Ethical Principles



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Principles of Nurses

Autonomy
Autonomous-automobile
Providing the patient their options and giving them the opportunity to choose their plan of care is autonomy. This can be implemented into activities of daily living in order to facilitate wellness and progress. A nurse is in charge of the patient's well-being, education, and overall situational awareness in order to provide autonomy in decision making. It is important to respect the patient's wishes and advocate for them if there is a conflict between their wishes. Considering a patient's gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, and age into the team's decisions on plans of care.

Beneficence
Ben-Affleck-fence
Care with the patient's benefit in mind promotes beneficence. This is simply stated as to do good and the right thing. "Actions guided by compassion," is how the ANA describes beneficence.

Nonmaleficence
Nun-maleficent
Nonmaleficence is instilled in healthcare professionals, deeply rooted in either the Hippocratic Oath or the Nightingale Oath. To do no harm is nonmaleficence; harm can be intentional or unintentional. Choosing an intervention that promotes the least amount of harm is most beneficial to the patient. Nurses are under the obligation to report when a patient has homicidal or suicidal ideations.

Justice
Lady-justice
Nurses must be fair when delivering care to patients and family members. Justice is to provide care equitably, among all the patients a nurse is assigned to. Treatment must be free of individual's biases, financial capabilities, religious and political beliefs. Fairness is a key principle nurses abide by in order to provide justice.

Fidelity
Fiddle
As a nurse, it is important to keep a promise to a patient. Nurses are trusted to be faithful to their word and this oath is to be done in a timely, safe, and professional manner.

Veracity
Verified-check
Provision of truth promotes trust in a patient's team. With the principle of veracity, the nurse will tell the truth to the patient, no matter the outcome.

Accountability
Accountant
Nurses are responsible for decisions made in the healthcare system and are expected to have integrity with each action. All professional and personal consequences are intertwined once a nurse has his/her license to practice. Accepting responsibility for all actions is a key principle in nursing.

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History on Nursing Ethical Principles

Nightingale Pledge

Nightingale Pledge

Florence Nightingale is the founder of modern nursing and has been said to have created the initial code of ethics in 1893. The Nightingale Pledge is similar to the Hippocratic Oath which is taken by medical doctors. As time progressed, the American Nurses Association (ANA) took over the oath, formulated an official code of ethics for nursing, as well as regulates the code to enhance nursing care.

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