

## Short Commentary

### Importance of Professional Values in Nursing and Healthcare

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Any professional group has primary standards called professional values. These values are considered as the guideline and motivation of professional behavior for the members of a certain profession [1]. According to Weis and Schank, professional values are standards for action that are accepted by professional groups and individuals, and are used to evaluate the integrity of the individual or organization. In addition, professional values are necessary to reinforce individuals' the professional identity and performance. Professional values are rooted in personal values, which are influenced by family, culture, environment, religion, and ethnicity. The process of acquisition such values is gradual and evolutionary and occurs throughout an individual's lifetime [2].

Nursing is one of the most trusted professions which is rooted in professional ethics and values. Professional nursing values are defined as important professional nursing principles of human dignity, integrity, altruism, and justice that serve as a framework for standards, professional practice, and evaluation. Values play a key role in any profession including the nursing profession. Professional values are articulated in the code of ethics. In India, every newly registered nurse is expected to adhere to the code of ethics and code of professional conduct for nurses developed by Indian Nursing council [3].

Nurses, as the largest health care group, have well-known and important professional values. The use of these values in nursing practice increased the quality of patients care, nurses' occupational satisfaction, their retention in nursing and commitment to the organization. Professional values are a source to promote nurses' ethical competencies in clinical settings and dealing with ethical concerns in the present era. Most nurses are aware of ethical issues, but they do not use them in their clinical practice [4]. Furthermore, in many cases, they lack sufficient power and support to demonstrate their reaction in this regard or they are not aware of its importance. Thus, professional values are a solution to the current problems in nursing profession. Today,

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globalization, migration, nursing shortage, new diseases, ageing population, and demand for high-quality care are complicated issues that result in ethical problems for nurses. Therefore, they are expected to be aware of professional values and apply them to their decision makings while dealing with such ethical problems [5].

Ethics and professional values enlighten the nurses in providing quality of care to their clients. Furthermore, professional values not only influence individuals' principles, behavior standards but also enable them in the creation of an ethical framework. Weis and Schank argued that professional values are standards for behaviors that are recognized by professional groups and individuals, and are used to evaluate the integrity of the individual or organization. However, according to the International Council of Nurses, the core nursing professional values include caring, activism, professionalism, trust, and justice [4,5].

Values are acquisitive; this means they learned either directly or indirectly by observing others' behavior. Following academic education, development of professional values in nurses is mainly influenced by experts in the profession, colleagues, patient care situations, and organizational values [6].

Various studies on professional values in different countries have reported that the difference in professional values lies neither in their prioritization nor in their nature. These researches have highlighted that the difference in priorities might be owing to the cultural, social, economic, and religious situations [7]. For instance, Rassin's study in Israel, demonstrated that priority values were different among the nursing students of different ethnic groups. The study conducted by Shahriari et al., entitled "Ethical values perceived by nurses" indicated that Iranian nurses, due to their religious beliefs, placed more emphasis on preserving patients' dignity. Two other studies showed that nurses' knowledge of professional values and how such values influence their behavior is an essential component of nursing care [3,4]. Moreover, some other studies represented that nurses have low knowledge and awareness of professional values do not use them in action to shape their ethical thinking and rely merely on personal experiences or organizational culture as the basis of their ethical responsibility and commitment. Therefore, it is important to obtain the basic information on nurses' awareness of their professional values in different clinical environments. Furthermore, examining the nurses' perspective on the importance of professional values in different environments and cultures would help healthcare managers to perceive the differences in professional individuals' value systems, thereby creating an appropriate working environment for nurses [8]. Moreover, the complexity pertaining to advanced healthcare increases the need to conduct research and provide the basic information for education in the field of professional values and ethics [9].

### Nursing Values

Nursing values are the principles and standards that nurses follow to ensure they're doing ethical, quality work. Many nurses and nursing organizations share values with a commitment to respecting

their patients and providing excellent comfort, support and treatment through every area of healthcare. Nurses who share these values with their healthcare team may work together more effectively to care for their patients [10,11].

The following list includes some values important to the nursing community:

### **Human dignity**

One of the most important values of nursing is to respect the dignity of their patients. This means treating patients with kindness and thoughtfulness as you provide care, and remembering to consider their emotions about the situation as you talk with them, care for them and educate them about their health. Valuing human dignity also means acknowledging the rights of each patient to choose healthcare services and maintain privacy, which are two other important nursing values.

### **Integrity**

In nursing, integrity is vital to connecting with patients and providing ethical, quality care. Integrity refers to making honest, moral decisions. Nurses should practice integrity in their workplace to meet their health facilities standards for care and aid the recovery of their patients. Patients may have more confidence in nurses who perform their duties with integrity, which makes patients more comfortable and willing to receive necessary treatment for their illnesses or injuries.

