Nursing Council of Papua New Guinea

Code of

Professional Conduct
for

Nurses in

Papua New Guinea

September 2002
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Introduction

The Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses in Papua New Guinea (the Code) is a set of expected national standards of nursing conduct for Papua New Guinea nurses. The Code is not intended to give detailed professional advice on specific issues and areas of practice, rather, it identifies the minimum requirements for conduct in the profession. A breach of the Code may constitute professional misconduct or unprofessional conduct.

The nursing profession expects that nurses will conduct themselves personally and professionally in a way that will maintain public trust and confidence in the profession. Nurses have a responsibility to the individual, society, and the profession to provide safe and competent nursing care which is responsive to individual, group and community needs, and the profession.
Purpose

The purpose of the Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses in Papua New Guinea is to:

- Set an expected national standard of conduct for the nursing profession,
- Inform the community of the standards for professional conduct of nurses in Papua New Guinea, and
- Provide consumer, regulatory, employing and professional bodies with a basis for decisions regarding standards of professional conduct.
The Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses requires each nurse to:

- Practise in a safe and competent manner.
- Practise in accordance with the agreed standards of the profession.
- Not bring discredit upon the reputation of the nursing profession.
- Practice in accordance with laws relevant to the nurses' area of practice.
- Respect the dignity, culture, values and beliefs of individual and any significant other person.
- Support the health, well-being and informed decision-making of an individual.
- Promote and preserve the trust that is inherent in the relationship between nurses and individuals with respect to both their person and their property.
- Treat personal information obtained in a professional capacity as confidential.
- Refrain from engaging in exploitation, misinformation and misrepresentation, in regard to health care products and nursing services.

All Registered Nurses are expected to be familiar with the key principles of the Codes and to abide by them in their practice.
Explanatory Statements

The explanatory statements form part of the Code and may be used to clarify the meaning and scope of operation of that provision.

1. **A nurse must practise in a safe and competent manner.**

   - A nurse is personally accountable for the provision of safe and competent nursing care. Therefore it is the responsibility of each nurse to maintain the competence necessary for current practice.

   - Maintenance of competence includes participation in ongoing professional education to maintain and upgrade knowledge and skills relevant to practice in a clinical, management, education or research setting.

   - A nurse must be aware that undertaking activities that are not within their scope of practice may compromise the safety of an individual. The scope of practice is based on each nurse’s education, knowledge, competency, extent of experience and lawful authority.

   - Nurses will advise the appropriate authorities or employers of their scope of practice including any limitations.

   - When an aspect of care is delegated, a nurse must ensure that delegation is appropriate and does not compromise the safety of an individual.

   - A nurse has an obligation to practise in a safe and competent manner that is not compromised by personal health limitations.
Explanatory Statements

2. A nurse must practise in accordance with the agreed standards of the profession.
   - A nurse is responsible to ensure that the standard of that nurse’s practice conforms with professional standards with the object of enhancing the safety of the individual, any significant other person and colleagues.
   - A nurse’s primary responsibility is to provide safe and appropriate nursing services. Any circumstances which may compromise professional standards, or any observation of questionable or unethical practice, will be made known to an appropriate person or authority. If the concern is not resolved and continues to compromise safe and appropriate care, a nurse must intervene to safeguard the individual and notify the appropriate authority.

3. A nurse must not bring discredit upon the reputation of the nursing profession.
   - The actions of a nurse in their personal life may have an adverse impact on their reputation and on the profession, and may have adverse therapeutic outcomes.
   - The conduct of a nurse must at all times maintain and build public trust and confidence in the profession.

4. A nurse must practise in accordance with laws relevant to the nurse’s area of practice.
   - Nurses must be familiar with relevant laws to ensure that they do not engage in practices prohibited by such laws or delegate to others activities prohibited by those laws.
Explanatory Statements

5. **A nurse must respect the dignity, culture, values and beliefs of an individual and any significant other person.**
   - In planning and providing effective nursing care, a nurse must consider and respect cultural values and beliefs, personal wishes and decisions of individuals and any significant other person.
   - A nurse must promote and protect the interests of an individual, irrespective of gender, age, race, sexuality, lifestyle, or religious or cultural beliefs.
   - In making professional judgements in relation to individual’s interests and rights, a nurse must not contravene any law or breach the human rights of any individual.

