

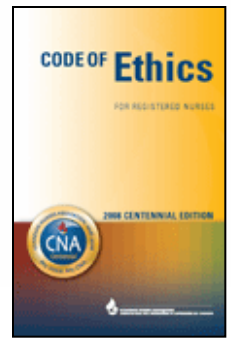


Mission:

Competent,  
caring,  
knowledge-  
based  
registered  
nursing for the  
people of  
Saskatchewan.

# Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses

*NAME*  
*TITLE*



# Historical Context

- 1954: CNA adopted the International Council of Nurses code
- 1980: CNA developed and adopted its own Code-CNA Code of Ethics: An Ethical Basis for Nursing in Canada
- June 2008: CNA Convention
  - Updated every 5-6 years

# Nature of Ethics

- Ethics is not a black & white subject
- Ethics is not something you either know or don't know
- Ethics involves thinking and feeling, study and practice, knowledge and intuition

# *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses*

## **Purpose**

- Serves as a foundation of ethical practice
- Sets out expectations for ethical behavior of RNs
- Provides guidance for decision-making
  - used in conjunction with professional regulations, competencies, standards & laws
- Basis from which RNs can advocate

# Purpose of The Code (cont'd)

- Provides a means for self-evaluation and self-reflection
- Provides a basis for feedback and peer review
- Delineates what RNs must know about their ethical responsibilities

# Purpose of The Code (cont'd)

- Informs other health care professionals & members of the public about the ethical commitments of RNs
- Upholds the responsibility of being a self-regulating profession
- Serves as an ethical basis from which to advocate for quality practice environments

# The Code Does NOT...



- Provide rules of ethical or moral behavior for every circumstance
- Offer guidance about which values should take priority or how they can be balanced in practice
- Supersede other and stronger moral or legal obligations (e.g. the law)

# Elements Of An Ethical Practice

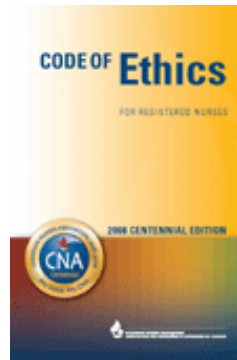
- Commitment to do good
- Sensitivity and receptiveness to ethical matters
- Willingness to enter into relationships with clients receiving care



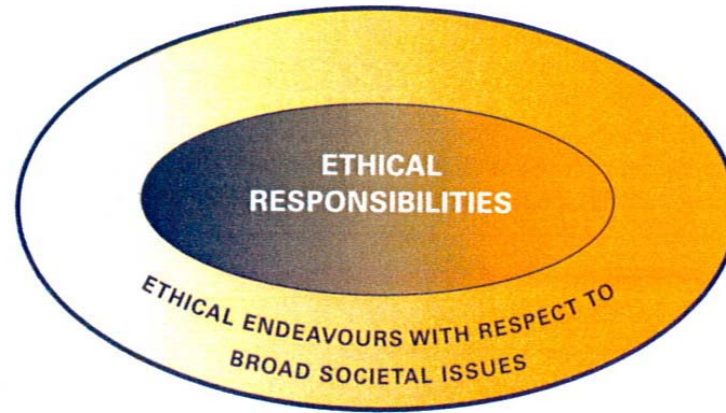
# Level of Application

- Nursing practice involves attention to ethics at various levels:
  - Client (individual, family, groups, populations)
  - Organizational (the health care agency or program)
  - Community
  - Society
  - Internationally





