

Introduction to nursing

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Ethics versus Morality

- Ethics is derived from the Greek word ethos, meaning custom or character.
- Ethics can be defined as the branch of philosophy dealing with standards of conduct and moral judgment.
- It refers to a method of inquiry that assists people to understand the morality of human behavior. (i.e. it is the study of morality).

- When used in this sense, ethics is an activity; it is a way of looking at or investigating certain issues about human behavior. Ethics refers to the practices or beliefs of a certain group (i.e. Nursing ethics, Physicians' ethics).
- It also refers to the expected standards as described in the group's code of professional conduct.

- Ethics is concerned what ought to be, what is right, or wrong, good or bad.
- It is the base on moral reasoning and reflects set of values.
- It is a formal reasoning process used to determine right conduct. It is professionally and publicly stated. Inquiry or study of principles and values. It is process of questioning, and perhaps changing, one's morals.

- **Moral:** is principles and rules of right conduct. It is private or personal.
- Commitment to principles and values are usually defended in daily life

Types of Ethics

- **Descriptive:** It is the description of the values and beliefs of various cultural, religious or social groups about health and illness.
- **Normative:** a study of human activities in a broad sense in an attempt to identify human actions that are right or wrong and good and bad qualities. In nursing normative ethics addresses: scope of practice of different categories of nurses and, level of competence expected.
- **Analytical:** analyzes the meaning of moral terms. It seeks the reasons why these action or attitudes are either wrong or right.

- **Ethical Principles**

- Principles are basic ideas that are starting points for understanding and working through a problem. Ethical principles presuppose that nurses should respect the value and uniqueness of persons and consider others to be worthy of high regard. These principles are tenets that are important to uphold in all situations. The major principles of nursing ethics are:
 - **Autonomy**
 - **Beneficence**
 - **Nonmaleficence**
 - **Justice**

1. Autonomy

- Autonomy is the promotion of independent choice, self determination and freedom of action.
- Autonomy means independence and ability to be self-directed in healthcare.
- Autonomy is the basis for the client's right to self-determination.
- It means clients are entitled to make decision about what will happen to their body.

The term autonomy implies for basic elements

- The autonomous person is respected
- The autonomous person must be able to determine personal goals.
- The goals may be explicit or may be less well defined

The autonomous person has the capacity to

- decide on a plan of action.
- The person must be able to understand the meaning of the choice to be made and deliberate on the various options, while understanding the implications of possible outcomes.
- The autonomous person has the freedom to act upon the choices.

- Competent adult clients have the right to consent or refuse treatment even if health care providers do not agree with clients' decisions; their wishes must be respected.
- However, in most instances patients are expected to be dependent upon the health care provider.
- Often times health care professionals are insensitive to ways by which they dehumanize and erode the autonomy of consumers.

For example:

- Right after admission patients are asked about personal and private matters
- Workers who are new to patients may freely enter and leave the patients' room making privacy impossible

Four factors for violations of patient autonomy

- Nurses may assume that patients have the same values and goals as themselves
- Failure to recognize that individuals' thought processes are different
- Assumptions about patients' knowledge base
- Focus on work rather than caring

- Infants, young children, mentally handicapped or incapacitated people, or comatose patient do not have the capacity to participate in decision making about their health care.
- If the client becomes unable to make decisions for himself/ herself, this "surrogate decision maker" would act on the client's behalf.

- Autonomy of clients is more discussed in terms of larger issues such as: informed consent, paternalism, compliance and self-determination.

- **Informed consent:** is a process by which patients are informed of the possible outcomes, alternative s and risks of treatments and are required to give their consent freely.
- It assures the legal protection of a patient's right to personal autonomy in regard to specific treatments and procedures.
- Informed consent will be discussed in detail in selected legal facts of nursing practice

Paternalism:

- Restricting others autonomy to protect from perceived or anticipated harm.
- The intentional limitation of another's autonomy justified by the needs of another.
- Thus, the prevention of any evil or harm is greater than any potential evils caused by the interference of the individual's autonomy or liberty.
- Paternalism is appropriate when the patient is judged to be incompetent or to have diminished decision-making capacity.

Non-compliance:

- Unwillingness of the patient to participate in health care activities. Lack of participation in a regimen that has been planned by the health care professionals to be carried out by the client.

Noncompliance may result from two factors:

- When plans seem unreasonable to the patient
- Patients may be unable to comply with plans for a variety of reasons including resources, lack of knowledge, psychological and cultural factors that are not consistent with the proposed plan of care

2. Beneficence

- Beneficence is doing or promoting good. This principle is the basis for all health care providers. Nurses take beneficent actions when they administer pain medication, perform a dressing to promote wound healing or providing emotional support to a client who is anxious or depressed.
- This principle provides nursing's context and justification. It lays the groundwork for the trust that society places in the nursing profession and the trust that individuals place in particular nurses or health care agencies.

- The principle of beneficence has three components:
 1. Promote good
 2. Prevent harm
 3. Remove evil or harm

3. Nonmaleficence

- Nonmaleficence is the converse of beneficence. It means to avoid doing harm. When working with clients, health care workers must not cause injury or suffering to clients. It is to avoid causing deliberate harm, risk of harm and harm that occurs during the performance of beneficial acts. E.g. Experimental research that have negative consequences on the client.
- Nonmaleficence also means avoiding harm as a consequence of good. In that cases the harm must be weighed against the expected benefit

4. Justice

- Justice is fair, equitable and appropriate treatment. It is the basis for the obligation to treat all clients in an equal and fair way. Just decision is based on client need and fair distribution resources. It would be unjust to make such decision based on how much he or she likes each client

5. Veracity

- Veracity means telling the truth, which is essential to the integrity of the client-provider relationship
- Health care providers obliged to be honest with clients
- The right to self-determination becomes meaningless if the client does not receive accurate, unbiased, and understandable information

6. Fidelity

- Fidelity means being faithful to one's commitments and promises.
- Nurses' commitments to clients include providing safe care and maintaining competence in nursing practice.
- In some instances, a promise is made to a client in an over way
- Nurse must use good judgment when making promises to client. Fidelity means not only keeping commitment but also keeping or maintaining our obligation.

Confidentiality
coming soon

THANKS