

# Ethical Principles in Nursing Handout

---

The Ethical Principles in Nursing Handout serves as a practical guide for healthcare professionals to navigate ethical dilemmas and uphold the highest standards of ethical practice in nursing. This handout is designed to provide clear and concise guidance on fundamental ethical principles and their application in clinical practice.

---

## Ethical principles

### 1. Accountability

- **Definition:** Nurses take responsibility for their actions and decisions in patient care.
- **Example:** Documenting accurately and promptly, admitting mistakes, and reporting errors to ensure patient safety.
- **Consequences of noncompliance:** Compromised patient safety, erosion of trust with patients and colleagues, and potential legal repercussions.

### 2. Justice

- **Definition:** Nurses treat all patients fairly and equitably, advocating for social justice and reducing health disparities.
- **Example:** Ensuring equal access to healthcare resources and advocating for vulnerable populations.
- **Consequences of noncompliance:** Inequitable distribution of resources, perpetuation of health disparities, and ethical conflicts.

### 3. Nonmaleficence

- **Definition:** Nurses strive to do no harm to patients, minimizing risks and preventing harm in patient care.
- **Example:** Administering medications safely, maintaining patient confidentiality, and preventing falls.
- **Consequences of noncompliance:** Patient harm, compromised trust, ethical dilemmas, and legal implications.

### 4. Autonomy

- **Definition:** Nurses respect patients' right to make informed decisions about their healthcare.
- **Example:** Obtaining informed consent before procedures, respecting patients' treatment preferences.
- **Consequences of noncompliance:** Violation of patient rights, loss of autonomy, and erosion of trust.

### 5. Beneficence

- **Definition:** Nurses promote the well-being and best interests of patients.

- **Example:** Advocating for access to necessary resources, providing comfort measures, and advocating for pain management.
- **Consequences of noncompliance:** Suboptimal patient outcomes, ethical dilemmas, and compromised patient trust.

## 6. Fidelity

- **Definition:** Nurses maintain trust and integrity in the nurse-patient relationship.
- **Example:** Upholding patient confidentiality, honoring commitments, and advocating for patients' rights.
- **Consequences of noncompliance:** Breach of trust, erosion of professional relationships, and legal ramifications.

## 7. Veracity

- **Definition:** Nurses communicate truthfully and honestly with patients.
- **Example:** Providing accurate information about treatment options, disclosing potential risks and benefits.
- **Consequences of noncompliance:** Loss of patient trust, compromised informed decision-making, and ethical conflicts.

---

## Application guidelines

- Apply ethical principles to clinical scenarios, considering the unique circumstances and values of each patient.
- Seek consultation or guidance from ethics committees or colleagues when faced with complex ethical dilemmas.
- Reflect on personal and professional values to align actions with ethical principles and promote ethical practice.

---

*By adhering to the ethical principles outlined in this handout, healthcare professionals can navigate ethical challenges effectively and promote ethical practice in nursing.*