Legal and Ethical Principles

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
- Define at least 10 terms relating to legal and ethical principles.
- Describe at least five examples of ethical behavior for the health care worker.
- Identify at least five situations that show improper ethical or legal behavior.
- Explain the importance of confidentiality in health care, including privacy issues resulting from advanced technology.
- Describe at least two examples of rights of the health care patient.
- Describe the role of the health care worker regarding current legal issues, including advanced directives and telemedicine.

KEY TERMS
Confidential (kah-nuH-DEHN-cheH) Private or secret
Ethics (ETH-iks) Dealing with what is good or bad, determining moral duty and obligation
Informatics (in-FOR-muh-TEK-iks) Study of information processing, computer science
Informed consent (in-FOR-muh-KAHN-sent) Agreement to surgical or medical treatment with knowledge of the facts and risks involved
Jurisprudent (joo-REEZ-prood-uhnt) Understanding the science or philosophy of law
Legal (LEE-guhl) Deriving authority from or founded on law
Liable (LIE-uh-buhl) Legally responsible
Libel (LIE-buhl) Communicating something untruthful and harmful about another person in writing
Malpractice (mal-prak-tiss) Failure of professional skill or learning that results in injury, loss, or damage
Moral (MORE-uhl) Relating to principles of right and wrong
Negligence (NEHG-luh-jens) Failure to execute the care that a reasonable (prudent) person exercises
Legal and Ethical Terminology
Which Term Best Fits with this Example?
Wanda Roberts was run over by a truck in 1992. After 6 weeks of treatment at a hospital, she was transferred to another facility. In Roberts v. Galen (1999), the U.S. Supreme Court considered her claim of "patient dumping." This practice was described as moving a patient without insurance to a publicly funded facility for care regardless of condition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>Neglecting a patient or client under and in need of immediate professional care, without making reasonable arrangements for the continuation of such care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>A threat or an attempt to injure another person in an illegal manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battery</td>
<td>Unlawful touching of another person without consent, with or without injury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breach</td>
<td>Breaking the law, an obligation, or the terms of a contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil law</td>
<td>Defines the legal relationships between individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common law</td>
<td>Unwritten law; customs that may have authority or have been established by prior court decisions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BOX 4-1
Legal Issues in Health Care
- Abuse
- Fraud
- Insurance/managed care
- Medical records
- Privacy
- Medicare/Medicaid
- Patient care bioethics

Ethical and legal responsibilities include practicing within the guidelines of laws, policies, and regulations established for each type of employment (Box 4-1).

Health care workers may stay within a "scope of practice" or use the methods and procedures in which they are trained (Table 4-1). The Nurse Practice Acts (NPAs) are state laws that define what nurses may legally perform. Some common laws or traditional practices also influence nursing practice. Performing skills or tasks that are outside the health care worker's scope of practice is illegal as well as unethical. The health care worker who is supervising others may delegate some tasks. For example, the registered nurse or licensed physician may assign licensed practical nurse to assess the patient's health, collect data, record, and charting data. The licensed practical nurse does not work independently. The nurse assistant works under the supervision of the registered nurse or licensed practical nurse (Fig. 4-1). The medical assistant works under the supervision of a licensed physician. The dental assistant works under the supervision of a licensed dentist. Dental hygienists may practice without the supervision of a dentist in some states.

Ethical standards apply to relationships with fellow workers, patients, and the community. They are based on individual morals and society's expectations. Some ethical standards are the same for all health occupations (Box 4-2). Each profession may have an oath or pledge that states the basic beliefs and goals of the group (Box 4-3).

The health care worker must be jurisprudent, aware of the laws that influence the industry. Workers in all occupations are legally responsible (liable) for their behavior and the care given. The employer also may be liable for the actions of the worker that are not reasonably prudent (negligent) or that reflect bad practice (malpractice). Slander means to communicate verbally something that is untrue and harmful about another person, and libel means to put it in writing. Inadequate charting is the cause of many incidents of liability for the health care worker. Another common concern is the violation of a patient trust that could result in invasion of privacy or illegal restraint.

