What is workplace ethics?

Ethics is a set of principles of right <u>conduct</u>.

Rules of conduct that govern <u>behavior</u>.

Standards of behavior that outline what is <u>acceptable</u>.

The <u>application</u> of moral principles, standards of behavior, or set of values regarding proper conduct in the workplace as *individuals* and in a *group setting*.

Workplace ethics reflects an organization`s set of <u>values</u> regarding proper conduct in the workplace.

What is workplace ethics?

For nurses and social workers, ethics also deals with duties and obligations of nurses and social workers to:

- Patients/clients

- Other health professionals

- The profession

- The wider public

- Global humanity

Examples of Poor Ethics

- **Breach of professional boundaries.**
- **Failure to honor patient/client choice.**
- **Failure to advocate for and protect the rights, health and safety of the patient/client for.**
- **Withholding information in order to influence the patient/client's decision.**
- **Failure to maintain competence as a professional.**
- **Failure to protect the patient/client when impaired practice is suspected.**

An ethical code is an identifying feature of a profession to:

- Facilitate professional self-regulation and accountability
- Describe obligations of client-professional and colleague-to-colleague relationships
- Serve as a guide for analysis, decision and action

What is an ethical code?

Social Work Code of Ethics

The following broad ethical principles are based on social work's core values of

- service,
- social justice,
- dignity and worth of the person,
- importance of human relationships,
- integrity, and
- competence.

These principles set forth ideals to which all social workers should aspire.

Ethical Principle: *Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems.*

Social workers elevate service to others above self-interest.

Social workers draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address social problems.

Social workers are encouraged to volunteer some portion of their professional skills with no expectation of significant financial return (pro bono service).

Ethical Principle: Service

Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people.

Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity.

Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

Ethical Principle: Social Workers challenge social injustice

- respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.

- treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers promote clients' socially responsible self-determination.

- seek to enhance clients' capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs.

- are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between clients' interests and the broader society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession.

Ethical Principle: Social Workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person

Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change.

Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process.

Social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the wellbeing of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

Ethical Principle: Social Workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.

Social workers are continually aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them.

Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

Ethical Principle: Social Workers behave in a trustworthy manner

Ethical Principle: Social Workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise

Social workers continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice.
Social workers should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.

- It you lean your ladder against the wrong wall, it doesn't matter how high you climb.

Leadership	Regulatory Environment
History	Culture
Policies	Practices

People

Every organization and workplace is unique

Organizational ethics: Sets of formal and informal standards of conduct that people use to guide their behavior at work.

To appreciate workplace ethics, we look at relationships at work:

- Management/Supervisors
- Employees
- Customers/patients/clients

Communication is key among management, employees, and customers/patients/clients in order for respect to be extended to each person within the organization and to promote healthy relationships.

If employers and employees do not consistently follow a high standards of conduct, companies cannot prosper.

What is an ethical culture?

It is an environment that makes it *easy* to do the *right* thing and makes it *difficult* to do the *wrong* thing.

