

# Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses in PNG



**2002**

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

*Recommendations for improving the code of explanatory statements would be welcomed and should be addressed to:*

Registrar

Nursing Council of Papua New Guinea

PO Box 841

PORTMORESBY

National Capital District

## Introduction

The *Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses in Papua New Guinea* 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 the nurse will conduct themselves personally and professionally in a way that will maintain public trust and confidence in the profession. Nurses have 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
- Provide consumer regulatory, employing and professional bodies with a basis for decisions regarding standards of professional conduct.

The *Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses in PNG* requires each nurse to:

- Practice in safe and competent manner
- Practice 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 the individual and any other significant person
- Support the health, well being and inform decision-making of an individual
- Promote and preserve the trust that is inherent in the relationship between nurses and individual 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

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## Principles underpinning the *Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses in PNG*

### Principle 1

Adhere to current legislation that impact on nursing practice.

#### **Criteria**

- The name of the nurse is registered with the Nursing Council of Papua New Guinea
- Renew registration annually as a practicing nurse
- Practice within legislation impacting on nursing practice and delivery of health care.

### Principle 2

Provide safe and competent nursing care and adhere to *PNG Nursing Competency Standards* of practice.

#### **Criteria**

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

### Principle 3

Respect clients' rights, and cultural and spiritual beliefs.

#### **Criteria**

- Acknowledges and allows for the individuality of people
- Provides information to enable the client to exercise informed choice and consent to the delivery of professional nursing a care
- Respects any privileged access conferred by professional status to clients information and their possession, resident and workplaces
- Safe guards confidentiality and privacy of information obtained within the professional relationship
- Helps clients understand their rights and acknowledge their responsibilities related to the delivery of professional nursing
- Is aware of and guided by codes of rights and responsibilities in the PNG Constitution for clients and healthcare providers in area of practice
- Practices in a manner which is culturally and spiritually acceptable
- Respects the trust implicit in the professional nursing relationship.

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## Principle 4

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

### *Criteria*

- Maintains and updates professional knowledge and skills in area of practice
- Takes responsibility for own professional development
- Is aware of own limitations and seeks assistance as necessary
- Uses professional knowledge and skills to promote client safety and well being
- Acts in ways which contribute to the good standing of the nursing profession.

## 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.

### **A nurse must practice 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. This 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 within their scope of practice may compromise the safety of an individual.**

The scope of practice is based on 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 ensures that delegation is appropriate and does not compromise the safety of an individual. A nurse has an obligation to practice in a safe and competent manner that is not compromise by personal health limitations.

### **A nurse must practice 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, enhancing 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.

### **A nurse must not bring discredit upon the reputation of the nursing profession.**

The actions of the nurse in their personal life may have 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.

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## **A nurse must practice in accordance with laws relevant to the nurse's areas 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.

## **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 judgments in relation to individual's interests and rights, a nurse must not contravene any law or breach the human rights of any individual.

## **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 situation where individuals are unable to decide or to speak independently, a nurse must endeavour to ensure that an appropriate advocate represents the perspective of that individual.

## **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 that makes the individual vulnerable and open to exploitation. An individual trusts that a nurse will care no physical or psychological harm and will care for the possessions and property of that individual. A nurse fulfils roles outside of the professional role, including family member, friends and community members. A nurse must be aware that dual relationships may compromise care outcomes and always conduct professional relationships with the primary intend 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.

## **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 not disclose information about an individual unless it is necessary 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 judgment 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 required by the law to disclose certain information.

## **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 a 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.