Ethical and legal responsibilities are a central part of all health care occupations. The worker must understand and follow ethical practices, including respect for cultural, social, and ethnic differences of the patients and other workers. Legal responsibilities include practicing within the guidelines of laws, policies, and regulations established for each type of employment (Box 4-1).

Health care has become an industry that involves many complex professions and technologies. The health care worker must make legal and ethical decisions daily. Ethics are the principles and values that determine appropriate behavior. An individual, community, or society adopts moral standards that distinguish right from wrong. Morals are based on the experience, religion, and philosophy of the individual and society. The basis of ethical behavior in the health care field is the respect for the needs and rights of others.

**CASE STUDY 4-1** You enter a room and find the patient is gone. You look all over the floor and then alert the rest of the staff of the absence. As you are contacting security, the patient reappears and states she had gone to the chapel. What should you do?

**Answers to Case Studies** are available on the Evolve website: http://evolve.elsevier.com/Gerding

In some cases nurse assistants may assist a patient with medication in a home setting, but not in a hospital.
**BOX 4-2**

**Legal and Ethical Terminology**

Which Term Best Fits with this Example?  

In Hunter v. Mann (1974), a doctor treated a man and a girl for injuries from a traffic accident. The doctor refused to disclose their identity to the police who were looking for a man and girl who had earlier run away from an accident.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conduct</td>
<td>Behavior or a person’s actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent</td>
<td>Permission granted by a person voluntarily and in sound mind; written consent is most easily proved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>Performing an act that is forbidden or omitting a duty required by public law, making the offender liable for the action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal law</td>
<td>Defines the legal obligation between an individual and the state or society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custom</td>
<td>An accepted behavior or common practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duty of care</td>
<td>By law, health care workers must perform services in a manner that meets common standards of practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Standards of behavior and practice that are established by a professional organization for its members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 4-2**

Types of Law Affecting Health Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Law</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>Enforce statutory law, code-regulating bureaucracies</td>
<td>OSHA, NPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Common</td>
<td>Dispute between individuals</td>
<td>Assault, false imprisonment (restraint)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal (penal)</td>
<td>Decisions made by judges, based on earlier court decisions</td>
<td>Protex discretionary patient, exemptions from immunizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constitutional</td>
<td>Supreme law of the land</td>
<td>Freedom of speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal (penal)</td>
<td>Legal punishment for public concerns (Common or statutory)</td>
<td>False-facitation of patient records, fraud, theft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statutory</td>
<td>Rules passed by government</td>
<td>DRG law, NPA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BOX 4-3**

**Nightingale Pledge**

I solemnly pledge myself before God, in the presence of this assembly, to pass my life in purity and to practice my profession faithfully.
I will abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous and will not take or knowingly administer any harmful drug.
I will do all in my power to maintain and elevate the standard of my profession, and will hold in confidence all personal matters committed to my keeping and all family affairs coming to my knowledge in the practice of my profession.
With loyalty I will endeavor to aid the physician in his work and devote myself to the welfare of those committed to my care.

---

The scope of duties that may be legally performed by a health care worker depends on the level of training and education of the worker. Some functions, such as giving medications, are regulated by laws and require a license. The health care worker must understand the limits or scope of his or her practice. A written job description helps define the scope of practice for a job.

---

**CASE STUDY 4-2**  You are working on a floor that is very busy. A nurse asks you to change an intravenous (IV) bag for a patient because she has to give medications in another room. You have never changed an IV bag, although you have seen it done many times. What should you do?

**Answers to Case Studies** are available on the Evolve website: http://evolve.elsevier.com/Geradin

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Confidentiality

Information regarding the patient in health care is considered confidential, or private. The health care worker is ethically and legally responsible for maintaining the patient's privacy. The health care worker must share information regarding the patient with only the appropriate personnel involved in the care. Confidentiality is important so that the patient may tell the health care worker personal information related to health without fear of it being shared with someone who is not involved in the patient's health care.

---

**CASE STUDY 4-3**  You are eating lunch in the cafeteria and a co-worker joins you. The co-worker begins talking about one of the patients for whom you both provide care. What should you do?

Answers to Case Studies are available on the Evolve website: http://evolve.elsevier.com/Geradin

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are regulated by state agencies. Some workers hold a license that determines which actions may be performed. Licensed professionals are legally responsible for their actions when performing as employees or in their own practice.