Studies have shown that companies that work to build and maintain ethical workplace cultures are more financially successful and have more motivated and productive employees.
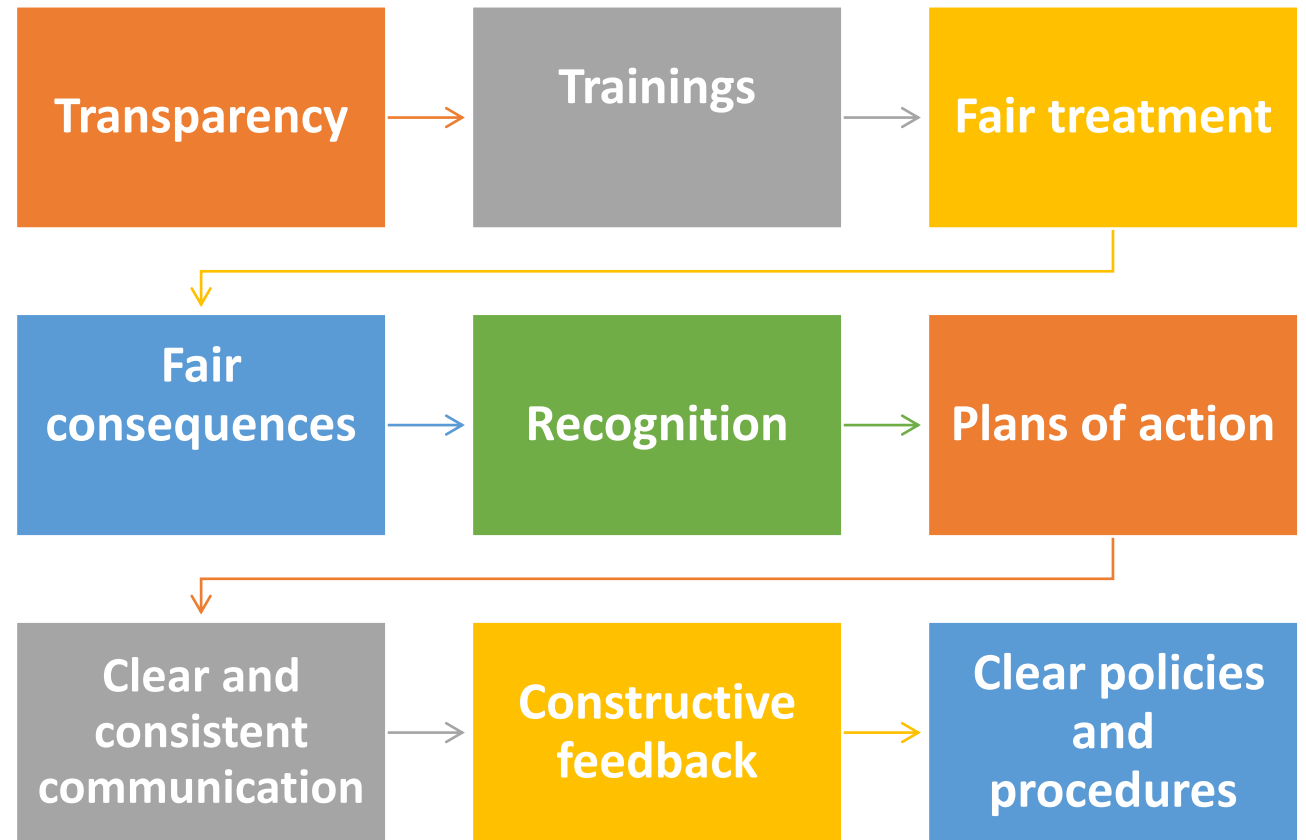
Ethical workplace virtues

The work climate should foster:

- Respect and trust
- Mutual caring
- Communication
- Generosity
- Kindness
- Equality
- Prudence
- Transparency

Encourage good ethics through

Transparency → Trainings → Fair treatment

Fair consequences → Recognition → Plans of action

Clear and consistent communication → Constructive feedback → Clear policies and procedures

