



International Federation of Perioperative Nurses

## *IFPN Position Statement Code of Ethics*

### **Preamble**

Perioperative nurses have four fundamental responsibilities: to promote health, to prevent illness, to restore health and to alleviate suffering. The need for perioperative nursing is universal.

Inherent in nursing is respect for human rights, including the right to life, to dignity and to be treated with respect.

Perioperative nursing care is unrestricted by considerations of age, colour, creed, culture, disability or illness, gender, nationality, politics, race or social status.

Perioperative nurses render health services to the individual, the family and the community and co-ordinate their services with those of related groups.

### **Elements of the Code**

#### *1. Perioperative nurses and people*

The perioperative nurse's primary professional responsibility is to people requiring their nursing care. In providing care, the perioperative nurse promotes an environment in which the human rights, values, customs and spiritual beliefs of the individual, family and community are respected. The perioperative nurse ensures that the individual receives sufficient information on which to base consent for care and related treatment. The perioperative nurse holds in confidence personal information and uses judgement in sharing this information. The perioperative nurse shares with society the responsibility for initiating and supporting action to meet the health and social needs of the public, in particular those of vulnerable populations. The perioperative nurse also shares responsibility to sustain and protect the natural environment from depletion, pollution, degradation and destruction.

#### *2. Perioperative nurses and practice*

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The perioperative nurse carries personal responsibility and accountability for their nursing practice, and for maintaining competence by continual learning. The perioperative nurse maintains a standard of personal health such that the ability to provide care is not compromised. The perioperative nurse uses judgement regarding individual competence when accepting and delegating responsibility. The perioperative nurse at all times maintains standards of personal conduct which reflect well on the profession and enhance public confidence. The perioperative nurse, in providing care, ensures that use of technology and scientific advances are compatible with the safety, dignity and rights of people.

### 3. *Perioperative nurses and the profession*

The perioperative nurse assumes the major role in determining and implementing acceptable standards of clinical perioperative nursing practice, management, research and education. The perioperative nurse is active in developing a core of research-based professional knowledge. The perioperative nurse, acting through the professional organisation, participates in creating and maintaining equitable social and economic working conditions in nursing.

### 4. *Perioperative nurses and co-workers*

The perioperative nurse sustains a co-operative relationship with co-workers in nursing and other fields. The perioperative nurse takes appropriate action to safeguard individuals when a co-worker or any other person endangers their care.

The IFPN Code of Ethics for Nurses is a guide for action based on social values and needs. It will have meaning only as a living document if applied to the realities of perioperative nursing and health care in a changing society and within the many cultural norms around the world. To achieve its purpose the Code must be understood, internalised and used by perioperative nurses in all aspects of their work. It must be available to students and perioperative nurses throughout their study and working lives.

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## Advice to nurses

- Study the standards under each element of the Code.
- Reflect on what each standard means to you. Think about how you can apply ethics in your nursing domain: perioperative practice, education, research or management.
- Discuss the Code with co-workers and others.
- Use a specific example from experience to identify ethical dilemmas and standards of conduct as outlined in the Code. Identify how you would resolve the dilemma.
- Work in groups to clarify ethical decision-making and reach a consensus on standards of ethical conduct.
- Collaborate with your national perioperative nurses' association, co-workers, and others in the continuous application of ethical standards in nursing practice, education, management and research.

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### Element of the Code # 1: PERIOPERATIVE NURSES AND PEOPLE

Perioperative practitioners and Managers	Educators and Researchers	National Perioperative Nurses' Associations	Interpretive statement for perioperative (operating theatre) staff
Provide care that respects human rights and is sensitive to the values, customs and beliefs of people.	In curriculum include references to human rights, equity, justice, solidarity as the basis for access to care.	Develop position statements and guidelines that support human rights and ethical standards.	Ensure the privacy and dignity of all patients and treat all with equal respect
Provide continuing education in ethical issues	Provide teaching and learning opportunities for ethical issues and decision making	Lobby for involvement of nurses in ethics review committees.	Maintain a morally correct attitude towards all patients based on learning
Provide sufficient information to permit informed consent and the right to choose or refuse treatment.	Provide teaching/learning opportunities related to informed consent	Provide guidelines, position statements and continuing education related to informed consent	Deliver best practice in giving patients sufficient information on which to make meaningful and timely decisions about their treatment
Use recording and information management systems that ensure confidentiality	Introduce into curriculum concepts of privacy and confidentiality	Incorporate issues of confidentiality and privacy into a national code of ethics for nurses.	Make sure that all patient information is only available to those who need to use or know it
Develop and monitor environmental safety in the workplace	Sensitise students to the importance of social action in current concerns	Advocate for safe and healthy environment	Ensure that the Health and Safety of staff and patients is considered and where possible remedies found to remove risks