**Malpractice and Liability**

Health care workers are legally responsible or liable for the care that is given to their patients. There are several types of law that apply to health care. The health care worker is accountable for all of them (Table 4-2).

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as part of the worker's compensation or benefit package.

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**BRAIN BYTE**

In some specialties, such as obstetrics, up to 50% of the cost of medical services goes to pay the physician's malpractice insurance cost.
Legal and Ethical Terminology

Which Term Best Fits with this Example?

In 1998 the Washington King County Medical Examiner’s Office donated parts of Bradley Gierlich’s brain to a research institute investigating bipolar and schizophrenic disorders. Although he did not leave a will, the sister of Mr. Gierlich stated that he did not want his body parts donated.

**Term**

Felony
Ideal
Illegal restraint
Invasion of privacy
Liable
Libel

**Definition**

A serious crime for which the penalty is imprisonment for more than one year
Standard of perfection or excellence
Holding or detaining a person against his or her will
Unlawfully making known to the public any private or personal information without the consent of the wronged person
Legally responsible for one’s actions
Communicating something untruthful and harmful about another person in writing

In 1996 Congress passed the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) to try to reduce the administrative cost of health care and ensure the ability of the patient to change insurance plans, even with preexisting conditions. HIPAA Privacy Rules were issued in 2000. They standardize and protect individually identifiable health information that might be accessible through use of electronic technology. HIPAA requires that only authorized workers may see health care information. For example, a direct health care provider may be allowed to see health information but not billing information. In April 2003 standards for the “Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information” went into effect (Box 4-4).

Protected health information (PHI) includes any individually identifiable health information that is transmitted or maintained in any way. This includes electronic, written, and verbal communication (Fig. 4-2). The rule applies to all agencies sharing or transmitting personal health information, whether it is paper, oral, or electronic. It covers people who are insured privately or those covered by public programs or who are uninsured. The standards protect medical records and personal health information. Life insurance and workers’ compensation programs are not covered by the regulations. These providers are allowed to use and reuse patient information without prior consent. An exception to the patient’s right to privacy is when there is imminent danger to another individual that can be foreseen by the practitioner. This “duty to warn” requires the health care practitioner to disclose the patient’s relevant personal health information when such a threat exists.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is responsible for oversight and enforcement of HIPAA privacy regulations. The OCR may impose penalties on health care entities (workers or organizations) up to $100 per violation or $25,000 per year. Criminal penalties can be up to $250,000 and 10 years in prison if the PHI is sold, transferred, or used commercially, for personal gain, or for malicious harm. Box 4-5 lists some examples of violations of HIPAA. More information regarding HIPAA may be found in Chapters 1 and 2.

**Patient Rights**

In 1998 the Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality in the Health Care Industry issued a report designed to protect consumers. The report had three goals and listed specific rights and responsibilities for the patient (Box 4-6). The report stated that consumers of health care have the right and responsibility to participate or have a representative in making treatment decisions. The patient is responsible for maintaining healthy habits and working with health care providers in treatment plans. The patient is also responsible for communicating honestly and showing respect for health care providers. The health care consumer is also responsible for making a “good-faith” effort to pay for care and follow the procedures of the health care plan.

Legal and Ethical Terminology

Which Term Best Fits with this Example?

Cynthia Collins made several visits to the Cook County Hospital and clinic between 1986 and 1987. At that time, a nurse felt a lump on Ms. Collins’s breast. After further evaluation, Ms. Collins was instructed to return in 3 months, which she did not do. Later in 1987, Ms. Collins was treated for abdominal cramps, vaginal discharge, and pain. In 1988 Ms. Collins was diagnosed with breast cancer that had spread to her neck and arm. She died of breast cancer in 1989. Ms. Collins’s estate sued Cook County hospital (and the health care personnel).

