Ethics Elements
- Serious Thoughts in a Cartoon -

2nd part: applications
2006, revised nov. 2012

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OBJECTIVES

. Clarify some basic principles that are likely to orient our nursing care.
. Think about their day-to-day application.
. Become acquainted with the nursing profession’s Code of Ethics.
WARNING
This document has no theoretical pretentions: it aims only to bring some concepts to the students’ reach.

The main topic here is applied ethics.

All the principles of ethics are not dealt with in this document and as to our professional Code, only the general articles are mentioned.

The images of this document belong to diverse sites identified in the webography. We thank them.
Whatever our field is, we must remember that the individual must be the center and the measure of everything.
SOME ETHICAL PRINCIPLES
Br Brit Brit! Mister Wizard, is there a recipe for ethics?

Yes thinking!!! And a few principles...
Here are some of the most obvious for nursing care!

Brit! Brit! Brit!!!
It’s not that simple!!!
Dino, please explain how these principles influence the nursing profession!

The ethical principles we are going to see are the basis of our Code of ethics.

With pleasure!
Precise professional rules were later be added to those principles.

And they really structure our work!

Obvious!
Principle of respect for individual dignity
Principle of respect for individual dignity

Moral obligation to consider the individual as a human being and not as a mere object of research or care, to respect him as a member of the human family.
This principle applies regardless of the person’s race, culture, religion, age, sex or I.Q.
According to our Code of ethics we are not allowed to refuse to take care of someone on the grounds of race, colour, sexual orientation, language, religion, social status or handicap. (art. 1.2)

We have there a first application of ethics to our professional Code.
This principle applies to the pretty bees like us, but what about the toads?!!!

It applies to everybody, to those who are different and especially to the weakest and smallest!!!
Tell me, does it apply to the disorganised, mentally ill patient?

And even to the homeless like us?

Of course! That’s obvious!!

And to the confused elderly person suffering from Alzheimer’s disease?
It is particularly important to respect this principle when dealing with:

- elderly persons, above all, if they are confused, insane or physically handicapped.
- patients suffering from mental disease.
- retarded children.
- anyone who is different because of language, race, religion or values.
We must give every one the same quality of care.

Even if someone has disturbing, disruptive behaviour???

Certainly!
To respect the individual’s dignity and uniqueness is also to take into account his day-to-day life with its experiences and its suffering. It also means expressing empathy and helping him according to his needs, his rhythms and his possibilities.
The nurse must also act with respect, even with the patient’s family! (art. div. II, 1.29)
Toucan, do you think that this includes a warm reception?

Yes, and support when facing great hardship, and if needed, information…
They are:

- respect for individual uniqueness,
- the right to difference,
- respect for integrity (wholeness),
- respect for individual inviolability.

The principle of respect for individual dignity is very extensive and includes other important aspects.
The patient’s respect makes us aware of our responsibility for many of our behaviours.

Yet, it would be much easier to hide it.
Here are some examples. According to this principle, do you know that a nurse must never show a behaviour which goes against what is allowed in our profession? (Div. 1 art. 1.3)

It is a question of respect for the patient!

Wake up, Kitty!!!
Am I respectful of the patients? Do you think that my uniform is okay??

Why do you have to criticize my manners?? I like making a buzz. What’s wrong with that?
I agree to change my appearance, but what should I change in my behaviour?!!

Respect goes a long way! It even leads us to think about our whole manner of functioning while taking care of patients!
If I take care of the patient in an aggressive way… (Div. II, art. 3.37)

If I behave like a birdbrain or with a lack of concern, am I committing a breach of ethics? ...

For sure!!

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Do you know that in line with this principle, in the scope of our functions, we must always keep a relationship of trust with patients…! (Div. II, art. 1.28)
Do you also know that a nurse must always subordinate her own interests to those of patients!
(Div. 1 art. 5.20)
Did you know that in the scope of her functions, in order not to place herself in a conflict of interests, the nurse must not have intimate, loving or sexual relations with a patient? (Div. II, art. 3.38)
The principle of respect for individual uniqueness
The individual’s uniqueness is a principle which obliges us to respect his particular character, what he is experiencing, what he is feeling and what he recognises of himself as being his own, in short to respect what forms his identity.

Please remind me. What is to be respected??
Each of us is unique in wealth and limitations !!!
Respect for individual uniqueness

Ethics requires that others respect my uniqueness, i.e. everything that composes my identity, everything that makes me what I am...!!!
By any chance, Dino, is it because each of us is unique that we must give personalised care to the patients?

You got it!!!

Gosh! There are so many implications!
Obviously, we are all different, with special colours, with values, and habits which are our own...

