**ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL ISSUES IN NURSING**

Introduction

Nursing is the core concept of promoting the health, preventing the individuals from illness and care of individuals those who are sick. We all know that nursing is the Nobel profession which is dealing with the practice of soul. Not only nursing every profession should have some ethical and professional values to achieve their aim successfully.

Code of ethics in nursing

Florence nightingale Oath was composed with the sentence “I will do all in my power to maintain and elevate the standard of my profession”. It’s describing the professional standards to maintain the behavior of the nurses. Nursing is a profession needs to administrate the wide variety of patients with varies medical conditions. In order to give successful nursing care it’s our responsibility to know about the important legal and societal expectations. There are certain code of ethics such as Values, Code of conduct, Integrity, Objectivity, Professional Competence, Risk assessment, Inquiry and reporting mechanisms, Assessment, evaluation and Confidentiality.

Professional values

Every nurse should know the professional values to improve their career and relationship with other health care professionals. Professional values are the standard principles which are designed to follow for quality maintenance in nursing care and strong nurse patient relationship. There are many professional values play a major role in nursing profession. Among them first one is trust. Trust will improves the patient outcome and satisfaction rate of the patient. Next one is accountability. Decision making is the important role of the nurse to face the critical situation. Both being accountable and justifying the decision were requires to encourage among the nurses to build their professional role. Another one important value is Ingenuity. Ingenuity is states that quality of being smart, well planned and having original ides. Trust, Accountability, Decision making and Ingenuity were the most important professional values.

Fig No 1: Code of Ethics in Nursing

Code of conduct

Code of conduct is defined as a set of rules and policies for employees and employers in the working environment. The employees should know about the institution policies and rules, it is essential to be safe from harm. Periodic conduction of meeting regarding code of conduct will give awareness among employees regarding institutional policies and rules. It includes that promoting institution values, learning about the behavior in the working place, follow the laws behind the work, developing the morals, evaluating the employees success and taking ethically good decisions.

Integrity and objectivity

Integrity and objectivity is very much important in nursing. The Nurses will practically faces many challenges and complex situations. Integrity means maintaining honesty with all the people in all the time. Benefits of being honest are making positive environment, provide trustworthy in every actions, accepting the cause of mistake and developing the ability in duties. Objectivity in the sense, all professionals should have their own objectives in their duties.

Professional Competence

Professional competencies is a set of skills such as decision making, work standards, problem solving, planning, communication, stress tolerance, motivation, reliability, integrity, adaptability and initiative.

Fig No 2: Steps of Risk assessment

Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is otherwise known as impact analysis. It is recommended to identify and analyze the hazards. In health care sectors, health care personals should involve in risk assessment. There is some risk in nursing such as inventory, machineries, advanced nursing cares, patient outcome and satisfaction, interpersonal relationship and profit of stakeholders.

Inquiry and reporting mechanisms

First and foremost steps in nursing before giving nursing care are inquiry. It means collecting information. Proper reporting in nursing which includes patient safety issues, medication error, critical situations of patients, problems related to procedure and malfunction of the machines, equipments. It is befitted both the patients and nurses.

Assessment and evaluation

In every step in nursing care we have to assess the patient condition first, we have to check the subjective and objective report of the patients. After collecting the subjective and objective assessment, he nursing care should be plan accordingly. Evaluation is the final step, nurses should analysis the outcome of the patient symptoms. Evaluation is the important steps to check the quality of nursing care.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an important ethical principal in nursing. It is illegal to give patient details with others. It is necessary, to maintain confidentiality with patients record. According to the United States Department of Health & Human Services, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the HIPAA Privacy Rule provides federal protections for individually identifiable health information and gives patients an array of rights with respect to that information.