**Term**

Licensure
Ligation
Malpractice
Misdemeanors
Negligence
Privileged communication
Reasonable care

**Definition**

Authorization by the state to perform the functions of an occupation for which educational and examination standards are specified
A lawsuit or legal action
Bad or harmful practice that injures another person
Crimes that are less serious than felonies and result in imprisonment for less than 1 year
Failure to perform duties in a reasonable and customary way
Personal or private information relating to the care given by health care personnel
Services given in a manner appropriate to the level of education and experience of the health care worker
BOX 4-6

Consumer’s Bill of Rights and Responsibilities

Objectives:
- Provide the consumer of health care with ways to address concerns and participate in their health, leading to greater confidence in the health care system.
- Support a strong relationship between health care professionals and patients.
- Establish rights and responsibilities for all participants in health care.

Patient’s Bill of Rights:
- Information disclosure.
- Choice of providers and plans.
- Access to emergency services.
- Participation in treatment decisions.
- Respect and nondiscrimination.
- Confidentiality of health information.
- Complaints and appeals.


Informed Consent

Informed consent to a medical or surgical procedure means that the risks and medical information involved have been fully explained to the patient (Fig. 4-3). The patient has both the legal and ethical right to make decisions about what is done to his or her body. The health care facility determines which procedures and treatments require written consent, but the health care worker should ask permission (consent) before completing even simple tasks such as assessment of vital signs. Exceptions to informed consent laws may be made in emergencies, when the patient is not mentally competent, and for minors (decisions may be made by family or a medical representative). For example, a qualified health care provider does not need informed consent to provide first aid or perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on an unresponsive patient.

Informed consent includes the following elements:
- Description of the treatment or procedure (purpose and nature)
- Description of alternatives that are available (regardless of cost or insurance coverage)
- Risks, benefits, and unknown factors of each alternative
- Risks, benefits, and unknown factors of not receiving treatment
- Patient questions
- Assessment of the patient understanding
- Agreement by the patient for the treatment or procedure

FIGURE 4-3 The nurse may need to teach the patient in order to obtain an informed consent. (From Hunt SA, Saunders: Fundamentals of Medical Asst, St. Louis, 2007, Saunders.)

Legal and Ethical Terminology

Which Term Best Fits with this Example?

In 1982 Caroline Eli worked at the Griggs County Hospital and Nursing Home as a nurse’s aide. During her afternoon break in the dining room, she made offensive and derogatory remarks about her supervisor and Griggs. The residents and visitors were offended by her remarks. Ms. Eli’s employment was terminated. She sued for reinstatement, back pay, and damages.

Term | Definition
--- | ---
Slander | Verbally communicating something unlawful and harmful about another person
Statutory law | Law established by the legislative branch of government that determines what is legal
Tort | Civil wrong action that does not represent ideal behavior but might not be illegal
Unethical | Action that does not represent ideal behavior
Value system | Ideals and thoughts that determine what is considered worthwhile or meaningful, right or wrong
Will | Written document that allows a person to distribute property after death

BOX 4-7

Elements of the Advanced Directive

I. Health Care Agent

This section designates a person to make medical decisions if the patient is unable to do so independently. This person is given a durable power of attorney for the health care of the patient. It may also include a second person in case the first is unavailable.

II. Treatment Preferences: Living Will

This section indicates what type of care is important to the patient in a life-threatening condition. For example, the patient may prefer to be pain free or to be able to recognize relatives.

If the condition is terminal, the patient may want artificial nutrition and hydration or not. The person may want life-sustaining measures such as CPR started or stopped in certain circumstances.

In the case of a persistent vegetative state or end-stage conditions such as Alzheimer disease, the patient may make the decision for CPR, nutrition, and hydration in another manner. The patient may designate someone to be a guardian if necessary.

III. Organ Donation

The patient may wish to donate part, all, or no tissues or organs.

IV. Autopsy

The patient may refuse or allow an autopsy.

V. Signatures

The signatures include the patient and witnesses who are not relatives, health care workers, or named in the will.

Legal Directives

Advanced directives and living wills are legal documents that allow patients to express their wishes about their health care and treatment. Parts of advanced directives include the living will, power of attorney (health care proxy), the do-not-resuscitate (DNR) order, and organ donor cards. Advanced directives vary from state to state but have similar components (Box 4-7). An advanced directive takes effect only when a patient loses the ability to make his or her own decisions.

