profession

Learning activity 1.5



Mr. G., a 60-year-old patient, was admitted to the emergency department and was on the third day after surgical intervention. The patient complained of dizziness; his extremities were cold and pale. His vital signs were as follows: blood pressure 80/45 mm Hg, heart rate 131 bpm, respiratory rate 28 breaths/min, and temperature 36.1°C. His oxygen saturation on room air was decreasing to 82%, and his hemoglobin level was 10 g/dl.

Mrs. T., a registered nurse on duty that night, was a committed nurse who worked with empathy, diligence, and discernment. She managed her time effectively and communicated well with her colleagues and other healthcare professionals in the surgical unit. She was hardworking, observant, and used critical thinking to resolve patient problems.

When she entered Mr. G.'s room, she noticed that the patient's operative wound was bleeding. She took vital signs and a blood sample for a lab test, which showed a hemoglobin level of 6.5 g/dL. She called the doctor immediately and explained the patient's situation. The doctor responded that Mr. G. should be transfused. The nurse then filled out a request for a blood transfusion for Mr. G. with blood type A+. However, the lab technician informed her that only O+ blood was available. Mrs. T. never forgot to cross-check the blood type with a colleague to ensure the patient was not harmed.

1. What were the qualities that Mrs. T. used to save the life of Mr. G.?
2. If the nurse had not intervened, what consequences would have resulted from her inaction?

The following qualities should also characterise a professional nurse.

- a. Responsibility:** is an obligation or duty. Condition, quality, fact, or instance of being responsible; obligation, accountability, dependability, ... For example, a nurse should take responsibility to give drug appropriate dose if the doctor commits an error in prescription.
- b. Self-determination** is defined as the personal decision to do something or think a certain way, without outside influence. e.g.: a nurse working with determination should not wait the unit manager to remind her the care to be given to the patient
- c. Accountability** is the quality or state of being accountable, especially: an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions, it is taking or being assigned responsibility for something that you have done or something you are supposed to do. e.g.: if a nurse does not provide care to the patient according to the quality required, she is accountable.
- d. Integrity** should be regarded as the primary virtue in the healthcare context. Healthcare practitioners often support their actions to act or not, on the base that it would undermine or violate their integrity and/or core beliefs if acting otherwise. e.g.: the nurse who does not respect patient's privacy and confidentiality
- e. Effective Communication**

In the workplace, nurses must be able to communicate clearly with their co-workers and with patients and their families. They must be able to take instructions from co-workers and supervisors, especially in high-pressure situations.

They must also communicate effectively with patients and their families to meet their needs and provide quality care. The ability to receive information effectively and efficiently is essential for nurses. They must be able to read charts and understand a treatment plan without in-depth instruction. After they collect data about a patient's vital signs, they must record that information immediately and accurately for other nurses, doctors and medical staff to interpret. Proactive communication with patients and families can set nurses apart from their peers.

e.g.: the nurse must document on patient file and provide information necessary like change of vital signs or lab results. If he/she does not report timely, the patient can get in severe condition and miss necessary intervention at the right time

- f. Optimism** While this career may be emotionally challenging at times, outstanding nurses know how to remain positive and focus on serving others. Further, nurses who have a positive attitude can act as leaders in their practice, inspiring optimism in others as well. e.g. :if the patient is in critical

condition, she will not give up to him, she continues to provide care even for the chronic disease there is a way to improve life condition.

- g. Compassion** In their career, nurses will see patients suffer. Beyond simply offering a solution, they must be able to express compassion for patients and their families. E.g.: a nurse should always consider the pain of the patient and listen to his/her concerns
- h. Even-Temperedness:** nurses must be able to manage their responses to difficult situations in order to solve problems and concentrate on their patients' health and safety. Not getting visibly angry or upset with patients is important no matter how difficult the day has been.e.g.: if a nurse is angry to the patient that one would lose trust
- i. Flexibility:** Remaining calm under pressure also helps nurses stay flexible in their work since shifts are typically long. Nurses may have to work nights, weekends and holidays. On the job, flexibility is a must for nurses. They cannot predict what the day will bring and what illnesses or injuries they will have to treat. e.g.: like if the nurse is called during his/ her day off or obliged to go home late due to patient's condition

Self-assessment 1.5

Mr. G. was admitted to the emergency department on the 3rd day after surgical intervention. The patient complained of dizziness, and his body extremities were cold and pale. The vital signs were as follows: blood pressure 80/45 mm Hg, heart rate 131 bpm, respiratory rate 28 breaths/min, and temperature 36.1 °C. The pulse oxymeter reading on room air decreased to 82%, and haemoglobin (Hgb) was 10 g/dl.

Mrs. T., a registered nurse, noticed that the patient's operative wound was bleeding. She took a blood sample for a lab test, and the result of hemoglobin was 6.5 g/dL. She called the doctor immediately and explained the patient's situation. The doctor responded that Mr. G. should be transfused. The nurse then filled out a request for the transfusion unit to bring blood for Mr. G. with blood group A+. However, the lab technician responded that the available blood was group O+. Although Mrs. T. knew that blood with group O+ could help the patient, she did not forget to check the patient's identification to ensure the patient would not be harmed.

- 1) Explain at least five characteristics of a professional nurse.
- 2) What are the qualities of nurses in patient care?

1.6. End unit assessment

End unit assessment

- 1) Define these concepts: Profession, value
- 2) Explain the functions of the following health professionals:
Nurse
Radiologist
Lab technician
Dentist
- 3) What is the role of an associate nurse in healthcare team?
- 4) Compare and contrast the roles of nurse and associate nurse
- 5) Explain why the health professionals should have the virtue of discernment
- 6) Using practical examples in patient care, explain the five qualities of health professionals
- 7) Explain at least five characteristics of a professional nurse
- 8) Enumerate the five qualities of health professionals
- 9) Describe how a nurse can apply the qualities of health professionals in health care

Mr. J. is a Registered Nurse in a surgical unit. He has patients with different needs. Patient A was operated for an abdominal disease and needs timely and appropriate food intake according to his condition. Another patient B, was operated on for a fracture of the left lower limb and needs to be mobilized on the day specified by the surgeon.