# Structure Of The Code



**Part 1 – “Nursing Values and Ethical Responsibilities”**

**Part 2 – “Ethical Endeavors”**

# Nursing Values

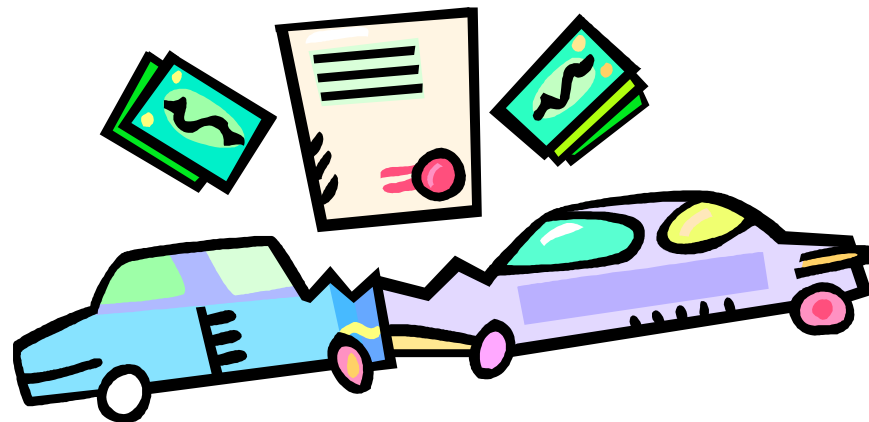
- A. Providing Safe, Compassionate, Competent and Ethical Care
- B. Promoting Health and Well-being
- C. Promoting and Respecting Informed Decision-making
- D. Preserving Dignity
- E. Maintaining Privacy and Confidentiality
- F. Promoting Justice
- G. Being Accountable

# Responsibility Statements

- Each value is followed with a number of responsibility statements
- Assist in clarifying and elaborating on the application of each value
- Provide further support in assessing the ethical situation

# When Values Collide?

- When one's personal, professional or institutional values conflict
- When an individual's values conflict with the values of another individual



# Ethical Situations

- **Ethical Problems**
- **Ethical (or Moral) Uncertainty**
- **Ethical Dilemmas or Questions**
- **Ethical (or Moral) Distress**
- **Ethical (or Moral) Residue**
- **Ethical (or Moral) Disengagement**
- **Ethical Violations**
- **Ethical (or Moral) Courage**



# Moral Residue

“Is what nurses experience when they seriously compromise themselves or allow themselves to be compromised. The moral residue that nurses carry forward from these kinds of situations can help them reflect on what they would do differently in similar situations in the future” (CNA, 2008, p. 7).

# Ethical Disengagement



“Can occur if nurses begins to see the disregard of their ethical commitments as normal. A nurse may then become apathetic or disengage to the point of being unkind, non-compassionate or even cruel to other health-care workers and persons receiving care” (CNA, 2008, p. 7).

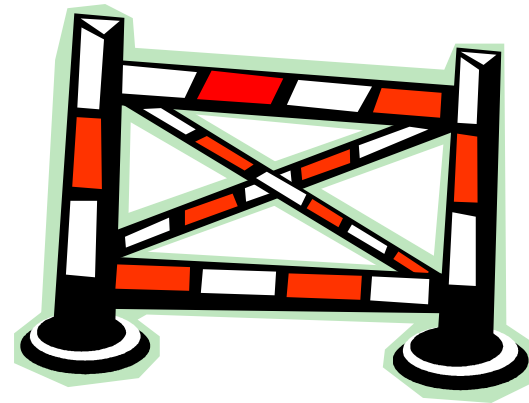


# Ethical Courage

“Is exercised when a nurse stands firm on a point of moral principle or a particular decision about something in the face of overwhelming fear or threat to himself or herself” (CNA, 2008, p. 7).

# Barriers to Action

- Fear or circumstances beyond the RNs control
- Co-worker's attitudes
- Institutional obstacles

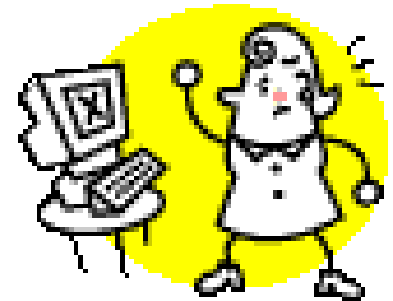


# Sources Of Moral Distress

- Harm to patients (pain, suffering)
- Health policy constraints
- Medical prolongation of dying without informed choice
- Inadequate staffing
- Effects of cost containment