A living will allows a person to state in advance which life-support procedures to use if the person is terminally ill or permanently unconscious. A durable power of attorney for health care allows another person or agent to make medical decisions if the patient is unable. The person does not need to be terminally ill or permanently unconscious for the durable power of attorney to take effect. Advanced directives do not necessarily mean "that a patient is not to be resuscitated or revived after a cardiac arrest. The health care worker is responsible for knowing about and respecting the patient's legal directives."
Allowing organ donation may be part of the advanced directive. Regulation of organ donation is controlled by each state within the limits of the 1968 National Organ Transplant Act. In the United States, donation of organs requires an affirmative or positive statement. Although this “affirmative statement” may be included on the driver’s license or in a living will, relatives can still prevent organ donation.

**BRAIN BYTE**
In most states, the Good Samaritan Act protects you from liability for emergency care within the limits of first aid.

**Health Care and the Internet**
Use of the Internet to access health care information and products has introduced a new set of issues and concerns. Patients can find information, join chat groups, purchase drugs and other medical items, and consult a health care practitioner online. Informatics is the term used to describe the development and use of information technology. Clear legal jurisdiction for health care that is provided over the Internet does not exist because it may cross state or even country boundaries. In the fall of 2000, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (now referred to as The Joint Commission) adopted new credentialing standards for hospitals that are using telemedicine.

Telehealth, which includes telemedicine, began in the 1960s when physicians provided health care treatment by phone to patients living in remote locations. Telehealth is a broader term than telemedicine and includes prevention, promotion, and care. Examples of current uses of telehealth include remote patient monitoring (electrocardiography, lung capacity), patient consultation via videoconference, transmission of images for diagnosis, and robotic surgery (telesurgery).

**Documentation**
Records of health care (charting) must be precise, clear, and concise to record the activities of care. The chart is the main technique used for health care workers to communicate about the patient’s case. The chart is the written documentation that serves as the legal record of the care given to the patient. It is divided into sections according to the service being provided for easy reference. Policies of the facility determine what records each type of treatment and the acceptable method for charting. Two general guidelines for good charting include charts only for oneself and not for another person and keeping any information contained in the chart confidential.

Reporting (telling) and recording (charting) observations and vital or life signs are methods by which communication about the patient’s status is made. Accurate and timely communication is necessary to ensure the best care possible. Abnormal vital signs should be reported immediately to the appropriate supervising personnel. Vital signs are recorded on graphic sheets and flow sheets (see Appendix II, Fig. II-2 A-C, pp. 384–386). The handwriting on graphic sheets must be easy to read, and the information must be accurate. Information should be written on paper soon after the assessment is made so that it is not forgotten. Documentation also may be entered directly into a computer, providing rapid information access. Patient information in a digital form is called the electronic health record (EHR) or electronic medical record (EMR). The use of electronic records may provide a more efficient system and prevent duplication of services.

**BRAIN BYTE**
For legal purposes, if care is not recorded, it has not been done. In charting by exception, only changes in a patient’s condition or abnormal findings are recorded.

**Summary**
- Six examples of ethical behavior are to promote wellness, preserve life, provide adequate and continuous care for all patients, know and do not exceed the limits of practice, maintain competence by continuing education, and practice jurisprudence.
- Five situations that show improper ethical or legal behavior include disrespecting a patient’s religion, assault, libel, slander, and malpractice.
- Confidentiality in health care is important to ensure that the patient will share personal information regarding health without fear of its being told to someone not involved in health care.
- Two examples of rights of the health care patient are the right to voice grievances and the right to security of personal possessions.

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**Explore the Web**
Research/News
WebMD
[http://webmd.com](http://webmd.com)
Telemedicine
Search Terms: nurse abandonment patient
Informatics
HHS Projects – AHRQ-Funded Projects
[http://healthit.hhs.gov](http://healthit.hhs.gov)
Case Studies
Search Terms: malpractice case studies

---

**STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Foundation Standard 5: Legal Responsibilities**
Healthcare professionals will understand the legal responsibilities, limitations, and implications of their actions within the health care delivery setting. They will perform their duties according to regulations, policies, laws, and legalised rights of clients.

**Accountability Criteria**
5.1 Legal Implications
5.1.1 Analyse legal responsibilities.
5.1.2 Apply procedures for accurate documentation and record keeping.