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**Element of the Code # 2: PERIOPERATIVE NURSES AND PRACTICE**

Practitioners and Managers	Educators and Researchers	National Nurses' Perioperative Associations	Interpretive statement for perioperative (operating theatre) staff
Establish standards of care and a work setting that promotes quality care	Provide teaching/learning opportunities that foster life long learning and competence for practice	Provide access to continuing education, through journals, conferences, distance education, etc	Make sure that your nursing practice is high quality and evidence based
Establish systems for professional appraisal, continuing education and systematic renewal of licensure to practice	Conduct and disseminate research that shows links between continual learning and competence to practice	Lobby to ensure continuing education opportunities and quality care standards	Make certain that you hold current registration, are competent to practice and have regular appraisal
Monitor and promote the personal health of nursing staff in relation to their competence for practice	Promote the importance of personal health and illustrate its relation to other values	Promote healthy lifestyles for nursing professionals. Lobby for healthy workplaces and services for nurses	Keep fit and healthy in order to be able to perform your role for your patients and career.

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### Element of the Code # 3: PERIOPERATIVE NURSES AND THE PROFESSION

Practitioners and Managers	Educators and Researchers	National Nurses' Perioperative Associations	Interpretive statement for perioperative (operating theatre) staff
Set standards for nursing practice, research, education and management	Provide teaching/learning opportunities in setting standards for nursing practice, research, education and management	Collaborate with others to set standards for nursing education, practice, research and management	Deliver your nursing care based on international evidence, best practice and continuing personal education
Foster workplace support of the conduct, dissemination and utilisation of research related to nursing and health	Conduct, disseminate and utilise research to advance the nursing profession	Develop position statements, guidelines and standards related to nursing research	Share your knowledge with your colleagues and also learn from them collaboratively
Promote participation in national perioperative nurses' associations so as to create favourable socio-economic conditions for nurses	Sensitise learners to the importance of professional nursing associations	Lobby for fair social and economic working conditions in nursing. Develop position statements and guidelines in workplace issues	Use your membership of your professional organisation to help raise nurses' profiles and status within your country

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### Element of the Code #4: PERIOPERATIVE NURSES AND CO-WORKERS

Practitioners and Managers	Educators and Researchers	National Nurses' Perioperative Associations	Interpretive statement for perioperative (operating theatre) staff
Create awareness of specific and overlapping functions and the potential for interdisciplinary tensions	Develop understanding of the roles of other workers	Stimulate co-operation with other related disciplines	Share knowledge and learn from other professionals to ensure high quality total patient care
Develop workplace systems that support common professional, ethical values and behaviour	Communicate nursing ethics to other professions	Develop awareness of ethical issues of other professions	Discuss ethical patient care with other professional groups to put good systems in place in the operating department
Develop mechanisms to safeguard the individual, family or community when their care is endangered by health care personnel	Instil in learners the need to safeguard the individual, family or community when care is endangered by health care personnel	Provide guidelines, position statements and discussion for a related to safeguarding people when their care is endangered by health care personnel	Recognise poor ethical care and be prepared to be an advocate for your patients by refusing to accept poor practice

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## Dissemination of the IFPN Code of Ethics for Nurses

To be effective the IFPN Code of Ethics for Nurses must be familiar to perioperative nurses. We encourage you to help with its dissemination to schools of nursing, practising perioperative and other speciality nurses, the nursing press and other mass media. The Code should also be disseminated to other health professions, the general public, consumer and policy-making groups, human rights organisations and employers of nurses.

## Glossary of terms used in the ICN Code of Ethics for Nurses

*Co-operative relationship.* A professional relationship based on collegial and reciprocal actions, and behaviour that aim to achieve certain goals.

*Co-worker.* Other nurses and other health and non-health related workers and professionals.

*Nurse shares with society.* A nurse, as a health professional and a citizen, initiates and supports appropriate action to meet the health and social needs of the public.

*Perioperative.* Care of the patients around the surgical intervention, for example anaesthetic, operating room and post-anaesthesia along with those who may perform surgery in a different setting

*Personal health.* Mental, physical, social and spiritual wellbeing of the nurse.

*Personal information.* Information obtained during professional contact that is private to an individual or family, and which, when disclosed, may violate the right to privacy, cause inconvenience, embarrassment, or harm to the individual or family.

*Related groups.* Other nurses, health care workers or other professionals providing service to an individual, family or community and working toward desired goals.

## REFERENCES/RESOURCES:

ICN Code of ETHICS for NURSES, Revised 2012, <https://www.icn.ch/>

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