



An Bord Altranais

(The Nursing Board)

***The Code of Professional Conduct for each Nurse and Midwife
April 2000***



An Bord Altranais

(The Nursing Board)

***The Code of Professional Conduct for each Nurse and Midwife
April 2000***

DEFINITION

'Patient' - the use of the word patient in the code is to be broadly interpreted as individuals or groups who have contact with the nurse in his/her professional capacity and does not necessarily denote or imply ill health.

'Nurse' - where used in the code, the word nurse shall have the meaning assigned to it in the Nurses Act 1985. The word 'nurse' means a person registered in the Live Register of Nurses as provided for in Section 27 of the Nurses Act 1985 and includes a midwife and nursing includes midwifery.

An Bord Altranais

An Bord Altranais is the statutory body which provides for the registration, control and education of nurses and for other matters relating to nurses and the practice of nursing. It sees it's overall responsibility to be in the interest of the public.

The purpose of this code is to provide a framework to assist the nurse to make professional decisions, to carry out his/her responsibilities and to promote high standards of professional conduct.

This code provides guidelines. Specific issues will be considered, when they arise or may be the subject of interpretative statements to be issued from time to time by An Bord. An Bord shall take appropriate action as defined in Part V of the Nurses Act 1985 where nurses fail to meet the following requirements.

The nursing profession demands a high standard of professional behaviour from its members and each registered nurse is accountable for his or her practice.

An Bord Altranais

The aim of the nursing profession is to give the highest standard of care possible to patients. Any circumstance which could place patients/clients in jeopardy or which militate against safe standards of practice should be made known to appropriate persons or authorities.

Information regarding a patient's history, treatment and state of health is privileged and confidential. It is accepted nursing practice that nursing care is communicated and recorded as part of the patient's care and treatment. Professional judgement and responsibility should be exercised in the sharing of such information with professional colleagues. The

confidentiality of patient's records must be safeguarded. In certain circumstances, the nurse may be required by a court of law to divulge information held. A nurse called to give evidence in court should seek in advance legal and/or professional advice as to the response to be made if required by the court to divulge confidential information.

The nurse must uphold the trust of those who allow him/her privileged access to their property, home or workplace.

It is appropriate to highlight the potential dangers to confidentiality of computers and electronic processing in the field of health

An Bord Altranais

services administration.

It is necessary for patients to have appropriate information for making an informed judgement. Every effort should be made to ensure that a patient understands the nature and purpose of their care and treatment. In certain circumstances there may be a doubt whether certain information should be given to a patient and special care should be taken in such cases.

Any form of sexual advance to a patient with whom there exists a professional relationship will be regarded as professional misconduct.

Competence is the ability of the registered nurse or registered midwife to practice safely and effectively fulfilling his/her professional responsibility within his/her scope of practice.

In determining his/her scope of practice the nurse or midwife must make a judgement as to whether he/she is competent to carry out a particular role or function. The nurse or midwife must take measures to develop and maintain the competence necessary for professional practice.

The nurse or midwife must acknowledge any limitations of competence and refuse in such cases to accept delegated or assigned

An Bord Altranais

functions. If appropriate the nurse or midwife must take appropriate measures to gain competence in the particular area.

A nurse shall be entitled to make known at the earliest possible opportunity to an appropriate person or authority any conscientious objection which may be relevant to professional practice.

The nurse shares the responsibility of care with colleagues and must have regard to the workload of and the pressures on, professional colleagues and subordinates and take appropriate action if these are seen to be such as to constitute abuse of the individual practitioner and/or to jeopardise safe standards of practice.

Each nurse has a continuing responsibility to junior colleagues. He/she is obliged to transmit acquired professional knowledge, skills and attitudes both by word and example. The nurse must not delegate to junior colleagues tasks and responsibilities beyond their skill and experience.

The nurse is responsible for the overall care provided by students. The nurse's responsibility in transmitting knowledge, skills and attitudes and in maintaining standards of care extends to student nurses wherever their learning activity occurs.

The nurse shall work in close co-operation with members of the health professions and others

An Bord Altranais

in promoting community and national efforts to meet the health needs of the public.

The nurse must at all times maintain the principle that every effort should be made to preserve human life, both born and unborn. When death is imminent, care should be taken to ensure that the patient dies with dignity.

When making public statements, the nurse shall make it clear whether he/she is acting in a personal capacity or on behalf of the profession.

The nurse should avoid the use of professional qualifications in the promotion of commercial

products in order not to compromise the independence of professional judgement.

The nurse should not accept any gifts or favours from patients/relatives which could reasonably be interpreted as seeking to exert undue influence or to obtain preferential treatment.

The nurse must at all times take reasonable precautions to ensure that from the point of view of his/her health he/she is competent to carry out his/her duties. Abuse of alcohol or other drugs adversely affects that competence.

In taking part in research, the principles of

An Bord Altranais

confidentiality and the provision of appropriate information to enable an informed judgement to be made by the patient, must be safeguarded. The nurse has an obligation to ascertain that the research is sanctioned by the appropriate body and to ensure that the rights of the patient are protected at all times. The nurse should be aware of ethical policies and procedures in his/her area of practice.

