



BERMUDA NURSING AND MIDWIFERY COUNCIL

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT- For Nurse & Nursing Associate

INTRODUCTION

The Bermuda Nursing and (BNMC) Code of Professional Conduct (The Code) applies to any Nurse including, Registered General Nurse, Registered Psychiatric Nurse, Advanced Practice Nurse, Nurse Specialist, Enrolled Nurse, and Nursing Associate registered with the BNMC. The purpose of The Code is to outline 7 facets of professional conduct and ethical values that every nurse, and nursing associate is expected to uphold.

The BNMC is guided by the International Council of Nurses (ICN) who state “nurses have four fundamental responsibilities: to promote health, prevent illness, to restore health and to alleviate suffering. The need for nursing is universal.”

THE CODE

As a nurse, or nursing associate, you are personally accountable for your practice. In caring for patients and clients, you must:

1. Respect the patient or client as an individual
2. Provide quality and compassionate care
3. Protect confidential information
4. Cooperate with others in the team
5. Maintain your professional knowledge and competence
6. Be trustworthy
7. Act to identify and minimize risk to patients and client

1. RESPECT THE PATIENT OR CLIENT AS AN INDIVIDUAL

As a nurse, or nursing associate you must respect the patient or client as an individual.

- You must recognize and respect the role of patients and clients as partners in their care and the contribution they can make to it. This involves identifying the patient preferences regarding care and respecting these within the limits of professional practice, existing legislation, resources and the goals of the therapeutic relationship.

2. PROVIDE QUALITY AND COMPASSIONATE CARE

- You are personally accountable for ensuring that you promote and protect the interest and dignity of patients and clients, irrespective of gender, age, race, ability, sexual orientation, economic status, lifestyle, culture and religious or political beliefs.
- You must, at all times, maintain appropriate professional boundaries in the relationship you have with patients or clients. You must ensure that all aspects of the relationship focus exclusively on the needs of the patient or client.
- You must promote the interests of patients or clients by facilitating individuals and groups gaining access to health and social care giving information and support relevant to their needs.
- You must report to a relevant person or authority, at the earliest possible time, any conscientious objection that may be relevant to your professional practice. You must continue to provide care to the best of your ability and within your scope of practice until the specific care provider/professional is available.

As a nurse, or nursing associate you must obtain consent before you give any treatment or care.

- All patients or clients have a right to receive information about their condition. You must be sensitive to their needs and respect the wishes of those who refuse or are unable to receive information about their health status. Information should be accurate, truthful and presented in such a way as to make it easily understood. You may need to seek legal or professional advice, or guidance from your employer, or supervisor about the giving or withholding of consent.
- You must respect patients' and clients' autonomy - their right to decide whether or not to undergo any health care intervention - even where a refusal may result in harm or death to them or a fetus, unless a court of law orders to the contrary. This right is protected in law, however in circumstances where the health of the fetus would be severely compromised by any refusal to give consent, it would be appropriate to discuss this matter entirely within the team, and possibly to seek external advice and guidance from the appropriate authority. Nursing Associate must consult with the Nurse, or legally authorized person.
- When obtaining valid consent, you must be sure that it is:
 - Given by a legally competent person.
 - Given voluntarily and
 - Informed.
- You should presume that every patient or client is legally competent unless otherwise assessed by a suitably qualified practitioner. A patient or client who is legally competent can understand and retain treatment information and can use it to make

an informed choice.

- Those who are legally competent may give consent in writing, orally or by co-operation. They may also refuse consent. Ensure that all your discussions and associated decisions relating to obtaining consent are documented in the patient's or client's health care record. Nursing Associate must consult with the Nurse, or legally authorized person.
- When patients or clients are no longer legally competent and thus have lost the capacity to consent or refuse treatment or care, you should investigate whether they have previously indicated preferences in an advance statement. You must respect any refusal of treatment or care given when they were legally competent, provided that the directive applies to the present circumstances and that there is no reason to believe that they have changed their wishes. When such a statement is not available, adhering to the patient's or client's wishes if known is vital. If these wishes are not known, the criteria for treatment must be that it is in their best interests. Nursing Associate must consult with the Nurse, or legally authorized person.
- The principles of obtaining consent apply equally to those people who have a mental illness. While you should be involved in their assessment, it will also be necessary to engage relevant people; this may include a psychiatrist. If patients or clients are detained under statutory powers (Mental Health Act), you must ensure that you know the circumstances and safeguards needed for providing treatment and care without consent. Nursing Associate must consult with the Nurse, or legally authorized person.
- In emergencies where treatment is necessary to preserve life, you may provide care without patient's or client's consent, if they are unable to give it, provided you can demonstrate that you are acting in their best interests and within your scope of Practice.
- No-one has the right to give consent on behalf of another competent adult. About relation to obtaining consent for a child, the involvement of this with parental responsibility in the consent procedure is usually necessary, but will depend on the age and understanding of the child. If the child is under the age of 18, you must be aware of legislation and local protocols. Nursing Associate must defer to the Nurse, or legally authorized person.
- Usually the individual performing a procedure should be the person to obtain the patient's or client's consent. In certain circumstances, you may seek consent on behalf of colleagues specially trained for that specific area of practice. Act within your Scope of Practice.

3. CLIENT CONFIDENTIALITY

- You must ensure that the use of complementary or alternative therapies is safe and in the interests of patients or clients. A discussion with the team is paramount as part of the therapeutic process and the patient or client must consent to their use. You must practice within your scope at all time.

As a nurse, or nursing associate you must protect confidential information.