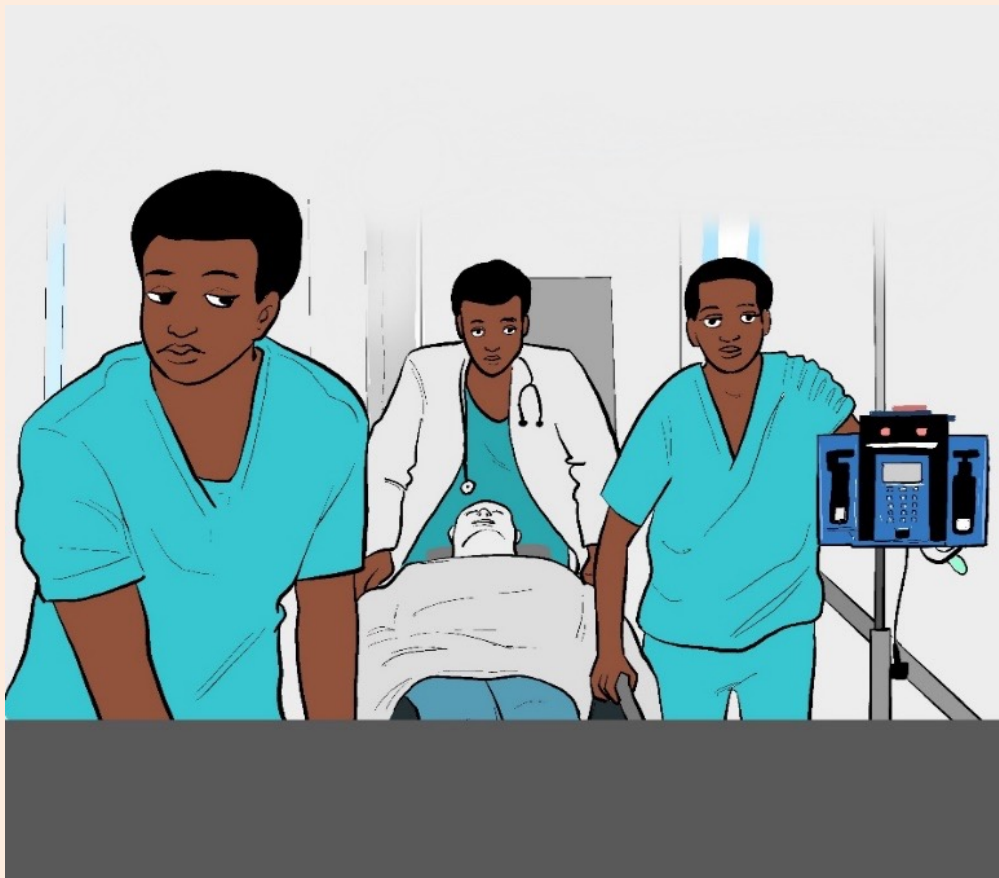
The following activities are required for the nursing management of patients A and B: monitoring vital signs, pain, rehydration/feeding, elimination, ensuring hygiene, comfort, and proper positioning, taking samples for lab examination, documenting abnormal changes and completing the charts in the patient's file, administering drugs according to the prescription, providing health education, calling the dietitian for a diet prescription, calling the physiotherapist for exercise, and taking the patient to the radiologist for an x-ray.

1. What tasks will he perform himself as a registered nurse?
2. What tasks will he delegate to the associate nurse working in the same service?
3. Who are the other health professionals who will work with him to ensure the treatment of those patients?

Key Unit Competence

Apply the nursing code of conduct

2.0 Introductory activity



Observe the above picture and discuss about the following:

M.E is an enrolled nurse who has been working in a district hospital for 3 years. Colleagues and the unit manager noticed that the clients assigned to M.E were not properly cared for; wet bed sheets were unchanged, urine bottles were not emptied, and vital signs were not monitored. M.E often arrived late and spent a lot of time at the nurses' station on the phone, while her clients were left without assistance. Her unit manager, colleagues, and caregivers raised complaints.

After receiving advice from colleagues and the manager, she began attending the unit on time, collaborating with clients, providing care to each client, and advocating for clients' needs. She became a respected nurse among the clients, improved communication and collaboration with the unit manager and colleagues, and ensured all assigned clients were cared for as required. After reading the above scenario, analyze the nurse's general attitude in the workplace and answer the following questions:

- a. Who are the people in the above picture?
- b. Identify the bad behavior of a nurse displayed in this scenario.
- c. List 3 qualities of a good professional nurse demonstrated in the scenario.

2.1. Introduction to the code of professional conduct for nurses and midwives

Learning activity 2.1

Mrs. K. is a registered nurse working in a unit where patients are admitted after surgical operations. She always arrives at work on time. When she arrives in the morning, she puts on her clean uniform, greets clients, and observes the overall situation to identify any emergent situations. She is respectful toward colleagues and clients of all ages. She is kind to everybody at work and even outside of work. She provides care to all assigned clients in a safe and timely manner. Before accomplishing any nursing tasks, she first obtains the client's consent and treats them with kindness and respect.

Read the above scenario and answer the following questions:

1. Identify the 4 positive professional nurse requirements demonstrated in the scenario.
2. List 2 behaviors that should adhere to the nursing code of conduct.

Key Concepts of the Code of Conduct

A code: the Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses is a set of expected national standards of nursing conduct for nurses and midwives to be respect during the exercise of the profession

The Code is not intended to give detailed professional advice on specific issues and areas of practice; rather, it identifies the minimum requirements for conduct in the profession. A breach of the Code may constitute professional misconduct or unprofessional conduct (ANA, 2021)

The code of profession conduct will help to address many issues and promote client and nursing satisfaction.

A conduct: the manner in which a person behaves, especially in a particular place or situation. Professional conduct refers to the manner in which a person behaves while acting in a professional capacity.

It is generally accepted that when performing their duties and conducting their affairs professionals will uphold exemplary standards of conduct.

Specific issues concerning professional practice will be considered when they arise and may be the subject of professional practice guidelines

Ethics: Ethics refers to moral principles, values that governs a person's behaviour or a manner of conducting or accomplishing activities. Ethics deals with principles or morality and what is right or wrong, it is also concerned with motives and attitudes and relationship of these attitudes to the good of individuals (Basavanthappa, 2006).

Ethics refers to well-founded standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, justice, or specific qualities.

A code of ethics is a set of guiding principles that all members of a profession accept. It is a collective statement about the group's expectations and standards of behavior. Codes serve as guidelines to assist professional groups when questions arise about correct practice or behavior. (Potter and Perry Fundamentals of Nursing, 8th edition, Elsevier, 2017).

According to the American Nurses Association (ANA), the nursing code of ethics and profession conduct is a guide for "carrying out nursing responsibilities in a manner consistent with quality in nursing care and the ethical obligations of the profession." Ethics, in general, are the moral principles that dictate how a person will conduct (ANA, 2021)

Self-assessment 2.1

According to the above definition of nursing code of conduct and aspects included in the code of conduct used in Rwanda

1. Explain 2 roles of the code of conduct in nursing practice
2. Using an example, illustrate how you should honor the nursing profession

2.2. The nursing code of conduct

Learning activity 2.2



Mrs. J. is an associate nurse in Internal Medicine, and the team in this unit is small, as it comprises only 6 persons for both day and night duties. Her colleague Mrs. T. was sick and unable to accomplish all assigned tasks as she was weak and pregnant. The morning medical rounds also included orders for taking blood samples for many clients, and other drugs were prescribed to be given before noon. She felt stressed but did her best to accomplish the assigned tasks. Her colleague Mrs. J. visited Mrs. T.'s subunit, observed the state of T and the assigned tasks, and decided to perform some procedures, such as withdrawing blood samples, since she was skilled in vein puncture. The unit manager was very happy and congratulated the nurse.

