

# Nursing Ethics and Law

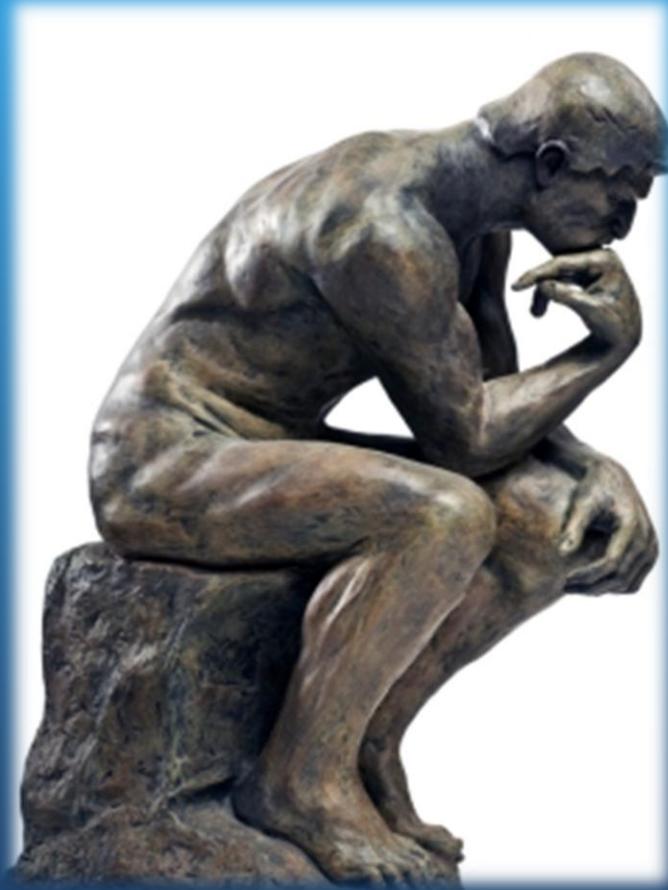
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a **SET OF PRINCIPLES** that  
**GUIDE** an individual, a group or  
a profession to **MAKE THE**  
**CORRECT DECISION** regarding  
their conduct

So why do we need ethics?



- To ensure that patient care is of the highest standard
- To protect our patients
- To protect ourselves
- To ensure continual professional development (CPD)

# Ghana's Code of Nursing Ethics

- Accountability for Professional Practice
- Individuality of patient, client and their relatives
- Protection of confidential information
- Consent for care or treatment rendered
- Maintenance of professional knowledge and competence
- Identification of minimizing risks to patients, clients and their relatives
- Trustworthiness
- Collaboration with the other professionals of the healthcare team

How do we tackle an ethical  
dilemma?

M.O.R.A.L.

# M- Measure up the dilemma

- What is the problem being presented?
- Who is involved?
- Remember- YOU are always an advocate of the patient you take care of



# O- Outlining the options

- Think about the different options you have
- There is always more than one option- but it's up to you to make the right decision regarding your patient.
- Remember- **YOU** are accountable for your actions, so always keep this in mind



# R- Reviewing the situation

- Go back to the situation, with the options you have outlined for yourself and apply them to the situation at hand
- Which option is best for the situation you and the patient are in?
- What are the best case and worst case scenarios?
- Refer to the code of ethics and use them to help you address the situation to the best of your ability



# A- Affirm your position and take action

- Make a decision based on the facts
- Empower the patient to ask questions relating to their treatment
- Always review the situation properly before taking action



# L- Look back and reflect

- Evaluate the situation which has just occurred.
- Take time for reflection- what was good? what was bad? Why did the situation occur in the first instance? What can you do to prevent it occurring again? How can you deal with the situation better next time?



# Case study 1

42 year old female, scheduled for a colon resection. Her surgeon is known on the wards for having a bad surgical reputation. Many of his previous colon resections have gone wrong and have caused further infection and distress to patients, meaning they have to be rushed back to the ICU. The patient has heard some 'gossip' regarding the surgeon's bad reputation and she asks the nurse about this surgeon's skills and reputation.

What should the nurse do?

# Case study 2

76 year old male admitted to a large metropolitan hospital. He was diagnosed 6 months ago with metastatic cancer which has spread from his lungs and liver to his GI tract and bones. His physician had decided that further chemotherapy would be useless and ordered for the patient to be kept comfortable with medication. A continuous morphine-sulphate IV drip was delivered to help control the pain. A friendly and happy person by nature, as the cancer spread, the patient would cry out in pain and ask the nurses not to move him. Being over 6 foot tall and underweight, his bony prominences became reddened and sore. He would yell so loudly when he was turned that the nurses wondered whether they were hurting him or helping him. The head nurse called a conference to decide what should be done, and came to the decision that due to hospital regulations, the patient should continue to be turned every 2 hours to prevent sepsis or further infection.

What would you do?