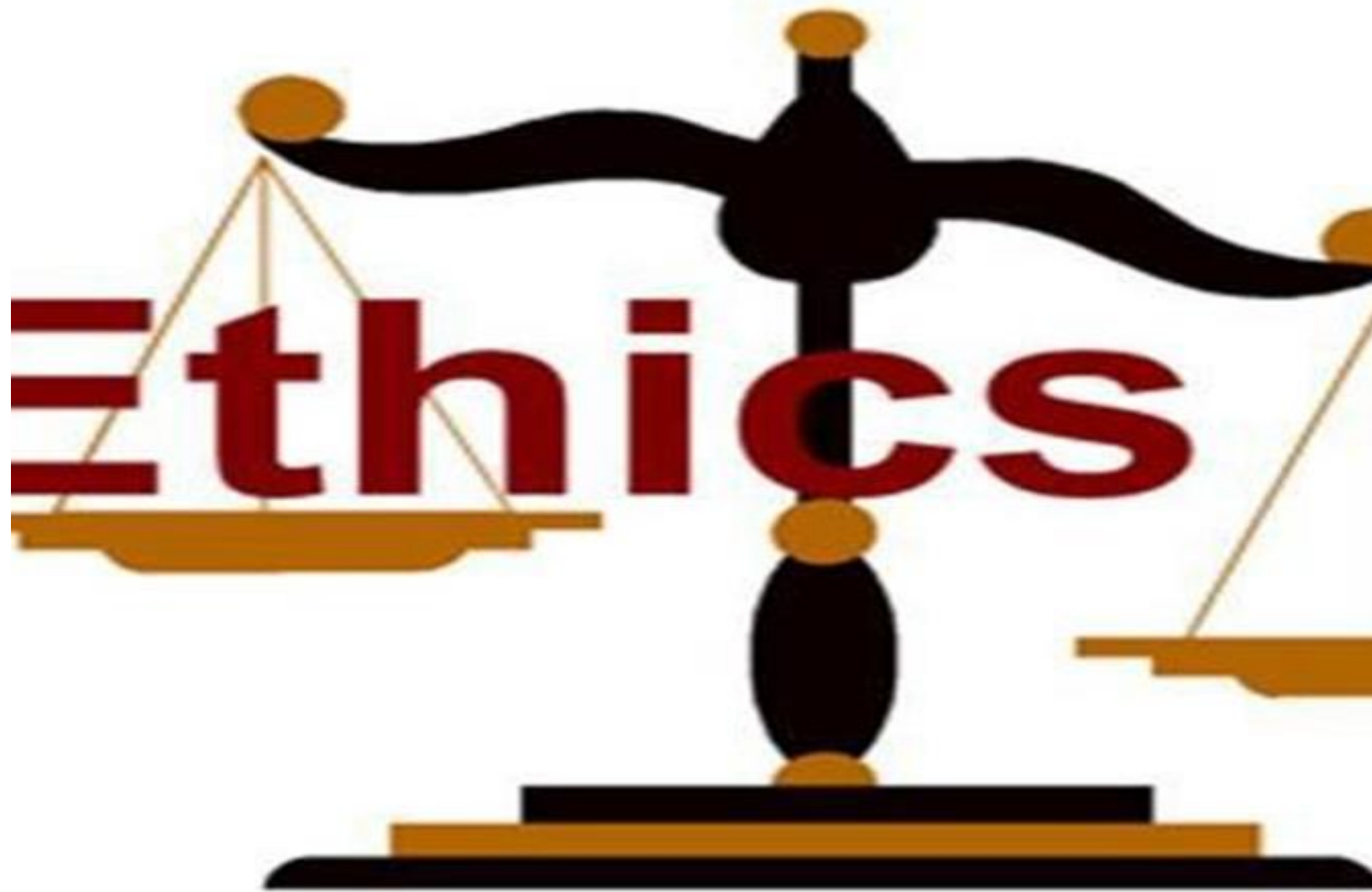# Benefits of good ethics

Loyalty

Desirable work environment

Produce results

Build good references

Good morale

Growth and expansion

Recognition

Ethics allow YOU to distinguish the difference between right and wrong.

Thousand Shades of Grey

"...ethics isn't about choosing between right and wrong; it's about choosing between grey and grey. It's about choosing between two equally desirable, but mutually exclusive courses of action. Freedom or security? Courage or comfort? Self-examination or blissful happiness?"

-Will Ferguson, *Happiness*

TO LEAD AN ETHICAL CULTURE, YOU MUST BE AN ETHICAL PERSON

These pillars of character describe an ethical person.