According to the above scenario:

1. What do you think about the origin of the stress for nurse T?
2. Identify the professional behaviors of the nurses.
3. What would be the consequences for the clients if the nurse had a heavy burden?

Nurses are currently facing various personal, interpersonal, professional, institutional, and socio-cultural challenges in their professional practice, and dealing with them may not always be clear. The lack of a correct approach or attitude in addressing different issues may lead to ethical issues or difficulty in choosing between different options to resolve them.

The Rwandan regulatory body of the Nurses and Midwives was established by the constitution of the Republic of Rwanda on 04th June 2003 and by Law No 25/2008 of 25/7/2008 establishing the National Council of Nurses and Midwives(NCNM), and adopted by the Cabinet in its session of 09/07/2010. The Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses and Midwives is overseen by the Rwanda National Council of Nurses and Midwives.

2.2.1. Role of nurse's code of conduct:

A code of conduct provides structure and guidance for workplace values and principles. A respected code is important to the nursing profession to help prevent inappropriate and incompetent behavior and serves as a guide for nursing performance.

The Code guides nurses and midwives in their day-to-day practice and helps them understand their responsibilities in caring for service users in a safe, ethical, and effective way.

The Code supports ethical and clinical decision-making, ongoing reflection, and professional self-development. The Code informs the general public about the professional care they can expect from nurses and midwives.

The Code also emphasizes the importance of the obligations of nurses and midwives to recognize and respond to the needs of service users and families (Georges et al., 2012).

The Code of conduct sets standards for the regulation, monitoring, and enforcement of professional conduct.

The Code of conduct is used in conjunction with the code of ethics since ethics and professional conduct cannot be separated.

2.2.2. Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses and Midwives:

According to the code of conduct of Nurses and Midwives provided by the regulatory body National Council of Nurses and Midwives (NCNM); the standards of nurse's code of conduct is summarized as follow:

a. Conduct of a nurse towards patients

Respect for human rights and values

Without prejudices to provision of particular laws that specify the rights of a patient in Rwanda, the nurse / midwife shall:

- Promote the respect of human rights, human dignity, culture and spiritual beliefs of the individual, family and community
- Ensure that the individual receives written and sufficient information on which to base his/her consent for care and related treatment
- Keep confidential any information related to an individual and shall share this information with colleagues advisedly

Collaboration in promoting health activities

A nurse / midwife shall collaborate with members of the community in initiating and supporting actions to meet the health and social needs

A nurse / midwife shall also collaborate with others in conserving the environment

Refusal to act for lack of capacity and competence: a nurse or midwife is required to refuse any instructions to perform any activity that is outside his/ her scope of competence or one for which he/ she lacks sufficient knowledge. However, in case, in the case, he/ she shall inform his/her supervisor or the person what gave him/ her such instructions.

Example: If a medical doctor asks the nurse to withdraw excess fluid from the peritoneal cavity (Ascites), this is a medical task that is beyond the nurse's scope of competence, and he/she must inform the medical doctor that he/she is not able to perform that procedure.

Quality and continuing professional development: the nurse or midwife shall be obliged to fulfil his/her duties. He/ she shall regularly demonstrate continual use of technical knowledge and always be trained on modern techniques.

Obligation to care her/ his personal health: a nurse or a midwife shall be obliged to take care of his/her personal health so that his/ her responsibility of providing care is not compromised

Discretion on duty: a nurse or midwife shall ensure that no action or omission on his/ her part that may be harmful to health

Safe use of science and technology: a nurse or midwife shall ensure that use of science and technology on duty is compatible with the safety, dignity and people's rights

E.g., use of suctioning machine if not well used can traumatize upper respiratory tract

Activities contrary to moral and professional conviction: A nurse shall have right to refuse to participate in activities contrary to his/ her personal moral and professional convictions. However, such rights shall not contravene his/her responsibilities towards patients and those who require his/her services

b. Conduct of a nurse or a midwife in performing his/her duties

- **Abide by law and regulation** in the country in particular those relevant to his/her nursing profession
- **Maintain professional honor:** the nurse shall demonstrate all times a personal conduct that honors the profession and enhance public confidence in nursing and midwifery staff. The conduct of a nurse must be integral and even a model in the society
- **Participation in designing and implementation** of professional regulations: a nurse or midwife shall participate in designing and implementing guiding principles of nursing, midwifery management, research in matters regarding professional practice or duties of a nurse and a midwife

- **Participation in developing professional skills;** a nurse or midwife shall be active in developing a core of research based professional skills
 - **Role in enhancing better working conditions:** a nurse or a midwife, acting through professional federation or association in which he/she is a member, shall participate in creating and maintaining safe, equitable social and economic working conditions in nursing or midwifery practice respectively
 - **Safe management of resources:** a nurse or a midwife shall safely manage and maintain assets under his/her control as well as public resources, use effectively the available materials
- c. Relations between a nurse, a midwife and colleagues**
- **Interdisciplinary collaboration** : a nurse or midwife shall sustain collaboration with colleagues and workers in the multidisciplinary team in order to promote the health and well-being of each client.
 - **Appropriate measures to protect people:** a nurse or a midwife shall take appropriate measures in order to preserve the health of individual. Families and the public when endangered by a colleague or any other person
 - An incompetent nurse can lead to harmful nursing care
 - **Sharing and exchanging expertise/ experience:** a nurse or midwife shall share expertise and knowledge with colleagues and exchange views on various professional issues that may arise in their profession. They have to share experience in order to better care the clients and resolve raised issues
 - **Non evasion of responsibilities:** a nurse or a midwife shall avoid to relinquish his/her duties and to overburden his/her colleagues in order to evade responsibilities.

Self-assessment 2.2

After understanding how the nurse should behave with colleagues and fulfill duties

1. Explain briefly the importance of collaboration between nurses in caring for patients.
2. Explain briefly two standards of a nurse's conduct in the relationship between a nurse and a client.

2.3. Purpose of the professional code of conduct

Learning activity 2.3

Look at the following video on http://youtube.com/watch?v=Z8K-RN_Jtbw

Look also at this picture below and guess what is happening during the nurse and client interactions during the provision of nursing care

1. Is the client looks like well-prepared before nursing intervention? Is the client relaxed and ready to collaborate with the nurse?
2. Identify at least 3 attitudes of the nurse that a client may depreciate during the nurse client relationship
3. Explain the importance of nurse conduct/ behavior in front of the client



The professional code of conduct aims to :

- Set standards for the regulation, monitoring, and enforcement of professional conduct.
- Inform the public about the minimum standards of the profession.
- Help them understand professional nursing conduct.
- Outline the major ethical considerations of the profession and guide the profession in self-regulation.
- Act as a non-negotiable standard and reminder of nurses' commitment to society.
- The code requires nurses to continue their learning and evidence-based practice.

