

Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements



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by Scott D.C. Stern

★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ 4.6 out of 5

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The Code of Ethics for Nurses (CEN) is a set of ethical principles and guidelines that nurses follow to guide their practice and interactions with patients, colleagues, and the public. The CEN was first developed by the American Nurses Association (ANA) in 1950 and has been revised several times since then, most recently in 2015. The CEN is based on the ANA's mission to advance the health of the public and provide a high level of patient care.

The CEN consists of two parts: the Code of Ethics and the Interpretive Statements. The Code of Ethics is a set of nine principles that provide general guidance on ethical decision-making in nursing practice. The Interpretive Statements provide more specific guidance on how the principles apply to specific situations that nurses may encounter in their work.

Principles of the Code of Ethics

The principles of the CEN are:

1. **Provide Care:** Nurses provide care with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and uniqueness of every individual, unrestricted by considerations of social or economic status, personal attributes, or the nature of the health problem.
2. **Promote Health:** Nurses promote health and well-being by assessing, diagnosing, and treating human responses to actual or potential health conditions.
3. **Preserve Dignity:** Nurses preserve the dignity of individuals by protecting their privacy and the confidentiality of their health information.
4. **Respect Rights:** Nurses respect the rights of individuals to make informed decisions about their care and to refuse treatment.
5. **Advocate:** Nurses advocate for the health, safety, and rights of individuals and for access to health care services.
6. **Respond to Ethical Dilemmas:** Nurses respond to ethical dilemmas by using a systematic and ethical decision-making process.
7. **Create a Caring Environment:** Nurses create a caring environment by providing comfort and support to individuals and their families and by promoting a culture of respect and compassion.
8. **Provide Ethical Leadership:** Nurses provide ethical leadership by promoting ethical practice, safeguarding the profession, and advancing knowledge.

9. **Promote Professional Growth:** Nurses promote professional growth by continuing their education and by mentoring other nurses.

Interpretive Statements

The Interpretive Statements provide more specific guidance on how the principles of the CEN apply to specific situations that nurses may encounter in their work. The Interpretive Statements are organized into four sections:

1. **The Nurse-Patient Relationship**
2. **The Nurse-Colleague Relationship**
3. **The Nurse-Society Relationship**
4. **The Nurse as a Professional**

Each section contains a number of specific statements that provide guidance on ethical issues that nurses may encounter in their work. For example, the section on the Nurse-Patient Relationship includes statements on issues such as confidentiality, informed consent, and the nurse's role in end-of-life care. The section on the Nurse-Colleague Relationship includes statements on issues such as coworker relationships, bullying, and whistleblowing. The section on the Nurse-Society Relationship includes statements on issues such as public health, environmental health, and social justice. The section on the Nurse as a Professional includes statements on issues such as professional development, continuing education, and ethical decision-making.

Application of the Code of Ethics

The CEN is a valuable resource for nurses in all practice settings. It provides guidance on ethical decision-making and helps nurses to navigate

the complex ethical issues that they may encounter in their work. The CEN is also used by nursing schools to teach ethics to nursing students and by hospitals and other healthcare organizations to develop policies and procedures that promote ethical practice.

The CEN is a living document that is constantly being revised and updated to reflect the changing healthcare environment. The most recent revision of the CEN was in 2015, and the ANA is currently working on a new revision that is expected to be released in 2025.

The CEN is an essential resource for nurses in all practice settings. It provides guidance on ethical decision-making and helps nurses to navigate the complex ethical issues that they may encounter in their work. The CEN is a living document that is constantly being revised and updated to reflect the changing healthcare environment. The ANA is committed to ensuring that the CEN remains a valuable resource for nurses for years to come.

References

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3. Gallagher, A. M. (2017). The nurse's role in ethical decision-making. OJIN: The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing, 22(2).

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