6. **A nurse must support the health, well being and informed decision-making of an individual.**
   - A nurse must inform an individual and any significant other person regarding the nature and purpose of that individual’s care, and assist that individual to make an informed decision.
   - In situations where individuals are unable to decide or speak independently, a nurse must endeavour to ensure that the perspective of that individual is represented by an appropriate advocate.
7. A nurse must promote and preserve the trust that is inherent in the privileged relationship between a nurse and an individual and respect both the person and property of that individual.

- Within a professional relationship between an individual and a nurse, there exists a power imbalance which makes the individual vulnerable and open to exploitation.

- An individual trusts that a nurse will cause no physical or psychological harm and will care for the possessions and property of that individual.

- A nurse has the responsibility to maintain a professional boundary between that nurse and an individual, and between that nurse and any significant other person.

- A nurse fulfils roles outside of the professional role, including family member, friend and community member. A nurse must be aware that dual relationships may compromise care outcomes and always conduct professional relationships with the primary intent of benefit to the individual.

- A sexual relationship between a nurse and an individual for whom they provide care is unacceptable. Consent is not an acceptable defence in the case of sexual or intimate behaviour within a relationship between a nurse and an individual for whom they provide care.
Explanatory Statements

8. A nurse must treat personal information obtained in a professional capacity as confidential.

- A nurse has a moral duty and a legal obligation to protect the privacy of an individual by restricting information obtained in a professional capacity to appropriate personnel and settings, and to professional purposes.

- A nurse must, where relevant, information an individual that in order to provide competent care, it is necessary for a nurse to disclose information that may be important to the clinical decision making by other members of a health care team.

- A nurse must, where practicable, seek consent from the individual or a person entitled to act on behalf of the individual before disclosing information. In the absence of consent, the nurse uses professional judgement regarding the necessity to disclose particular details, giving due consideration to the interests, well-being, health and safety of the individual and recognizing that the nurse is required by law to disclose certain information.

9. A nurse must refrain from engaging in exploitation, misinformation or misrepresentation in regard to health care products and nursing services.

- When a nurse provides advice about any product or services, the nurse must fully explain the advantages and disadvantages of alternate products or services so that an individual can make an informed choice. Where specific product or service is advised, a nurse must ensure that advice is based on adequate knowledge and not on commercial or other forms of gain.

- A nurse must accurately represent the nature of their services or care intended to be provided.

Recommendations for improving the Code or explanatory statements would be welcome and should be addressed to:

Registrar
Nursing Council of Papua New Guinea
PO Box 841
PORT MORESBY
National Capital District.

Code of Professional Conduct
Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses in Papua New Guinea¹
September 2002

Principle 1
Adhere to current legislation that impacts on nursing practice.

Criteria
1.1 The name of the nurse is registered with the Nursing Council of Papua New Guinea.
1.2 Renews registration annually as a practicing nurse.
1.3 Practise within legislation impacting on nursing practice and delivery of health care.

Principle 2
Provides safe and competent nursing care and adheres to PNG Nursing Competency Standards of practice.

Criteria
2.1 Provides safe and competent nursing care.
2.2 Is guided by a recognized professional code of ethics applied to nursing.
2.3 Uses knowledge and skills for the benefit of clients/community.
2.4 Is accountable for practising safely within own scope of practice.
2.5 Demonstrates expected competencies in the area in which currently engaged.
2.6 Is responsible for maintaining own professional standards.
2.7 Observes rights and responsibilities in the prescription, possession, use, supply, storage and administration of controlled drugs, medications and equipment.
2.8 Accurately maintains required records related to nursing practice.
2.9 Reports to an appropriate person or authority any limitations in professional expertise of personal health status or circumstances which could jeopardise client safety.
2.10 States any relevant conscientious objection that could impact on own scope of practice.

