Guide to the **Code** of **Ethics** for **Nurses**
with **Interpretive Statements** Development, Interpretation, and Application

Faculty Pak

Faculty Guide

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Marge Hegge, RN, MEd, MS, EdD, FAAN

Dr. Marge Hegge is a Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Nursing at South Dakota State University. Dr. Hegge holds a doctorate in higher education and two master's degrees. Dr. Hegge was inducted as a Fellow of the Academy of Nursing in 2012. She studied at the Kennedy Bioethics Center at Georgetown University and has designed and taught doctoral-level ethics courses. Dr. Hegge served eight years on the American Nurses Association Ethics Advisory Board, the last four years as chair. Most recently, Dr. Hegge served as Chair of the Steering Committee to revise ANA's *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements*.

Faculty Pak Objectives

The American Nurses Association's *Guide to the Code of Ethics for Nurses: Development, Application, and Interpretation* Faculty Pak introduces the concept of ethics and the nurse's responsibility to use the Code as a guide to clinical decision-making. Learning objectives for this Faculty Pak are listed below.

At the completion of these learning exercises, students will be able to:

1. Identify a moral or ethical dilemma in nursing practice.
2. Apply the ethical theories or principles of nursing care to an individual and family.
3. Discuss the multiple conflicting loyalties of the nurse to the patient, profession, employer, physician, insurer, and government.
4. Analyze provisions of ANA's *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements*.
5. Formulate a rationale for a position on an ethical issue using a contrasting framework.
6. Determine ethical implications of a technological development in healthcare.
7. Analyze the flaws in a discredited research study.

The learning objectives reflect knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be demonstrated by undergraduate students and reflect levels of learning domains. Mastery assessment is based on these objectives.

Background for the Educator

This Faculty Pak addresses essential content for baccalaureate nursing students. Every aspect of healthcare is embedded with ethical issues requiring analysis and decision-making. ANA's *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements* ("the Code") is the major source of guidance for these issues. If ethics is not an integral part of nurses' preparation for practice, students will not be equipped for the challenges facing them in the healthcare environment. Patients, nurses, and healthcare in general will all be enriched if nurses diligently learn and apply the Code.

The role for undergraduate students is primarily direct patient care, which the first sections of the Code address. As these new nurses mature, expand their roles, and embrace the larger profession of nursing, they will need the last sections of the Code to guide them in addressing social determinants of health, justice, and broader collaborative efforts to ensure healthy populations throughout the nation and internationally.

Overview of Materials

PowerPoint Slide Decks

The Faculty Pak features three PowerPoint Slide Decks that correspond to the three sections of the Code: nurses and patients (Provisions 1–3), boundaries of duty and loyalty (Provisions 4–6) and beyond individual patient encounters (Provisions 7–9). The slide decks should be viewed in order to follow the sequence of *Guide to the Code of Ethics for Nurses: Development, Application, and Interpretation*. There are discussion points embedded, with a symbol indicating a pause for dialogue, in several places to mark those places for student engagement.

Mini-Papers: A Nursing Dilemma and A Patient's Wishes

The two mini-papers are designed to expand the student's comprehension of the depth and scope of ethics in clinical practice. Each three-page paper is linked to a student outcome. A rubric is provided to clarify quality expectations.

Group Assignment: Case Study Analysis, Robbie's Case

A case is presented that includes a minor patient, conflicting opinions about the course of treatment, cultural elements, and a nurse faced with an ethical decision about truth telling at the end of life.

Divide the class into small groups of five for an analysis of this case, instructing students to arrive at a consensus, with justification. Ask each group to report out to the entire class. Compare the responses to see if decisions about the nurse's response differed or if varying rationale was used to justify the decision.

Debriefing Questions

Following this assignment, enhance student engagement and retention by posing some or all of the questions below.

1. What insights did you gain about a nurse's role in end of life care where family dynamics are touchy?
2. How does a nurse deal with conflicting opinions about a course of treatment?
3. To whom is the nurse most accountable: the patient, the patient's family, or the physician? How does a nurse balance these conflicting loyalties?
4. How does the Code guide you in the spur of the moment when a response is expected momentarily?
5. What ideas did this assignment prompt in your thinking?

Group Assignment: The Ethical Aspects of an Innovation

Students are to form small groups of three to five, select a technological innovation from the list provided in the "Assignments" document, analyze this innovation in terms of its ethical implications, and create a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation. Students should also prepare for a 10-minute class discussion after their presentation. Students will address the questions posed in the assignment, using the Code. Students will forecast advances in healthcare over the next ten years to determine how this innovation will influence patient care. A rubric is provided to clarify quality expectations.

Debriefing Questions

Following this assignment, prompt deeper thinking by posing the questions below.

1. What skill sets will nurses in the future need to cope with advancing technology?
2. The Code can't accurately predict innovations, yet it provides a framework for integrating new technology ethically into patient care. What is missing from the Code that would give future nurses more direction in adapting to new scientific advances?
3. As specializations and sub-specializations emerge with new science, will nurses practicing in these new frontiers need their own code of ethics to guide them in more specific practices? What will this do to the unity of the profession?
4. As you anticipate your own practice over the next two decades, how will you keep your skillsets and competencies at the cutting edge to keep pace with new technology?

Group Assignment: Provision Analysis

Divide the class into groups and assign one provision from the *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements* to each group, so that each of the nine provisions are assigned. Depending on the size of your class, groups may vary. Groups are to write a five-page paper, with references, responding to the questions posed in the "Assignments" document. Students will also present a 15-minute summary of their findings to the entire class, using PowerPoint, beginning with provision one and following in order through all nine provisions. A rubric is provided to clarify quality expectations.

Debriefing Questions

Following this assignment, prompt a deeper understanding by posing the questions below.

1. Given the pace of change, the shifting healthcare environment, and the expanding roles for nurses, how can one Code of Ethics be sufficient to cover all nurses in all settings and all roles?
2. The Code is timeless, or is it? What language in the Code reflects earlier practice patterns, and what language forecasts new developments yet to come?
3. What is missing from the Code?
4. What could be deleted without weakening the Code?
5. How will you use the Code in your daily practice?

Discussions: Flawed Research and The Nurse's Role in Social Justice

The two discussion assignments ask students to post responses on the electronic discussion board. Students are to address questions on the topics of flawed research and the nurse's role in social justice, apply provisions of the Code to their responses, and cite references to support their responses. A rubric is provided to clarify quality expectations.

Students are expected to respond to at least two peer responses for each discussion.

Ethical Debate: Individual Autonomy and Privacy vs. Social Justice

Divide the class in half by birth month: assign students whose birthdays fall from January through June to use a Deontology framework (duty regardless of consequences) for the debate. Assign students who were born between July and December a Teleology Utilitarian framework (outcomes producing the greatest good for the greatest number). Instruct students not to color their responses with their own opinions, but to rely on guidance of the framework they have been assigned, as well as the Code. Two propositions are provided that position individual autonomy against public safety. Give students ten minutes to arrive at a consensus agreeing or disagreeing with the proposition with three points of rationale from their respective framework. Then, bring the two groups together to debate. A rubric is provided to clarify quality expectations.

Debriefing Questions

As the debate comes to a close, enhance student learning by asking one or more of the questions below.

1. If one focuses only on outcomes, how can outcomes be accurately predicted?
2. If one focuses only on duty in the present circumstance, does one avoid responsibility for outcomes? How?
3. When can restriction of individual freedom be justified for the greater good? Give other examples from public health.
4. America is the land of the free and the birthplace of individual liberty. Is restriction of freedom anti-American?
5. What did you learn about your own values as a nurse from this debate?