Common Ethical Problems in Nursing

Ethical problems will not only occur with the patients and also nurses will face some problems with the co workers. The most common ethical and professional issues which as follows:

Informed consent

Sometimes in emergency situation, nurses may fail to get informed consent. Even though informed consent have been gained, still patient may not be understand the treatment measures and also giving consent without understanding the complications of the treatment. In this place many nurses were facing ethical issues in nursing. While getting consent, its nurses responsibility to tell about detailed treatment measures. The details which includes, risk of the treatment, steps of procedure, side effects of medications and treatment, complications of the treatment and cost of the treatment.

Privacy of the patients

It is the rights of the patient or an individual to keep their personal or health related information is kept confidential. On another side, patient should not hide any health related information with the doctors. So the nurses and other health care professionals should also maintain confidentiality in the patient record.

Refusal of Treatment

Refusal of treatment is a patient right. It is states that every individual have the rights to take decision in their health care and the health professionals should not compel them to accept the health care. But if patient is not understanding the benefits of the treatment and refusing the treatment. Here again ethical dilemma between Beneficence and Non-maleficence. Health care professionals should determine the patient capacity to refuse and make them an informed decision about the treatment.

Inadequate staffing

Inadequate staffing is very common in most of the hospitals. Many times staff shortage will be unavoidable. So when the nurse facing inadequate staffing they should discuss this issue with the nurse supervisor. Then the nurse should always prioritize the patient need and have to give care. This is the responsibility of the nurse supervisor or hospital management to take some measures to keep the adequate staffing.

Professional Nurse Patient Relationship

Every nurse was in a state to maintain friendly and positive relationship with the patients. But on another side patient may chance to cross the professional relationship. In these situation nurse manager should enquire about the issue and educate the patient and nurse to know about their boundaries. The nurse manager should do periodic awareness lectures for the nurses regarding how to handle these type of issues.

Incompetency of co- worker

In some situation nurse feels that incompetency of other health team members. Many of the nurse they know there is some harm to the patient due to incompetency of other team members but still they hesitate to speak out. The nursing Code of Ethics states that “nurses must protect the patient, the public, and the profession from potential harm when practice appears to be impaired.” So when there is any potential harm to the patient immediately every health care member should react to the same.

Disclosing the medical conditions

Another one ethical considerations, many of the family members pleasing the nurses to stay calm with the patients and asking them to hide the medical conditions. Code of ethics also says that the nurses should truthful to the patients and other team members. Whether it is good or bad, nurses should obligate the truth with the patients and family members which allow the patient to make informed decisions.

Impact of ethical dilemmas

Both nurses and patients may face challenges due to ethical issues. Because of broader of ethical principles, it can lead to stress, fatigue, dissatisfaction in workplace, irritation towards the others and sometime depression. On the another side patient’s quality of life will get decline, poor dignity towards the patients, non trusting relationship between nurse and patient.

Fig No 3: Impact of ethical dilemmas

Conclusion

Nurses are facing much number of ethical issues in their practice. These kinds of issues are mostly concerns those considering a career in nursing are negligence and malpractice. Every hospital management should take responsibility to provide knowledge for the nurses to handle ethical dilemmas. Both the nursing standard and patient outcome is important for the hospital development. Issues need deliberations and common consensus. They need to be reviewed Periodically.

Bibliography

* Bassiel Marquis (2000). Leadership Roles and management functions in nursing (1st edition). Lippincott Publications.
* Basavanthappa BT (2015). Nursing Administration (3rd edition). Jaypee Publications.
* Jones & Bartlett (2002). Management and Leadership (1st edition). Canallam Publications.
* Taylor (2019). Fundamentals of Nursing (2nd Edition). Wolters Kluwer Publications.
* https://www.registerednursing.org/nclex/confidentiality-information-security/
* https://www.nursingprocess.org/ethical-dilemma-in-nursing-examples.html

Author Information

Mrs. R.Indhumathi M.Sc (N)

Asst. Professor,

Vinayaka Missions Annapoorana College of Nursing, Salem

Mail id: [indhuselva3@gmail.com](mailto:indhuselva3@gmail.com)

Ph.No: 9500705750