NURSES RESPONSIBILITIES



A nurse, in all professional relationships, practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and uniqueness of every individual, without considerations of social or economic status, the nature of health problems.

The nurse's primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, or community.

- The nurse promotes, advocates for, and strives to protect the health, safety, and rights of the patient.
- The nurse is responsible and accountable for individual nursing practice
- The nurse respects the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility
- The nurse preserves integrity and safety, maintain competence, and continue personal and professional growth.

- 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
- The nurse participates in the advancement of the profession through contributions to practice, education, administration, and knowledge development.
- The nurse collaborates with other health professionals and the public in promoting community, national, and international efforts to meet health needs
- 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
- The nurse personal conduct promotes the image of institution and the nursing profession

Self-assessment 2.3

Mrs. J. works in the Emergency Department, and the team in this unit is small, comprising only 8 people for day and night shifts. Her colleague Mrs. L. was sick and unable to attend the planned night duty. She asked J. to replace her and promised to do the same for him when she recovers. The unit manager agreed, but J refused. That evening, J. spent the night at a dancing club, and the next morning, he came to work drunk. He failed to provide care to assigned patients and blamed them without any reason. He forced a patient to get up without support, and due to dizziness, the patient fell and hit his head on the bed.

1. According to the above scenario, identify the unprofessional behaviors of this nurse?
2. Explain 2 purposes of the code of ethics
3. Enumerate 3 standards of the code of ethics for a nurse

2.4. End Unit assessment

End unit assessment

After covering this unit and understanding the Ethics and Professional Code of Conduct for nurses, and how to behave in order to promote client health and avoid any actions against nursing practice, answer the following questions:

1. The nursing profession is recognized worldwide for having a large number of staff in health facilities. Each nurse has the obligation to act in accordance with ethical principles. Which of the following ethical principles is not important in the nursing profession:
 - a) They are the basis for a nurse's decisions based on the consideration of the consequences of their actions.
 - b) They are universal moral principles used when making clinical judgments.
 - c) They are only applied in clinical settings while caring for different clients.
 - d) They are professional values used when interpreting ethical issues.
- 2) Autonomy is one of the ethical principles in the nursing profession and a client right. It means that:
 - a) A patient has to request the healthcare provider for a care plan about his/her care.
 - b) A patient has control over his own schedule for healthcare.
 - c) A patient should always accept the nursing care plan for him/herself
 - d) A patient has the right to choose and participate in his/her healthcare decisions.
- 3) Read the following statements carefully and answer T if they are true or F if they are false:
 - a) Nurses should always maintain health consumers' trust by providing safe and competent care. (T)
 - b) A right to confidentiality means that patients should not be required to reveal their information to healthcare professionals. (F)
 - c) A professional nurse must acquire expertise in carrying out nursing actions. (T)
 - d) The nurse code of conduct must be applied only in health institutions. (F)

- 4) Case Study Ms. K is a registered nurse working in the unit where clients are admitted after surgical operations. She always arrives at work on time, attends the morning staff meeting and handover. When she arrives in the morning, she puts on her clean uniform, greets clients, and observes the overall situation to identify any emergent situations. She is respectful toward colleagues and clients of all ages. She is kind to everybody at work even outside of working hours when necessary to fulfill assigned tasks. She provides care to all assigned clients in a safe and timely manner. Before accomplishing any nursing tasks, she first obtains the client's consent and treats them with kindness and respect. All clients are confident in Nurse K and don't hesitate to give her any information needed and to ask any questions they have.

Read the above case study and answer the following questions:

1. Identify four professional nursing values included in the scenario.
2. Use an example to illustrate the professional benefit of Nurse K's behavior on the nursing profession.
3. Is there any code of conduct for nurses violated in this case?

Key Unit competence:

Demonstrate an understanding of the scope of practice of an Associate Nurse.

3.0 Introductory activity

Mr. T. is admitted to the unit for patients with tuberculosis, where a registered nurse receives him for assessment. He is coughing, experiencing chest pain, and presenting transpiration on his forehead. The vital signs are: a temperature of 38.8°C, blood pressure of 102/64 mmHg, heart rate of 112 beats/min, and respiration of 20 cycles/min. The oxygen saturation is 92%. The health care professionals in this service include nurses, physicians, epidemiologists, dietiticians, radiologists, and pharmacists.

How should the nurse intervene to care for Mr. T.'s treatment?

3.1. Definition of key concepts**Learning activity 3.1**

Referring to the above case, the registered nurse and the associate nurse are going to care for the patient care of Mr. T.

How should the associate nurse intervene to care for Mr. T.?

Associate Nurse: Person who holds an advanced general certificate of secondary education A2 or its equivalent. He/she works under a direct or indirect supervision of a registered nurse. In any case an associate nurse shall be accountable on the basis of his/her performance and shall be liable before a registered nurse for all the tasks assigned.

Scope of practice refers to services a trained health professional is deemed competent to perform and permitted to undertake according to the terms of their professional nursing license.

Nursing scope of practice provides a legal framework and structured guidance for activities that practical nurses and registered nurses can perform based on their nursing license.

A Profession is a range of roles, functions, responsibilities, activities and professional accountability for which a nurse, or midwife is educated, competent, and has the authority to perform within limits of a particular sphere of practice.

A competence is the ability of the nurse or midwife to practice safely and effectively to fulfil her/his professional responsibility within one's own scope of practice.

Nursing activities

According to the International Council of Nurses (ICN 2010): Nursing encompasses autonomous and collaborative care of individuals of all ages, families, groups and communities, sick or well and in all settings. Nursing includes the promotion of health, prevention of illness, and the care of ill, disabled and dying people. Advocacy, promotion of a safe environment, research, participation in shaping health policy and in patient and health systems management, and education are also key nursing roles.

The key factors in nursing and midwifery profession determining factors that must be taken into account in deciding on the scope of practice of nursing and midwifery shall be the following: competence, accountability autonomy, and continuing professional development. Nursing activities that the nurse shall perform among others, will include the following:

- Reception and registration of patients/client
- Health education to the client/patient, family and community;
- Provision of safe client/patient care;
- Follow-up of client/patient ;
- Prompt reporting of client/patient information on condition as necessary
- Management of working environment;
- Leadership and management of resources;
- Collaboration with multidisciplinary teams;
- General safety of patients/clients, staff and working environment.

