

# Code of Ethics for Nurses in Papua New Guinea



**2002**

Nursing Council of Papua New Guinea, (2002). *Papua New Guinea Nursing Competency Standards*, PO BOX 841, Port Moresby NCD

## 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 Ethics* and *Code for Professional Conduct for Nurses*. All Registered Nurses are expected to be familiar with the key principles of the codes and to abide by them in their practice. The code of Ethics outlines the nursing profession's intention to accept the rights of individuals and to uphold these rights in practice.

## Purpose

The purpose of the *Code of Ethics for Nurses in Papua New Guinea* is to:

- Identify the fundamental moral commitments of the profession
- Provide nurses with a basis for professional and self-reflection on ethical practice
- 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 individual, 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 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 therapeutic relationship and the implementation and evaluation of therapeutic processes. Therapeutic processes include health promotion and education, counselling, nursing intervention and empowerment of individuals, families or groups to exercise maximum in relation to their health care.

Nursing practice is undertaken in a variety of settings. Any particular 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 practice of other health care providers. Nurses also recognize the potential between one person's needs and those of another, or group or community.

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Such factors may affect the degree to which nurses are unable to fulfil their moral obligation and/or the number and type of ethics problems they may face. The Code of Professional supports the Code of Ethics in Papua New Guinea. While the *Code of Ethics* focuses on the ethics and ideal 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.

### In Papua New Guinea, nurses should:

- Take responsibility to save and preserve life and promote optimal wellbeing of individuals and groups
- Save life by managing emergencies in all settings
- Take responsibility for providing health services to clients in all settings
- Support clients and significant others in illness and other stressful situations
- Share knowledge and skills that contribute to the promotion of health; and discourage harmful practices
- Provide equality nursing services and treat all with dignity and respect regardless of their place of origin, race, culture, gender, politics, social position, beliefs and behaviour
- Respect each person's individual needs, values and cultural differences when providing care
- Give people sufficient information to make informed choices in relation to their care
- respect traditional practices as being part of treatment and welfare of Papua New Guineans
- Accept responsibility and accountability for outcomes of their professional judgment and practice
- Should accept responsibility and report the matter to the appropriate authority if a client suffers as a result of their decision and/ or action
- Follow their conscience and exercise the right to refuse to participate in a procedure, which they consider to be unethical and/or immoral
- Use professional judgment in carrying out nursing and/or medical interventions
- Ensure that clients receive safe and adequate treatment/care as a moral and professional obligation
- Maintain good interpersonal and working relationships with members of the health profession and others involved in the provision of health care.
- Nurses should create, promote and maintain good relationships with all in their environment showing respect for the dignity of all persons
- Keep confidential any information obtained in a professional capacity and use professional judgment in sharing such information, except when required by law
- Keep confidential information about clients
- Never gossip about affairs arising in institutions or agencies



*“Nurses should ... respect each person's individual needs, values and cultural differences.”*

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- Develop attitudes and behaviours that will bring credit to themselves and the nursing profession
- 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 take an overdose
- Be committed to the nursing profession and its growth and development, locally, nationally and globally
- Value continuing education, both formal and informal, to maintain and increase knowledge and skills to promote the quality nursing care.
- Maintain their responsibility to the employer and uphold standards
- Fulfil their duty to the employer without compromising client care
- Give feedback to the employer concerning progress, problems, suggested solutions, needs and proposals for future development
- Take responsibility to fulfil their contractual obligations and accept rules and regulations set by the employer, while being mindful of upholding practice standards
- Uphold the laws, rules and regulations of the profession, the institution and the nation
- Obey the rules and regulations that apply to them such as stated by the Nursing Council of Papua New Guinea, PNG Nurses Association and Institutional regulations
- Obey the laws of the country to co-operate with institutional policy in accordance with hospital regulations and to contribute to peace and harmony in society.

*“Nurses should ... be committed to the nursing profession and its growth and development.”*



*“Nurses should ... value continuing education to maintain and increase knowledge and skills.”*