¹Adapted from Australian Nursing Council Inc. (ANCI) Code of Professional Conduct March 1999 and New Zealand Nursing Council of New Zealand Code of Conduct for Nurses and Midwives RP September 1999
**Principle 3**

Respects clients' rights, cultural and spiritual beliefs.

**Criteria**

3.1 Acknowledges and allows for the individuality of people.
3.2 Provides information to enable the client to exercise informed choice and consent to the delivery of professional nursing care.
3.3 Respects any privileged access, conferred by professional status to clients' information and their possessions, residences and workplaces.
3.4 Safeguards confidentiality and privacy of information obtained within the professional relationship.
3.5 Helps clients understand their rights and acknowledge their responsibilities related to the delivery of professional nursing.
3.6 Is aware of and guided by codes of rights and responsibilities in the PNG Constitution for clients and healthcare providers in area of practice.
3.7 Practises in a manner which is culturally and spiritually acceptable.
3.8 Respects the trust implicit in the professional nursing relationship.

**Principle 4**

Keeps up to date with professional development by gaining new knowledge and skills.

**Criteria**

4.1 Maintains and updates professional knowledge and skills in area of practice.
4.2 Takes responsibility for own professional development.
4.3 Is aware of own limitations and seeks assistance as necessary.
4.4 Uses professional knowledge and skills to promote client safety and well-being.
4.5 Acts in ways which contribute to the good standing of the nursing profession.
THE NURSING COUNCIL
Of
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Codes of Ethics
for
Nurses in Papua New Guinea

September 2002 Edition
Code of Ethics for Nurses in Papua New Guinea

Developed under the auspices of Nursing Council of Papua New Guinea.

Background

This Code of Ethics has been developed for nursing in Papua New Guinea context and is relevant to all nurses in all practice settings.

In March 2002 a workshop in Port Moresby convened by the Nursing Council of Papua New Guinea and funded by World Health Organization developed the first draft of PNG Nursing Competency Standards! The workshop also produced draft Code of Ethics² and Code for Professional Conduct³ for nurses. Participants represented Nursing Council of PNG, community and hospital health services, urban health clinics, nurse administrators and nurse educators in certificate and diploma programs, Training and Curriculum Unit, Human Resource Management Branch, Department of Health and PNG Nurses Association.

It participation of nurses and nursing organizations in Papua New Guinea whose many comments are acknowledged and appreciated.

The Code of Ethics outlines the nursing profession’s intention to accept the rights of individuals and to uphold these rights in practice.

Thus, the purpose of this Code of Ethics is to:

- Identify the fundamental moral commitments of the profession,
- Provide nurses with a basis for professional and self reflection on ethical practice, and
- Indicate to the community the moral values which nurses can be expected to hold.

Introduction

The nurse’s primary professional responsibility is to people requiring nursing care. In fulfilling this responsibility nurses provide care and support before and during birth and throughout life, and alleviate pain and suffering during the dying process. Nurses enable individuals, families and groups to maintain, restore or improve their healthy status, or to be cared for and comforted when deterioration of health has become irreversible.

A traditional ideal of nursing is the concern for the care and nurture of human beings giving just and due consideration to their ethnicity, culture, gender, spiritual values, sexuality, disability, age, economic, social or health status, or any other grounds. Nurses respect and uphold the rights of Papua New Guinea people. The profession also acknowledges the cultural diversity in contemporary Papua New Guinea society.

Nursing care is based on the development of a therapeutic (connected with) relationship and the implementation and evaluation of therapeutic processes. Therapeutic processes include health promotion and education, counseling, nursing interventions and empowerment of individuals, families or groups to exercise maximum choice in relation to their health care.