According to the scope of practice for the nurse as defined by ministerial order of Rwanda, the registered nurse shall plan, lead, supervise and evaluate health promotional activities, preventative care, curative, rehabilitative and palliative services, managerial educational, training and research roles,

An associate nurse will

- Carry out home visits for delivery of health services to individuals, families and community including follow-up, education, monitoring of nutrition, hygiene and sanitation in conjunction with multidisciplinary teams
- Use communication skills for behavioural change of an individual, family and community

- Communicates appropriate information for effective behaviour change and maintenance of sound health. More details on the roles of the associate nurse are described in unit one on characteristics of the associate nurse.

Self-assessment 3.1

- 1) Define the Scope of practice
- 2) Clarify the importance of the scope of practice
- 3) Mr. H. is an associate nurse and works in a health centre to provide care to mothers who bring their children for measurement of weight, height, and mid-upper arm circumference (brachial perimeter), assessment of nutritional status, and for receiving food supplements like vitamin A, therapeutic milk, and injections for vaccination. He works with Mrs. J., who is a registered nurse in charge of the vaccination service. She administers vaccinations to children, gives health education to their mothers about hygiene, breastfeeding, and proper nutrition, registers the children's vaccination status along with their weight, height, and mid-upper arm circumference, observes the availability and safety of the vaccines, and submits a weekly report to the health centre manager.
 - a) What activities will Mr. H. perform?
 - b) What activities are performed by Mrs. J.?

3.2. Roles of associate nurse

Learning activity 3.2

Mr. B. is assigned to the health centre where Mrs. C., a registered nurse, works with him. There are many clients, and today is immunization day, and they take advantage of that occasion to provide health education to the mothers who bring their children for immunization.

- 1) What activities do you think Mr. B. and Mrs. C. will perform?
- 2) During health education, what topics might Mr. B. and Mrs. C. cover?

Associate Nurses, like nurses and other healthcare professionals, can expand their knowledge and skills with the right training and governance. However, the intention is for nursing associates to support, not substitute, registered nurses. They follow the standards for nursing and nursing associate programs.

1. **Being an accountable professional:** associates nurses act in the best interests of people, putting them first and providing nursing care that is person-centered, safe and compassionate. They act professionally at all times and use their knowledge and experiences to make evidence based decisions and solve problems. They recognize and work within the limits of their competence and are responsible for their actions.
2. **Promoting health and preventing ill health:** associates nurses play a role in supporting people to improve and maintain their mental, physical, behavioural health and wellbeing. They are actively involved in the prevention of and protection against disease and ill health, and engage in public health, community development, and in the reduction of health inequalities
3. **Provide and monitor care:** associates nurses provide compassionate, safe and effective care and support to people in a range of care settings. They monitor the condition and health needs of people within their care on a continual basis in partnership with people, families, and caregivers. They contribute to ongoing assessment and can recognize when it is necessary to refer to others for reassessment.
4. **Working in teams:** associates nurses play an active role as members of interdisciplinary teams, collaborating and communicating effectively with nurses, a range of other health and care professionals and lay caregivers.
5. **Improving safety and quality of care:** associates nurses improve the quality of care by contributing to the continuous monitoring of people's experience of care. They identify risks to safety or experience and take appropriate action, putting the best interests, needs and preferences of people first.
6. **Contributing to integrated care:** associates nurses contribute to the provision of care for people, including those with complex needs. They understand the roles of a range of professionals and carers from other organizations and settings who may be participating in the care of a person and their family, and their responsibilities in relation to communication and collaboration.

Self-assessment 3.2

1. Use examples to illustrate four roles of an associate nurse
2. How does an associate nurse improve safety and quality of care while providing nursing care?

3.3. Scope of associate nursing

Learning activity 3.3

Mr. P., a 50-year-old patient, is admitted to the Internal Medicine department for long-lasting gastritis. Mr. U., an associate nurse working in that department, receives the patient and takes vital signs. The registered nurse then assesses the patient and calls the medical doctor. The doctor arrives and orders samples to be taken for lab investigations and prescribes oral medications to reduce the pain.

- 1) Which activities will be carried out by an associate nurse in caring for this client?
- 2) Which activities are not within the competence of an associate nurse?

Procedures to be undertaken by the nursing associate

At the point of registration, the nursing associate will be able to safely demonstrate the following procedures:

1. Procedures to enable effective monitoring of a person's condition

- Accurately measure weight and height, calculate body mass index and recognize
- Use manual techniques and devices to take, record and interpret vital signs including temperature, pulse, respiration (TPR), blood pressure (BP) and pulse oximetry (SO₂) in order to identify signs of improvement, deterioration or concern
- Measure and interpret blood glucose levels
- Collect and observe sputum, urine, stool and vomit specimens, interpreting findings and reporting as appropriate
- Recognize emergency situations and administer basic physical first aid, including basic life support.

2. Procedures for provision of client-centered nursing care provide support in meeting the needs of people in relation to rest, sleep, comfort and the maintenance of dignity:

- Use appropriate bed-making techniques, including those required for people who are unconscious or who have limited mobility
- use appropriate positioning and pressure relieving techniques
- Take appropriate action to ensure privacy and dignity at all times
- appropriate action to reduce or minimize pain or discomfort
- Support people to reduce fatigue, minimize insomnia and take appropriate rest.

3. Provide care and support with hygiene and the maintenance of skin integrity:

- Observe and reassess skin and hygiene status using contemporary approaches to
- Determine the need for support and ongoing intervention.
- Identify the need for and provide appropriate assistance with washing, bathing, shaving and dressing
- Monitor wounds and undertake simple wound care using appropriate evidence-based techniques.

4. Provide support with nutrition and hydration:

- Assist with feeding and drinking and use appropriate feeding and drinking aids
- Record fluid intake and output to identify signs of dehydration or fluid retention and escalate as necessary
- Support the delivery of artificial nutrition using NGT

5. Provide support with maintaining bladder and bowel health:

- Observe and monitor the level of urinary and bowel continence to determine the
- Need for ongoing support and intervention
- Assist with toileting, maintaining dignity and privacy and use appropriate continence products
- Care for and manage catheters for all genders

6. Provide support with mobility and safety:

- Use appropriate assessment tools to determine, manage and escalate the ongoing risk of falls
- Use a range of contemporary moving and handling techniques and mobility aids
- Use appropriate moving and handling equipment to support people with
- Impaired mobility.

7. Provide support with respiratory care: take and be able to identify normal SO₂ and oximetry measurements

8. Preventing and managing infection:

- Observe and respond rapidly to potential infection risks using best practice guidelines
- Use standard precautions protocols
- Use aseptic, non-touch techniques

- Use appropriate personal protection equipment
- Implement isolation procedures
- Use hand hygiene techniques
- Safely decontaminate equipment and environment
- Safely handle waste, laundry and sharps.

9. Meeting needs for care and support at the end of life:

- Recognise and take immediate steps to respond appropriately to uncontrolled symptoms and signs of distress including pain, nausea, thirst, constipation, restlessness, agitation, anxiety and depression
- Review preferences and care priorities of the dying person and their family and carers, and ensure changes are communicated as appropriate
- Provide care for the deceased person and the bereaved, respecting cultural requirements and protocols.

