



CODES AND DECLARATIONS

The Code of ethics for nurses: Romanian Nursing Association*

Introduction

This *Code of ethics* is the first such publication in Romania and is addressed to nurses who can use it as a working tool for making decisions, for reflection and for (self) evaluation. At the same time, it offers information to all professionals within the health care system, as well as to the general population, concerning the moral conduct expected of nurses. Such a code shows the acceptance of professional responsibility as well as the trust invested by society in this profession.

The problems faced in nursing practice can be legal or moral. This Code addresses only the moral dimension. It describes the general principles that guide professionals in their activities. Every nurse is responsible for his or her own professional conduct to be according to the principles of this Code. In order to understand and apply correctly the theories, concepts and principles of this *Code of ethics* we recommend that it is used in conjunction with the *Guidelines for ethics in nursing for Romanian nurses*, in which these notions are further elaborated (see pp. 66–78 of this issue of *Nursing Ethics*).

Nurses and clients

In his or her activity, the nurse:

- 1) *Respects human beings as biopsychosocial entities in interrelationship with the environment and the values and principles of his or her life*

In this context, he or she knows that:

- Each person is a unique being and he or she is caring for him/her without discrimination of economic, social, political or any other status or concern.
- A person is a whole being of body, mind and spirit, and his or her well-being is the result of the balance between all of these.

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- Care is offered with the aim of promoting health and preventing disease, recognizing the patient's needs for independence as soon as possible, alleviating suffering and supporting him/her during the last moments of life.
- 2) *Delivering care in a safe therapeutic environment:*
- By assuring a therapeutic environment, as this will influence the physical and psychological well-being of the patient;
 - By planning and choosing the nursing care with the patient, keeping in mind his or her limits of competence.
- 3) *Building together with the family and significant others a functional relationship for collaboration*
- The relationship between the nurse and the patient represents a process based on mutual trust, dignity and respect.
 - Information offered to the patient and his or her significant others has to be accurate, adequate for the situation and according to the nurse's limits of competence.
 - The right to intimacy has to be assured by confidential information and disclosure of information only in the following situations:
 - with the patient's consent;
 - for reasons of law;
 - when there is a prior public interest.
 - If the safety of confidential information is in danger, the nurse takes a positive position.
- 4) *Respecting the person and his or her rights and freedom:*
- By delivering individual care according to the specific needs of an individual, family or community;
 - By respecting the identity of the cared-for person;
 - By respecting the choices/decisions of the cared-for person who is well informed, who can refuse nursing care/treatments, and who assumes in a conscious way the outcomes of such decisions;
 - By not abusing the vulnerability of the cared-for person;
 - By respecting the cared-for person and his or her interests in relation to other professionals, family and authorities.

Nurses and the profession

Nursing is the science and art of caring for human beings with competence, respect and dignity.

- 1) *In practice, the nurse is a professional who is liable from a legal and a moral point of view.*

- 2) *The nurse has the ability to apply in practice the knowledge, skills and attitude gained during the process of becoming a professional:*
 - By using any opportunity to maintain and improve his or her competences;
 - By assuring the quality of nursing services according to given standards;
 - By informing the persons in charge and appropriate authorities of any circumstances that can cause damage to the cared-for person or which are incompatible with safety standards in practice;
 - By declaring any limitations on his or her competences;
 - By documenting any intervention and, if it concerns delegated interventions, carrying them out only after the person prescribing them has documented them.
- 3) *The nurse participates in any action that furthers the progress of the profession:*
 - By participating in the professional training of future nurses and by being concerned with continuing education;
 - By assuring the protection of the profession, participating in improving the knowledge base and skills in nursing as a member of a professional organization;
 - By carrying out research in nursing and/or implementing such results in practice;
 - By experience and authority in the context of professional training enabling their partners to develop their competences according to their own and society's needs;
 - By participating in the elaboration of policies at health units and by improving the standards of nursing practice and the quality of conditions in hospitals, managing resources and improving demographic data.
- 4) *The nurse has to maintain professional conduct so as not to damage the profession or the professional community of which he or she is a member:*
 - By avoiding participation in actions that may be contrary to health.

Nurses and society

- 1) *The nurse is committed to:*
 - Organizing health education activities for individuals, families and communities in order to promote health and prevent illness, and being a model for others in his or her life style;
 - Acquiring knowledge of problems of individuals and communities, enabling people to become active and responsible partners in solving their health problems;
 - Supporting clients and members of the community in training them in (self)care skills.
- 2) *When asked, or of his or her own volition, the nurse collaborates with other professionals, bodies or authorities, to solve health problems in the community.*

- 3) *The nurse does not participate in actions of publicity, commerce or any other activity that may cause damage to the profession or is against ethical conduct or may prejudice the health of others.*
- 4) *The nurse has the moral obligation to express his or her opinion in front of legislative institutions/bodies or in front of the person who is making decisions concerning the activity of care for health, always with the aim of supporting the cared-for person.*

The nurse and colleagues

- 1) *The nurse works in co-operation with all other health care workers in a team, but always with the aim to further the patient's interest.*
 - Nursing decisions are made in teams.
 - The nurse can take a leading role in improving the working relationships with other professionals.
 - Within the health care team, the nurse assumes individual and group responsibility and liability.
 - The nurse co-ordinates the care plan with other therapeutic plans and is concerned with the results of this collaboration.
- 2) *The nurse does not cover up his or her mistakes or those of his or her colleagues, and keeps an objective attitude.*
 - He or she is concerned with ethical thinking and behaviour in nursing.
- 3) *The nurse does not discuss and/or comment in the presence of the patient the caring interventions of colleagues or other professionals.*
 - The nurse maintains a relationship of co-operation and partnership with colleagues and other members of the health care team.