Trustworthiness: Honest – Reliable – Reputable

Respect: Tolerant – Considerate – With manners

Responsibility: Self control – Self discipline – Accountable

Fairness: Just – Reasonable – Impartial

Caring: Kind – Compassionate – Giving

Citizenship: Obey – Respect – Protect

Nursing Code of Ethics reminds you of your duty to self as well as others

Promotion of personal health, safety and well-being

Preservation of wholeness of character

Preservation of integrity

Maintenance of competence and continuation of professional growth

Continuation of personal growth

Duties to self and Others

Nurses must take care of themselves before taking care of others.

- Self-regarding duties include health, safety, integrity, competence and professional growth.

Promotion of Personal Health, Safety and Well-Being

Nurses have a duty to model health promotion to patients and the public.

- Fatigue and compassion fatigue may be occupational hazards for nurses in intense clinical practice.

- Balance in personal and professional life is essential for well-being.

- Good diet, exercise, healthy sleep patterns and healthy relationships are all factors in maintaining this balance.

Preservation of Wholeness of Character

Nurses are moral agents in any setting, as they embrace the values of the profession and display them in their communication and actions.

- Nurses should assess risks to integrity ahead of employment decisions.
- Nurses' personal values merge with professional values, creating an identity that is reflected in practice and permeates private life.
  - *Thieves, liars and cheats do not make good nurses!*
  - *Felonious record disqualifies a person from becoming a nurse*
- Nurses can foster a community of moral discourse where open dialogue about crucial health issues is facilitated.
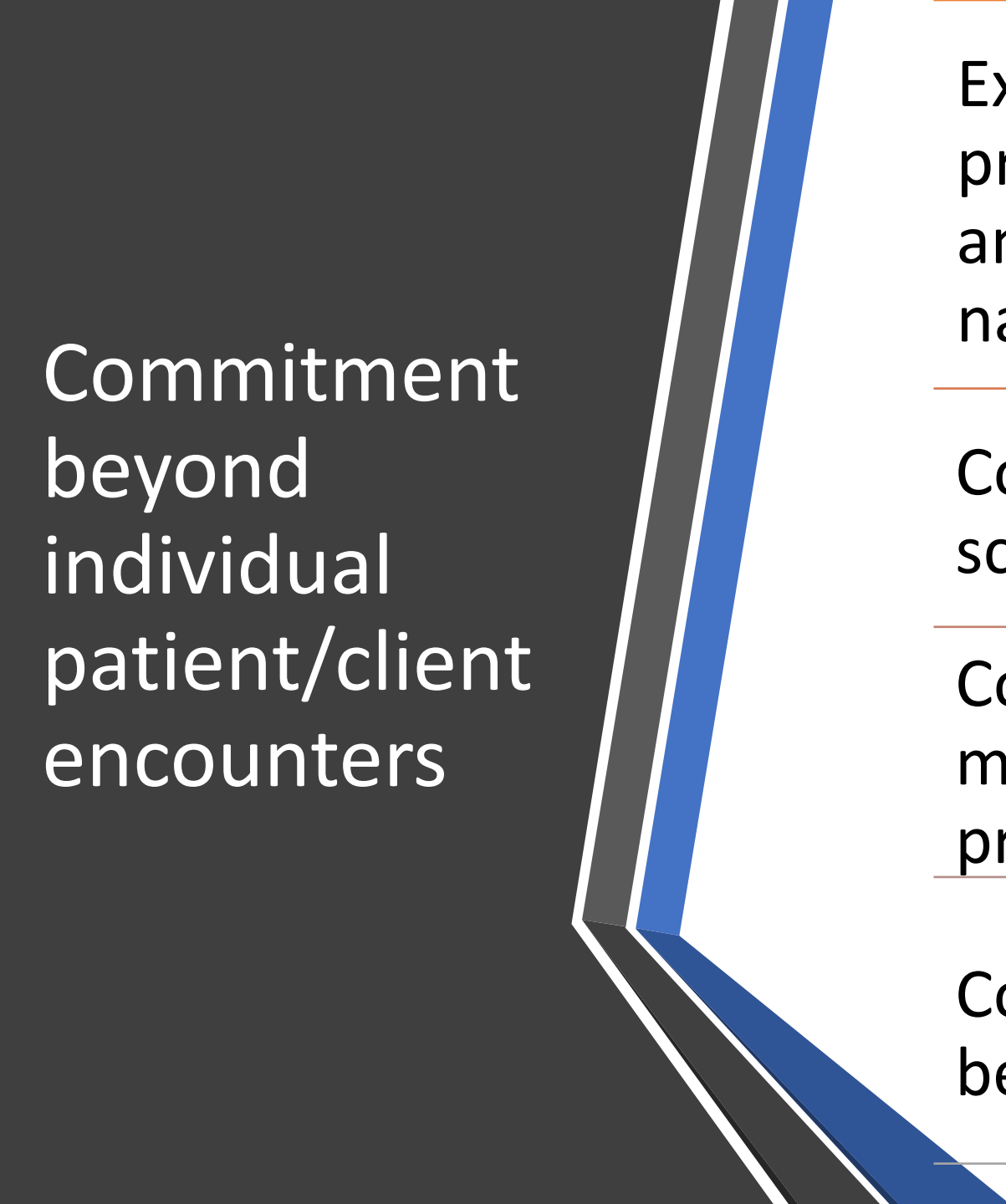
Preservation of Integrity