10. Procedural competencies required for administering medicines safely:

- Continually assess people receiving care and their ongoing ability to self-administer
- Their own medications. Know when and how to escalate any concerns
- Undertake accurate drug calculations for a range of medications
- Exercise professional accountability in ensuring the safe administration of
- Medicines to those receiving care
- Administer medication via oral, topical routes
- Administer injections using subcutaneous and intramuscular routes and manage injection equipment
- Administer and monitor medications using enteral equipment
- Administer enemas and suppositories
- Manage and monitor effectiveness of symptom relief medication
- Recognize and respond to adverse or abnormal reactions to medications, and when and how to escalate any concerns
- Undertake safe storage, transportation and disposal of medicinal products.

Self-assessment 3.3

- Describe five procedures within the scope of practice of an associate nurse.
- Which procedures are included in preventing and managing infection?

3.4. End Unit Assessment

End unit assessment

Section 1 : Multiple choice questions

Read the following options and choose the right answer

- 1) Among the following activities, which one is within the competence of an associate nurse?
 - a) Administer drug for malaria
 - b) Perform urinary catheter
 - c) Plan care for the patient in post-operative care
 - d) Evaluate the performance of the staff
- 2) Among the following activities, which one is a managerial activity?
 - a) Vaccination
 - b) Administer drug for malaria
 - c) Provide a report on the number of patients
 - d) Evaluate the performance of the staff
- 3) Among the following activities, which one is an educational activity?
 - a) Evaluate the performance of the staff
 - b) Teach nursing students during their internship
 - c) Provide supplement food to children

Section 2: Read the following statement and answer with T if the statement is true or F if the statement is false:

- 1) The associate nurse in the unit is not responsible for the good utilization of materials in their assigned services.
- 2) The associate nurse conducts home visits for the delivery of health services to individuals, families, and the community.
- 3) The scope of practice describes the services that a qualified health professional is allowed and competent to perform.

Section 3: Case study

Each health institution offers many services to the public, and among these services are the admission of the client in the hospitalization unit or being cared for in outpatient consultation, and each client receives required care.

To ensure the promotion of the client's health and well-being, collaboration with the multidisciplinary team is very important in caring for the client.

A client suffering from long-lasting gastritis was admitted after a road accident and has left an arm fracture which needs surgical intervention for better management. The client needs medication to reduce pain, a radiograph of the fracture, and to be prepared for surgical intervention.

According to the scope of practice and activities to be carried out in caring for this client:

1. List activities to be carried out by an associate nurse.

SECTION 4. ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

4.1 . Remedial activities

All of you have already been in a health institution and observed different activities carried out by the nurse.

- a) Identify 5 activities that can be carried out by an associate nurse without supervision.
- b) If, as an associate nurse, you are assigned a task that is not within your competence, what will you do?

4.2 Consolidation activities

- 1) Identify 4 roles of an associate nurse.
- 2) By using 4 examples, explain the scope of practice for an associate nurse.

4.3 Extended activities

A 20-year-old female has been at the health centre with a headache, fever, and loss of appetite. The nurse starts by taking vital signs as the client appears tired. The client has a temperature of 40°C. The nurse decides to withdraw a blood sample for laboratory investigation and then gives medication to reduce the body temperature while waiting for the result of the blood examination. After receiving the blood results, the client is diagnosed with malaria.

According to the scope of practice of a nurse:

- 1) Is the nurse competent to provide treatment to this client? Why?
- 2) If the client receives appropriate treatment for malaria, what should the nurse do to prevent complications and relapse of malaria?
- 3) If the client manifests signs of anemia (insufficient blood in the body), which health professional is competent to treat this client adequately?

Key Unit competence:

To demonstrate good decision-making when facing an ethical issue in nursing practice.

4.0 Introductory activity

Ms. K., a 12-year-old, has been admitted to an acute care hospital for an emergency appendectomy. Her parents have been given information about the surgery and what to expect in the immediate postoperative period. Three members of the nursing staff have also assured these anxious parents that they will be notified as soon as K. is admitted to the post-anesthetic area or sooner if there are complications with the procedure.

After the surgical intervention, while the client was in the recovery room, the intravenous catheter was leaking fluid and blood from the vein, and the client's bed was dirty and wet. The caregiver informed the nurse in charge of the recovery room, but the nurse didn't react. Thirty minutes later, the client was agitated, sweating, and the monitor showed a low blood pressure. When the nurse arrived later, she began by blaming the mother for being careless about the child. She then started to insert a new catheter into the vein, but the phone rang, and she answered it. The catheter leaked blood onto the bed, and when she resumed the procedure, the catheter was obstructed. The client and her mother refused to be punctured again and complained to the in-charge of the surgical unit about not being well cared for.

From the above case of Ms. K., identify the ethical principles that would be appropriate for the nursing staff to apply:

1. Identify the ethical issues that may arise in the scenario above.
2. Identify the ethical principles that were respected in this case.
3. Explain the ethical principles of nursing care that were violated.

4.1. Ethical principles in nursing practice

Learning activity 4.1

Miss.J., a 16-years old, is received at the health centre to asking for abortive contraceptive method. The nurse asks her about her sexual life and Ms J admits that she had sexual intercourse with her father. The mother is not yet informed. The nurse is a friend to Ms. J's family and is quite close to J's mother. Ms. J's father is a policeman and it is not easy to communicate with him. The nurse is quite confused by this news and is not sure how to help Ms. J, who is very anxious and promising to have unsafe abortion before being discovered by her mother or to prefer dying.

1. Explain how the nurse is going to apply ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence and non-maleficence for this client.

4.1.0. Definition of Ethics

World Health Organization: "ethics is concerned with moral principles, values and standards of conduct" (WHO, 2016). Ethical issues are event which occur when a given decision, scenario or activity creates a conflict with a society moral principles. This may arise with individuals or institution since any of their activities might be put to question from an ethical point view, Ethics, is one of the cross-cutting themes relevant and crucial component to all health care professionals (both in pre-service & in-service).

The principles of ethics included respect for persons autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice.

The concept of autonomy is an important extension of this principle; acting autonomously means that the actions are the result of the person's own deliberation and choices. The principle of beneficence is often simply stated as an obligation to act in ways that promote good. The principle of non-maleficence states that we should act in ways that do not inflict evil or cause harm to others. While a general principle of justice requires that we act in ways that treat people equitably and fairly

4.1.1. Autonomy and Beneficence

Moral principles are useful in ethical decisions about which action is right or wrong in a situation especially in health care

a) Autonomy: in health care, respect for autonomy refers to the commitment to include patients in decisions about all aspects of care as a way of acknowledging and protecting a patient's independence. the promotion of independent choice, self determination and freedom of action, the independence and ability to be self-directed or Self-governance and self-determination in health care provision. This means that clients are entitled to make decision about what will happen to their body

Autonomy is a principle and notion of moral decision making which hold that a rational person (defined by age and mental ability) has the capacity to make informed and voluntary decisions. Such a person would need to duly consider and comprehend the risks and benefits of each choice, based on clear information and without any controlling influences (e.g., fear, coercion, bribery).