### **Altruism**

Altruism for nurses means being considerate of the well-being of your patients and colleagues. You can show this nursing value by advocating for fair treatment of your patient, encouraging fellow nurses to take breaks while you step in and answering questions from patients' families as best as you can. An important part of altruism is to not expect something in return for your care, which means providing care outside of your typical duties or without need for acknowledgement.

### **Social justice**

The value of social justice means understanding and upholding moral and legal healthcare standards for every patient. This involves distributing all services and treatments equally amongst patients who need them. You may practice social justice by actively listening to the needs of individual patients and providing them with treatments and accommodations necessary for their recovery. This way, they feel more comfortable and trust in your team's abilities.

### **Diversity**

Valuing diversity helps nurses stay open-minded and treat patients regardless of their identity or ideals. When you value diversity, you can ensure your treatment of a patient meets moral and ethical standards, makes the patient comfortable and helps them recover from their condition. Diversity in the nursing community may also refer to a healthcare facility's commitment to hiring employees with various backgrounds and identities and treating them all with respect.

### **Ingenuity**

While you typically follow directions and rules as a nurse, ingenuity is a value that encourages critical thinking and helping create

treatments and strategies that help patients. As a field of science, healthcare is always changing, and the nurses who work directly with patients often have a deep understanding which aspects of healthcare can change to provide better treatment options and techniques. To practice ingenuity, it's a good idea to continually study medical advancements.

### **Compassion**

Compassion is a value important to nursing because being compassionate helps patients feel respected during their medical care. You can show compassion in a variety of ways, like listening to patients' concerns, quickly addressing those concerns and speaking kindly as you administer treatments and ask questions. For many nurses, this is one of the key components to providing quality care.

### **Trustworthiness**

Establishing trust helps nurses better understand the needs of those in their care and increase the chances that a patient cooperates with treatments. Patients who trust their healthcare providers also have less stress and may recover better from their illnesses or injuries. To show your trustworthiness, be interested in how your patient's care is affecting them, answer their questions honestly and tell them important and accurate information as soon as you can.

### **Accountability**

Accountability is another value important in nursing. Being accountable means acknowledging your actions and learning from mistakes, which is especially important for your growth in the nursing profession because each action you take affects patients. A good goal for nurses is to admit your mistakes to supervisors as soon as you realize them, which allows you to correct them and continue to give your patients the quality care they deserve.

### **Curiosity**

The nursing community values curiosity because it encourages nurses to keep learning and improve the skills needed to succeed. Personal and professional curiosity can help you determine your nursing goals, how you measure success and what areas of nursing you have a strong interest in. In addition, a sense of curiosity allows you to investigate concerns about treatment and ask questions on the job to learn more about the roles of your colleagues.

### **Autonomy**

Medical autonomy refers to a patient's right to accept or refuse healthcare services like treatments and procedures. This is an ethical nursing value that aims to respect and not influence a patient's healthcare choices, which may make patients feel more at ease and encourage them to seek other healthcare services when they need them. You may show your respect to autonomy by educating patients on their options without bias and supporting their decisions.

### **Precision**

Precision is an important value for nurses because precise, accurate care best fulfills the needs of patients and creates a safe environment for medical procedures and recovery. As a nurse, try to strive for precision in all aspects of your role, including understanding a specific patient's treatment plan, providing families and patients with accurate information and sanitizing all rooms and instruments to avoid germs and bacteria. This can help you maintain the standards of your facility and improve the health of your patients

## Empathy

Another nursing value is empathy, which helps nurses see a situation from their patient's perspective. This allows you to understand more deeply how a patient might feel and what they might need from their medical team, and this can help you administer successful treatment plans. You can use empathy to address a patient's concerns from their point of view, which is helpful when educating them about suggested procedures and understanding how to put them at ease.

## Professionalism

For nurses, professionalism is the standard by which they measure their performance and reputation. The specific aspects of your performance and reputation may include your ability to care for patients successfully, your attitude toward colleagues and patients and your ability to work as a team with other nurses and doctors. Maintaining a standard of professionalism ensures that you understand the importance of your job and strive to perform those duties well.

## Loyalty

A nurse may value loyalty to their job and their patients. This may mean you dedicate yourself to finishing a patient's treatment, performing all the duties of your job as best as you can and continuing to learn about relevant medical advancements. You can also show you value loyalty by advocating for patients who need your help and trying to resolve every one of their concerns.

## Excellence

The nursing community highly values a commitment to providing excellent service. As a nurse, you may strive to improve your knowledge so you can provide your patients with excellent quality support during their time in your facility. Other ways to make excellence a goal are to get involved in creating patient care plans, ask your colleagues questions when you don't understand something and prepare for many situations through continued coursework, practice and studying.

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