And they must all be respected!

Is this principle at the basis of the right to otherness?
The right to otherness

- Principle intimately related to respect for individual dignity and uniqueness.

- According to this principle, we must respect another’s way of thinking, of being in the world according to his reality and which is essentially different from that of others in its values, race, religion, opinions, aspirations and habits.

I am a little nervous!!!
But it is my way of being...
I have the right to otherness!!!

Why are you not like us???
Respect of the principle of otherness

- Our care milieus has become a medley of cultures and languages.
- We must adapt to values, habits and religious principles different from ours and we must respect them.
- At the same time, we must strive to help patients progress towards an optimal physical and psychological condition.
I am different and unique...

It is sometimes difficult to understand the values and habits of others...!!! But we must!
Respect for otherness

It implies:

- Trying to know the individual to understand him.
- Learning about his beliefs, taboos and religious restrictions and, as far as possible, taking them into account.
- Accepting and respecting him even if his values are different from ours.
Principle of respect for the person’s integrity/wholeness and inviolability
## Principles of integrity – of inviolability

| Obligation to protect life and the patient's wholeness in all its human dimensions - physical, psychological, social, spiritual - and his capacity as a self-aware being, conscious of his place in the world. |
| Obligation arising from the respect of the person’s dignity and integrity such that we cannot impose anything upon him against his will or gain access to his body without his explicit and informed consent. |
Because of the principle of respect of an individual’s wholeness, the nurse must ensure the patient’s security, warn in time in case of a complication, ensure the needed surveillance, take all possible means to maintain continuity of care.

(Div. III, 2.42, 44 et 45)

They forgot to keep an eye on me !!!

She must not be negligent in her care or in drug and treatment administration. Her attention must be constant.
In particular, when administering medication, a nurse "shall have sufficient knowledge of the medication and abide by the principles and methods applicable to its administration".  
(Div. III, art. 2.45)
Because of that principle of respect of patient integrity, like us the Saint-Bernard, you must give assistance to all endangered persons!!!

Evidently, unless there is a risk for yourself! (art. 1.1)
Of course Polly, according to this Code of ethics, the nurse must not show physical or verbal violence with the patient. (Div. II, art. 3.37)

Nor may she abandon the patient without reasons of the greatest importance. (Div. III, art. 2.43)
But there are also important interdictions. Right, Kitty???
Do you know that to insure the quality of care, the nurse must refrain from practicing in a state of mind weakened by substances which can cause a perturbation of her intellectual faculties?

(Div. 1, art. 3.16)
Thus, if I do not wash my hands properly and transmit a nosocomial disease, am I committing a serious breach of ethics ...???

Of course, Long-neck! It is a logical deduction!

But concerning the wholeness (integrity) other things occur more frequently...!
If I do not take into account the person’s needs his rhythm, his anxiety, I also do not respect his integrity (wholeness)…. It is about time you caught on!!
And according to the principle of respect of individual integrity and the obligation of care quality, the nurse must report to the authorities any error, accident or omission. (Div. 1, art. 2.12)

Do not forget, you must not hide anything!!
If I hide a mistake …??
(Div. 1, art.2.12)

It is very serious!

I hope you were not expecting congratulations??
And if I pinch something and nobody sees me…???

That is what you think Floppy-ears!

Think twice! It is a serious breach! A nurse shall never abuse the trust of her client. (Div. 1, art.2.11)
As for me, I respect their integrity!

Come on. Not even one little nibble?
And the principle of inviolability, what is that, Mister Owl???

It simply means that we cannot impose anything on the patient against his explicit will!
Oh! Kitty!!!

Do you believe that I should respect his inviolability and ask permission???
Yes indeed, but that is what it takes to become a professional.

Those are a lot of principles to respect! You are asking a lot from us!
Respect for individual privacy

- From the principles of respect for individual dignity and integrity follows respect for privacy.

- It is an ethical obligation:
  - not to uncover the patient’s body needlessly.
  - to protect him from indiscreet glances.
Respect for Privacy

- We have the ethical obligation:
  - to respect the patient’s private life, his personal space and his deep feelings,
  - not to ask unnecessary questions only to satisfy our own curiosity.

I would like you to respect my personal space
Respect for patient privacy

- This principle is very important in nursing.
- We must often touch the patient’s body during care.
- When we enter the person’s intimate zone, respect is essential.
- When we learn personal things about the patient or his family, we must remain discreet.
Because of that principle, intimate nursing care requires delicacy, gentleness and respect…
End of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} part. Come on, there is some more to learn in the 3rd part...!