---

**Review Questions**
1. List two examples of patient’s rights based on all citizens' rights.
2. Describe three elements or parts of an advanced directive.
3. Describe the role of the health care worker with advanced directives.
4. Use the following terms in one or more sentences that demonstrate their relationship to each other: legal, malpractice, and negligence.
5. Use the following terms in one or more sentences that demonstrate their relationship to each other: ethics and moral.
6. Use the following terms in one or more sentences that demonstrate their relationship to each other: libel and slander.

---

**Critical Thinking**
1. Investigate the code of conduct or rules of ethics for a health care profession.
2. Explain why each of the following is a legal or ethical consideration of health care.
   a. The patient is restrained in a wheelchair without a physician’s order.
   b. The patient requests to attend church services in the hospital chapel and is permitted to go.
   c. The health care worker charts that the patient is "an old battle-ax.
   d. The health care worker does not change the linen for two patients as assigned.

---

**The role of the health care worker regarding legal issues such as advanced directives is to be aware of and respect them.**

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**The health care worker eats leftovers from a patient’s dinner tray.
1. The patient requests a room change to a non-smoking area.
2. Describe the importance of confidentiality in health care.
3. Investigate the extent of use of computers for documentation in a local health care facility.
4. Investigate one of the five court cases described in the Legal and Ethical Terminology boxes. Write a paragraph that completely describes the participants of the lawsuit, the charges of the plaintiff, and the outcome of the dispute.
5. Use the HHS website to find a local informatics project. Describe the project in a paragraph.
6. Use the Internet to prepare an effective oral presentation describing an example of breech of confidentiality and its consequences.
7. Use the Internet to compare the professional code of ethics and scope of practice of two health care occupations."
STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY—cont’d

5.2 Legal Practices
5.21 Apply standards for Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
5.22 Describe advance directives.
5.23 Summarize the Patient’s Bill of Rights.
5.24 Understand informed consent.
5.25 Explain laws governing harassment, labor, and scope of practice.

Foundation Standard 6: Ethics
Healthcare professionals will understand accepted ethical practices with respect to cultural, social, and ethnic differences within the healthcare environment. They will perform quality healthcare delivery.

Accountability Criteria

6.1 Ethical Boundaries
6.11 Differentiate between ethical and legal issues impacting healthcare.

6.12 Recognize ethical issues and their implications related to healthcare.

6.2 Ethical Practice
6.21 Apply procedures for reporting activities and behaviors that affect the health, safety, and welfare of others.

6.3 Cultural, Social, and Ethnic Diversity
6.31 Understand religious and cultural values as they impact healthcare.
6.32 Demonstrate respectful and empathetic treatment of all patients/clients (customer service).


Culture and Health Care*

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Spell and define the key terms.
- Discuss eight specific examples of how cultural differences affect patient care.
- Describe five signs that may indicate a potential cultural barrier exists.
- List seven actions that can overcome cultural obstacles.
- List at least three culturally sensitive questions for patient care. Explain why each might be sensitive to a patient’s culture.
- Describe at least five guidelines to follow when using an interpreter.

KEY TERMS

Acculturation (uh-KUL-chir-AY-shun) The process of learning cultural behaviors from one group or person
Assimilation (uh-sim-uh-LEY-shun) The merging of cultural traits from different cultural groups
Culture (KUL-chir) The act of belonging to a designated group
Cultural competence (KUL-chir-uhi COM-puh-ten-se) The ability to meet the health care needs of patients while meeting and adhering to their cultural values, beliefs, and practices
Emotive (l-MOH-tiv) Expressing or exciting emotion
Ethnocentrism (eth-no-SEN-triz-uhm) The belief that one’s own culture is superior to another
Ethnography (eth-NAH-gruh-thee) A branch of anthropology that studies and records various human culture
Matriarchal (MEY-tree-ahrk-uh) Society or group with a female as head of the family or tribal line
Stereotype (STER-ee-uh-tahyp) Simplified image used to characterize or describe a group
Stoic (STOH-ick) Free from passion, without complaint

*We would like to acknowledge Elizabeth Molle, RN, MS, Nurse Educator, Middletown, Conn., who initially wrote this chapter in the fourth edition.