- When integrity is eroded, nurses may experience **moral distress.**
- Threats to integrity may be encountered in practice.
  - Nurses may be asked to take action in conflict with personal or professional values or the Code.
  - Nurses have a right and duty to express their opposition and only compromise if such a decision preserves their moral integrity.
- **Integrity-preserving compromise** is more likely in a safe environment of mutual respect where open moral dialogue is encouraged.

Maintenance of Competence and Continuation of Personal Growth

- Evaluate performance periodically using standards and peer review

- Commit to lifelong learning and advanced study

- Broaden understanding of the world, human beings and themselves as moral agents in the world

Commitment beyond individual patient/client encounters

Expanded duties of the person and the profession in advancing the profession and human dignity and well-being nationally and globally.

Contributions through research and scholarly inquiry

Contributions through developing, maintaining and implementing professional practice standards

Contributions through health and well-being policy development and advocacy

What is our role in regards to vulnerable populations?

- Low-income persons
- Underserved populations
- People with disabilities, cognitive as well as physical
- Elderly persons
- Children
- Prisoners
- Homeless persons
- Mentally ill persons
- Persons with dementia
- Refugees

Social Work Code of Ethics

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human wellbeing and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are <u>vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty.</u>

A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual wellbeing in a social context and the wellbeing of society.

Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.

If health is a human right, then a health disparity is a human rights issue and the struggle to achieve health equity for all is an issue of social justice."

-Jacquelyn Miller, CEO, Nebraska DHHS

Ethics Leadership: Health, Human Rights, and Health Diplomacy

Access to Care Is Still a Huge Issue for Millions: Underserved in Health Care

- **Power differential exists between those who can access health care and those who cannot**

- **Uninsured, underinsured**
    - **Marginally insured**
    - **Tenuously insured**
    - **Periodically insured**
    - **Refugees and immigrants**

- **Stigma of welfare in America**
    - **Less likely to secure Medicaid benefits**

Ethics Leadership

YOU ARE ALL LEADERS

What people see their organizational leaders, managers, and co-workers do on the job can influence their own views of what is acceptable or unacceptable behavior.

What can we do collaboratively to shape a future that fosters ethical integrity in all dimensions of our practice and common life?

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Global Health Inequities

Less than 10% of the world's health research budget is spent on conditions that account for 90% of the world's diseases!

But what can I do?

Small steps for individuals:

- Read to stay informed
- Write letters to legislators
    - Foster healthy lifestyles in your community
    - Be aware of underlying community condition contributing to health problems
        - Create a clinical environment that is culturally sensitive to diverse cultural perspectives
            - Join a professional organization that lobbies Congress for equitable policies

Global Injustice

? How are we to respond?

Something

to

think

about

"Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there."

-Will Rogers

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