Nursing practice is undertaken in a variety of settings. Any particular setting will be affected to some degree by processes, which are not within a nurse’s control or influence. The processes affecting nursing practice can include government policies, laws, resources constraints, institutional policies, management decisions, and the practice of other health care providers. Nurses also recognize the potential for conflict between one person’s needs and those of another, or of a group or community.

Such factors may affect the degree to which nurses are able to fulfill there moral obligations and /or the number and type of ethical problems they may face.

The Code of Professional Conduct supports the Code of Ethics for Nurses in Papua New Guinea. While the Code of Ethics focuses on the ethics and ideals of the profession, the Code of Professional Conduct identifies the minimum requirements for practice in the profession, and focuses on the clarification of professional misconduct and unprofessional conduct. The two Codes, together with competency standards, provide a framework for nursing.

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Code of Ethics for Nurses in Papua New Guinea

Nurses should:

1. Take responsibility to save and preserve life and promote optimal well-being of individuals and groups.
   1.1 Save life by managing emergencies in all settings.
   1.2 Take responsibility for providing health services to clients in all settings.
   1.3 Support clients and significant others in illness and other stressful situations.
   1.4 Share knowledge and skills that contribute to the promotion of health; and discourage harmful practices.

2. Provide quality nursing services and treat all with dignity and respect regardless of their place of origin, race, culture, gender, politics, social position, beliefs and behaviour.
   2.1 Nurses should respect each person's individual needs, values and cultural differences when providing care.
   2.2 Give people sufficient information to make informed choices in relation to their care.
   2.3 Nurses should respect traditional practices as being part of treatment and welfare of Papua New Guineans.

3. Accept responsibility and accountability for the outcomes of their Professional judgment and practice.
   3.1 If a client suffers as a result of a nurse's decision and/or actions, the nurses should accept responsibility and report the matter to the appropriate authority.
   3.2 Follow their consciences and exercise the right to refuse to participate in procedures, which they consider to be unethical and/or immoral.

4. Use professional judgment in carrying out nursing and/or medical interventions.
   4.1 Ensure that clients receive safe and adequate treatment/care. This is a moral and professional obligation.

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5. **Maintain good interpersonal and working relationships with members of the health profession and others involved in the provision of health care.**

5.1 Nurses should create, promote and maintain good relationships with all in their environment.

5.2 Respect the dignity of all persons,

6. **Keep confidential any information obtained in a professional capacity and use professional judgment in sharing such information, except when required by law.**

6.1 Information about clients should be kept confidential.

6.2 Nurses should never gossip about affairs arising in institutions or agencies.

7. **Develop attitudes and behaviours that will bring credit to themselves and the nursing profession.**

7.1 Nurses should ensure that they act in a responsible manner and maintain the respect and trust of the community. For example, they should not have intimate relationships with clients under their care; abuse clients; steal drugs, be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or taken an overdose.

8. **Be committed to the nursing profession and its growth and development, locally, nationally and globally.**

8.1 Value continuing education to maintain and increase knowledge and skills to promote the quality nursing care. Continuing education refers to formal and informal opportunities for education.

9. **Maintain their responsibility to the employer and uphold nursing standards.**

9.1 Nurses should fulfill their duty to the employer without comprising client care.

9.2 Nurses should give feedback to the employer concerning progress, problems, suggested solutions, needs and proposals for future development.

9.3 Nurses should take responsibility to fulfill their contractual obligations and accept rules and regulations set by the employer, while being mindful of upholding practice standards.

10. **Uphold the laws, rules and regulations of the profession, the institution and the nation.**

10.1 Nurses are expected to obey the rules and regulations that apply to them such as Nursing Council of Papua New Guinea, PNG Nurses Association and institutional regulations.

10.2 As citizens, nurses are expected to obey the laws of the country, to cooperate with institutional policy in accordance with hospital regulations and to contribute to peace and harmony in society.

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**Code of Ethics**

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1 Adapted from *Philosophy and Code of Ethics for Nurses in PNG 1988* and *Australian Nursing Council Inc. (ANCI) Code of Ethics for Nurses in Australia, 1999.*