Autonomy is also the capability to have input into determining your own well-being (Purtilo & Doherty, 2016), or self-rule that is free from both controlling interference by others and limitations that prevent meaningful choice' (Beauchamp & Childress p.101)

For example, when a patient is facing surgery, the surgeon has an obligation to review the surgical procedure, including risks and benefits, out of respect for the patient's autonomy. The consent that patients read and sign before surgery respects patient's autonomy.

b) Beneficence: Beneficence is doing or active promotion of good, refers to taking positive actions to help others. The principle of beneficence is fundamental to the practice of nursing and medicine and refer to all forms of action intended to benefit others. This is done by providing health benefits to the clients, balancing the benefits and risks of harm, considering how a client can be best helped. Example: a child who has fever has a risk of developing seizures. And respiratory arrest, if you reduce fever you prevent seizures and promote child health (doing good).

In the line of beneficence, Fundamental responsibilities of nurses are

1. To promote health
2. To prevent illness
3. To restore health
4. To alleviate suffering

(ICN, 2012; Sezibera & Karugarama, 2011)

4.1.2. Non-maleficence and Justice

a) Non-maleficence: Maleficence refers to harm or hurt; thus no maleficence is the avoidance of harm or hurt. In health care, ethical practice involves not only the will to do good, but the equal commitment to do no harm to the client. The health care professional tries to balance the risks and benefits of care while striving at the same time to do the least harm possible. The nurse must weigh the harm against the expected benefit and avoiding deliberate, risk of harm that occurs during the performance of nursing actions.

Non-maleficence is a principle which holds that no intentional or predictable harm or injury should be charged against a person, either through acts of commission or omission. The concept of intention is important in an understanding of non-maleficence. It holds that if a person intended to not harm first, but the end result was harmful, he/she did not act immoral. Non-maleficence is also intentionally refraining from actions that contribute to harm (Beauchamp & Childress, 2013; Putilo & Doherty, 2016)

b) Justice: justice refers to fairness. Most often used in discussions about access to health care resources, including the just distribution of resources. Justice is the promotion of equity or fairness in every situation a nurse encounters. Care must be fairly, justly, and equitably distributed among a group of patients as it can be compared to fair distribution of goods in the society

Self-assessment 4.1

Mr. K. is a senior nurse who has been working in the Internal Medicine unit for more than 15 years. He has acquired experience in caring for different clients suffering from different pathologies. A client suffering from hemiplegia (paralysis of one side of the body) was admitted for further investigations and better management of hemiplegia. The blood sample for laboratory investigations needed to be taken off; the client gave consent for the procedure but did not consent to a urinary catheter as she had urinary incontinence. While the nurse was inserting a catheter in the vein, the phone rang and he answered it. The catheter began draining blood into the bed, and when he resumed the procedure, the catheter was no longer draining blood. The client refused to be punctured again and complained to the in-charge of the Unit about not being well cared for by the nurse.

- 1) Enumerate the ethical principles that were not respected.
- 2) How can we describe the behavior of the nurse in the above scenario?
- 3) Was the urinary catheter necessary for the client? If yes, how can we proceed to convince the client?

4.2. Ethical issues in nursing profession

Learning activity 4.2



Mr. N., a 50-year-old patient, was admitted to the surgical ward for postoperative care. He had a body temperature of 37.40 C (degrees Celsius), a heart rate of 96 beats per minute, SpO₂ of 98%, and blood pressure of 102/62 mmHg. He underwent an operation for the removal of an appendix that was infected, and the surgical procedure was successful. However, this patient did not have health insurance; he was treated due to the emergency situation, and currently, the social agent has discovered that he is unable to pay for the surgical intervention as well as for other medicines and procedures required after the operation.

- 1) What principle is challenged for this patient?
- 2) How can a nurse intervene to respond to the needs of this patient without compromising the financial policy of the health care institution?

Ethics are essential to the integrity of the nursing profession as they help ensure better patient care. Nursing is a highly fast-paced job with new challenges arising daily, and nurse managers across the country are all dealing with similar ethical dilemmas. Many of these situations are rooted in protecting patients' rights, adequate staffing, advanced decision-making, and quality patient care.

- **Informed Consent**

Informed consent can sometimes be an ethical battle for nurses. There is a concern as sometimes patients do not feel comfortable asking questions and giving consent without fully realizing the implications of their treatment. If patients feel supported and trust their doctors and nurses, they are more likely to follow a treatment plan and experience better outcomes. Nurses should ensure that patients fully understand all the facets of their treatment plans. The details include knowing all the risks

The details include knowing all the risks and understanding the layout of how a procedure will take place or how certain medications and treatments will affect them. Therefore, healthcare workers should take every measure to ensure their patients understand the treatment plan to obtain informed consent securely.

- **Protecting Patient Privacy and Confidentiality**

Patient privacy and confidentiality are significant ethical issues faced by nurses. If not done correctly, this can have legal ramifications and result in severe consequences for healthcare professionals. Although nurses must protect their patient's rights and act in their best interest, they are still obligated to respect patient autonomy. Patient autonomy is a right of patients to independently make decisions about their care based on personal or cultural belief systems. It is a prime principle of nursing and should be respected by all healthcare professionals. With patient autonomy, patients have the right to refuse medications, treatments, or procedures. Although this may conflict with suggestions made by nurses and doctors, nurses will still have to respect this decision and operate accordingly.

- **Shared Decision-Making**

Shared decision-making is a far more ethical approach to patient care than in the past when healthcare professionals fully controlled treatment decisions. Shared decision-making extends patient autonomy by allowing patients and healthcare professionals to work together to make the best decisions possible regarding care. Through shared decision-making, patients and healthcare professionals engage in open conversations about the patient's background, values, beliefs, and culture, building a trusting relationship. A strong relationship facilitates better communication and cooperation between patients and healthcare providers. When patients are actively involved in decision-making, they are more likely to be satisfied with their care and trust the treatment plans.