# Ethical & Moral Distress

- Anger
- Frustration
- Anxiety
- Feeling ashamed
- Embarrassed
- Heartsick
- Grieving
- Depression
- Miserable
- Physical Pain
- Sadness
- Ineffective
- Fatigue
- Burnout
- Cynicism

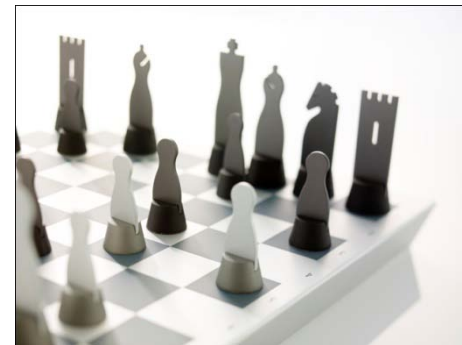


# Symptoms Over Time

- Loss of sleep
- Loss of appetite
- Loss of confidence
- Crying
- Nightmares
- Feelings of worthlessness
- More intense or prolonged physical symptoms

# Strategies To Reduce Ethical Distress

- Recognition
- Speak Out
- Education
- Support
- Consultation
- Debriefing/case studies
- Be proactive!

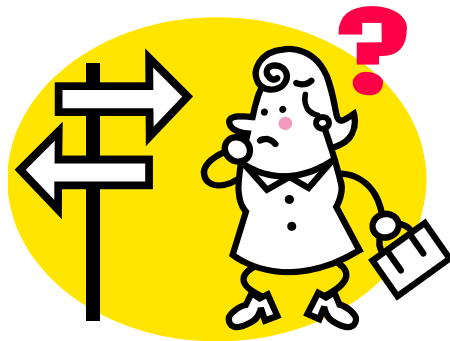


# Moral Decision-Making

- Recognize the moral dimension
- Who are the interested parties? What are their relationships?
- What values are involved?
- Weigh the benefits and burdens

# Moral Decision-Making

- Look for similar cases
- Discuss with relevant others
- Does this decision accord with legal and organizational rules?
- Am I comfortable with this decision?



## Part 2: Ethical Endeavors



- RNs should advocate for and work toward eliminating social inequities. Such as:
  - Utilize principles of primary health care
  - Address organizational, social, economic and political factors
  - Advocate for change to unethical policies/laws/regulations

# Additional Resources

- Appendix A – History of Code
- Appendix B – Context of the Code
- Appendix C – Ethical Models
- Appendix D – Applying the Code

# The Code As A Resource

- While the code cannot enforce responsibilities outside of nursing, it can provide a powerful political instrument for nurses when they are concerned about being able to practice ethically.



# Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association

## Ethics Resources

[www.srna.org/nursing-resources](http://www.srna.org/nursing-resources)

- *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses [CNA] (2008)*
- Publications
  - *Tools for Resolving Professional Practice Issues (2008)*
  - *Ethics Guidelines for Industry Sponsorships applying to RNs and RN(NP)s (2006)*
- 'Ask a Practice Advisor' FAQs
  - confidentiality, privacy, accountability & responsibility
- Ethics in Action: Resources for Ethical Registered Nursing Practice (poster)
- *Standards and Foundation Competencies for the Practice of Registered Nurses (2007)*

# Canadian Nurses Association

## Ethics Resources

[www.cna-aiic.ca/CNA/practice/ethics/code/default\\_e.aspx](http://www.cna-aiic.ca/CNA/practice/ethics/code/default_e.aspx)

- **Learning Modules – Bringing the Code of Ethics to Life**
- Ethics Resources Listing & Ethics Reading Resources
- Ethics in Practice series
- *Ethical Research Guidelines for Registered Nurses*
- Position Statements: i.e.: privacy, ethical recruitment, patient safety
- Publications: i.e.: social justice, environment

Canadian Nurses Interested in Ethics (CNIE) <http://cniethics.ca/>







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