- You must treat information about patients or clients as confidential and use it only for the purpose directed. As it is impractical to obtain consent every time you need to share information with others, you should ensure that patients or clients understand that some information may be made available to other members of the team involved in the delivery of care. You must guard against breaches of confidentiality by protecting information from improper disclosure at all times.
- You should seek patients' or clients' wishes regarding the sharing of information with their family and others directly involved and necessary for the provision of care. When a patient or client is considered incapable of giving permission, you should consult relevant colleagues.
- If you are required to disclose information outside the team that will have personal consequences for patients or clients, you must obtain their consent. If the patient or client withholds consent, or if permission cannot be obtained for whatever reason, a disclosure may be possible where:
 - Justification in the public interest (usually where disclosure is essential to protect the patient or client or someone else from the risk of significant harm).
 - They are required by law or by order of a court.
 - Where there is an issue of child protection, you must act at all times in accordance with local law (Children Act 1998).

As a nurse, or nursing associate you must co-operate with others in the team.

4. COOPERATE WITH OTHERS IN THE TEAM

- The team includes the patient or client, the patient's or client's family, informal caregivers and health and social care professionals in the Health Service, independent and voluntary sectors.
- You are expected to work co-operatively within the teams and to respect the skills, expertise and contributions of your colleagues. You must treat them fairly and without discrimination.

5. MAINTAIN PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCY

- You must effectively communicate and share your knowledge, skill and expertise with other members of the team as required for the benefit of the patient or client.
- Health care records are a tool to communicate within the team. You must ensure that the health care record for the patient or client is an accurate account of treatment, care planning and delivery. It should be consecutive, written with the involvement of the patient or client wherever practicable and completed as soon as possible after an event has occurred. It should provide clear evidence of the care planned, the decisions made, the care delivered and the information shared.
- When working as a member of a team, you remain accountable for your professional conduct, any care you provide and any omission on your part.
- Nurses may be expected to delegate care delivery to others who are not nurses .Such delegation must not compromise existing care but must be directed to meeting the needs and serving the interests of patients or clients. You remain accountable for the appropriateness of the delegation, for ensuring that the person who does the work is able to do it and is within their scope of practice and that provision is made for adequate supervision or support.
- You must cooperate with internal and external investigations.

As a nurse, or nursing associate, you must maintain your professional knowledge and competence.

- You must keep your knowledge and skills abreast with professional advances and developments. In particular, you should participate regularly in continuing education activities that develop your competence and performance.
- To practice competently, you must possess the knowledge, skills and abilities required for lawful, safe and effective practice without direct supervision.
- You must acknowledge the limits of your professional competence and only undertake practice and accept responsibilities for those activities in which you are competent and practice within your Scope of Practice.
- If an aspect of practice is beyond your level of competence or outside your level of registration, you must obtain help and supervision from a competent practitioner until you have acquired the requisite knowledge and skill or level of registration. You must always practice within your Scope of Practice.
- Nurses must facilitate students of nursing, midwifery, health visiting and others to

develop their competence.

- You have a responsibility to deliver care based on current evidence, best practice and where applicable, validated research when it is available.

As a nurse, or nursing associate you must be trustworthy.

6. BE TRUSTWORTHY

- You must behave in a way that upholds the reputation of the professions. Behavior that compromises this reputation may call your registration into question even if is not directly connected to your professional practice.
- You must ensure that your registration status is not used in the promotion of commercial products or service, declare any financial or other interests in relevant organizations providing such goods or services and ensuring any business considerations do not influence your professional judgment.
- When providing advice regarding any product or service relating to your profession role or area of practice, you must be aware of the risk that, on account of your professional title or qualification, you could be perceived by the patient or client as endorsing the product. You should fully explain the advantages and disadvantages of alternative products so that the patient or client can make an informed choice. Where you recommend a specific product, you must ensure that your advice is based on evidence and is not for your commercial gain.
- You must be respectful, responsible and accountable at all times when using all forms of communication - spoken, written, social media and networking sites.
- You must refuse any gift, favor or hospitality that might be interpreted, now or in the future, as an attempt to obtain preferential consideration.
- You must neither ask for nor accept loans from a patient/client, their relatives and or their friends.

As a nurse, or nursing associate, you must act to identify and minimize the risk to patients and clients.

7. ACT TO MINIMIZE RISK TO PATIENTS AND CLIENTS

- You must work with other members of the team to promote health care environments that are conducive to safe, therapeutic and ethical practice.
- You must alert the appropriate authority to protect patients and clients from risk if you have good reason to believe that you or a colleague, from your own or another profession, may not be fit to practice for reasons of conduct, health or competence.

- You should be aware of the terms of legislation that offer protection for people who raise concerns about health and safety issues.
- Where you cannot remedy circumstances in the environment of care that could jeopardize standards of practice, you must report them to a senior person with sufficient authority to manage them. This must be supported by a written account.
- When working as a manager, you have a duty toward patients, clients, colleagues, the broader community and the organization in which you and your colleagues work. When facing professional dilemmas, your first consideration in all activities must be the interests and safety of patients and clients.
- In an emergency, in or outside the work setting, you have a professional duty to provide care. A judgment is made based on the care provided against what could reasonably be expected from someone with your knowledge, skills and abilities when placed in particular circumstances.

International Council of Nurses (ICN) (2012). The ICN code of Ethics for Nurses.

Geneva: ICN.

National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) 2014. A Nurse's Guide to Professional Boundaries USA: NCSBN.

Nursing & Midwifery Council of United Kingdom (NMC) 2002.

Bermuda Nursing Council Standards of Practice for Nurses (2014)

Bermuda Nursing Council Standards & Scope of Practice for Nursing Associates (2017)

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