- **Addressing Advanced Care Planning**

Advanced care planning is always a difficult conversation for healthcare professionals, especially when it involves end-of-life care. These conversations occur between patients and doctors to plan for future healthcare if the patient becomes too ill to make their own decisions. Patients explore, discuss, and document their preferences regarding medical treatment. This process helps them identify their personal goals and values concerning future care. They also designate someone to make decisions on their behalf if they are unable to do so. For example, a patient may request not to be placed on a ventilator, even if their immediate family demands it. Despite such challenging scenarios, nurses must prioritize the needs and wishes of patients, especially in end-of-life care

- **Inadequate resources and staffing**

When medical facilities have scarce resources, patients are at risk of not receiving proper care leaving nurses to make difficult decisions. Hard decisions may also need to be made when facilities are faced with inadequate staffing levels. When there is not enough staff for patients, nurses do not have the time to do everything needed for each patient. Patient needs can include recovery times or even addressing the patient's emotional and physical needs. A nurses' moral obligations to patients are compromised due to work restraints and stress overload. They are left with mental struggles trying to decipher where they should focus their priorities.

Self-assessment 4.2

- 1) Give 5 ethical issues in nursing practice?
- 2) Describe 4 possible factors that may lead to conflict of interest in nursing practice.
- 3) What should a nurse do when conflict of interest occurs in his/her healthcare setting?

4.3. Health System and Ethical Challenges

Learning activity 4.3



Mrs.T. aged 68 years old is admitted in Accident and Emergency unit ward for pulmonary oedema and presents respiratory distress with dyspnoea SO2 65 % and is in unconscious status. Mr C. the nurse on the shift has no enough bed and is obliged to put the patient near the other patient who was treated from Covid 19 and tested negative with rapid test but yet the final result from a confirming test is not yet found and is waited in two hours.

- 1) What are the ethical issues presented in this situation G.?
- 2) Relate the ethical issue with the ethical principle challenged in this case?

a) Health system challenges

Health system policies or challenges can sometimes contribute to situations of ethical challenges

Examples:

- Shortage of healthcare professionals
- Large number of patients
- Health insurance payment structure: patients' lack of health insurance or money, delays in payments to hospital
- Inequity in distribution of equipment and materials, etc.

b) Challenges and Emerging Health Systems Issues in Rwanda

- Insufficiency of trained health care providers
- Lack of integration and accessibility of NCDs services at all levels of the healthcare system,
- Specialized NCDs services,
- High NCDs costs and lack of funds mobilization frameworks at global, regional and national levels,
- Lack of basic equipment and specialized infrastructure for NCDs,
- Essential drugs and advanced NCDs treatment, and
- Lack of proper NCDs data management

All of them they can indirectly contribute to ethical challenges (Yiika Sejdiu, 2018)

c) Dealing with Ethical Issues in Nursing

Every nurse should be familiar with the Code of Ethics for Nurses, the hospital's ethics committee, the hospital code of conduct, or a variety of educational resources. Some organizations have an ethics consultation service whose members assist staff in discussing any ethical issues that arise. Having a diverse team of nurses fosters an environment where conversations on ethical issues can occur within their units. These open dialogues benefit patients as they feel more welcomed and recognized by the hospital staff.

Example: Another ethical dilemma for nurses is the refusal of medication and vaccinations by patients and their family members. Vaccinations often become a highly debated topic, especially when it comes to childhood immunizations. Although it is a parent's right to refuse immunization for their child, healthcare professionals must communicate the health risks this poses for the child's future. Nurses must provide accurate information while also respecting the parents' boundaries.

Moral model to address ethical issues

The moral model is a nurse-generated, decision-making model originating from research on nursing-specific moral dilemmas involving client autonomy, quality of life, distributing resources, and maintaining professional standards. It consists of five or six steps:

The ethical decision-making process

- Define the ethical issue
- Identify internal and external factors
- Identify key values
- Identify the audiences that will be affected by your decision
- Select the ethical principles to guide you
- Make the decision and justify

Health Policy Concerns

Health policy concerns the choices that a society, or part of it, makes in regard to the health and welfare of its citizens. Nurses are frequently involved in health policy issues in everyday clinical settings.

Examples: Insufficiency of nursing staff, limited prescription authority, legalized abortion.

Moral Distress

Moral distress is defined as a painful state of imbalance experienced when nurses make a moral decision but are unable to implement it due to real or perceived institutional constraints, can be positively addressed in the workplace.

Example: A patient missing oxygen due to high demands during the COVID-19 pandemic

Self-assessment 4.3

- 1) What challenges in the health system can lead to ethical issues in nursing?
- 2) List 5 examples of health system issues currently occurring in Rwanda.

4.4. End unit assessment

End unit assessment

A. MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. The essence of justice refers to which of the following?
 - a) Giving money to poor patients for buying drugs
 - b) Providing appropriate care without discrimination
 - c) Identifying particular cases for social support
 - d) Bringing to court nurses who are unethical
2. The principle of non-maleficence is applied in which of the following actions?
 - c) Avoiding giving an injection to prevent harming the patient
 - d) Checking and verifying the correct drug and dose before injection
 - e) Avoiding reporting a nurse who is unethical to the patient
 - f) Hiding a patient who is vulnerable to drug abuse
3. Ethical issues arise due to which of the following situations?
 - a) Insufficient staff in nursing
 - b) Lack of support for professional development
 - c) Difficulties in health system policy
 - d) All of the above
4. An ethical dilemma refers to which of the following?
 - a) Informed consent
 - b) Disclosure of medical conditions
 - c) Incompetence among peers
 - d) All of the above
5. The principle of beneficence refers to which of the following nursing activities?
 - a) Communicating effectively and friendly with colleagues
 - b) Performing nursing care for assigned patients
 - c) Providing support when the number of nursing staff is insufficient
 - d) All of the above

6. The following actions violate the principle of non-maleficence except:
- Absenteeism
 - Reporting to the doctor when there is an error in the patient's drug prescription
 - Administering the wrong dose to the patient
 - Not documenting the data examined in the patient's file
7. The principle of autonomy is applied in which of the following situations?
- Providing health education
 - Ensuring patient privacy
 - Explaining the informed consent form
 - Providing the prescribed drug
8. Which of the following is the most appropriate reason to justify why nurses should respect clients?
- Respecting the culture
 - Religious customs
 - Inspiring trust from the client and the public
 - Practicing citizenship

B. SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

- What is an ethical issue in nursing?
- Give an example to illustrate an ethical issue.
- What are the challenges in the health system that may lead to ethical issues in nursing?

C. ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Remedial Activities

- Briefly explain the meaning of ethics in health care.
- List 4 qualities/traits of a good health professional that you would like to see in the nurse caring for a friend of yours.
- What are the primary moral principles of nursing practice?

2. Consolidation Activities

- Based on what you have observed in health institutions or discussed with your colleagues, what might be the causes of unethical behaviors?
- As a student in the associate nursing program, after learning about the ethical issues that may arise during nursing care, identify at least 4 common ethical issues that may occur in the workplace.

3. Extended Activity:

You are working in a health center receiving clients suffering from various health problems, including adults, middle-aged clients, and clients under 15 years old, but you do not have enough desks to seat everyone.

- a) Which clients would you select and accord more respect?
- b) What can you do to improve the working environment and the well-being of clients?
- c) Which nurse's value would you promote?

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