



Self-Assessment Tool: Ethics

The *Ethics* practice standard is one of the standards selected for the QA Program in 2009–2010. Nurses encounter ethical conflict and uncertainty in their everyday practice. The ability to work through an ethical issue is an essential component of nursing practice. The *Ethics* practice standard assists nurses in making decisions about ethical situations in the best interest of the client. Knowledge of the standard ensures that a nurse functioning in any role will be aware of how her or his actions have an impact on the client, colleagues and the public.

This tool will help you identify your areas of strength and the areas you need to improve related to the *Ethics* practice standard, and give you information on how to apply the standard to your individual practice. The tool lists seven values from the practice standard that the College has identified as being most important in nursing practice. To see the entire *Ethics* document, see the following link [here](#).

The tool can be downloaded or copied for future use.

How to use this tool

Step 1 Review the behavioural indicators listed in the tool.

If you are unsure of the behavioural indicator, read the bulleted notes to get an example of the indicator being used in practice.

Step 2 Identify your areas of strength and the areas you need to improve.

After reviewing each behavioural indicator, use the box beside the statement to show whether the indicator is an area of strength or an area you need to improve in your own practice setting.

If you need more space to write your examples, print additional copies of the tool or use extra paper.

- **Area of strength:** If you choose this box, provide an example of how or why this is an area of strength for you.
- **Area of improvement:** If you choose this box, provide an example of why it is an area requiring improvement and how you can improve this area in your practice.

Step 3 Use the information on the tool to develop learning goals that you can use in your Learning Plan form.

Once you have identified your areas of strength and the areas you need to improve, you can create your learning goals and start developing your Learning Plan.

Create your goal statement by starting with a phrase, for example:

“I want to share my knowledge/expertise about ...” (for areas of strength); or

“I want to work on/learn how to ...” (for areas of improvement).

Then add the applicable behavioural indicator that was noted as an area of improvement or strength. This information forms the basis for documenting activities in the “Activities to achieve my goal” section of the Learning Plan form. Click here for the College’s [Learning Plan form](#).

Remember to incorporate the following four elements into your self-assessment and the development of your Learning Plan:

- advances in technology;
- changes in the practice environment;
- entry-to-practice competencies; and
- interprofessional care.

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Behavioural Indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullet points are examples of how the indicator can be applied in practice. 	Identify whether the behavioural indicator is an area of strength, with an example, or an area you need to improve, with an example of how that area can be improved.	
	Area of strength	Area of improvement
Client well-being: Facilitating someone's good health or welfare and preventing or removing harm. You meet this indicator by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting and preserving the self-esteem and self-confidence of clients. • Intervening in situations in which the safety and well-being of clients are compromised. • Providing prompt assistance, support and treatment to clients. 		
Client choice: Providing clients with the information necessary to make their own choices and to consent to or refuse care. You meet this indicator by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting informed decision-making. • Demonstrating a willingness to explore alternative ways of providing care. • Considering a range of options to resolve ethical issues. • Analyzing the available options to determine the appropriate care for the client. 		
Privacy and confidentiality: Maintaining limited access to a person, the person's body, conversations, bodily functions or objects immediately associated with the person. You meet this indicator by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping all personal and health information confidential within the obligations of the law and the standards of practice. • Refraining from collecting information that is unnecessary for the provision of health care. • Protecting the client's physical and emotional privacy. 		
Respect for life: Human life is precious and needs to be respected, protected and treated with consideration. You meet this indicator by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocating for palliative measures for the client when active treatment is withheld or no longer an option. 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the client’s wishes within the obligations of the law and the standards of practice. 		
<p>Maintaining commitments: Keeping promises, being honest and meeting implicit or explicit obligation toward their clients, themselves, each other, the nursing profession, other members of the health care team and quality practice settings. You meet this indicator by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating the effectiveness of the actions taken to resolve ethical issues. • Identifying personal values and ensuring they do not interfere with professional practice. • Maintaining knowledge of the legislation affecting ethical behaviour (by demonstrating awareness of changes to legislation, seeking educational resources to acquire knowledge and evaluating knowledge). • Identifying ethical issues and communicating them to the health care team. • Reporting to the appropriate authority any nursing colleague whose actions or behaviour toward clients are unsafe or unprofessional. • Discussing and working through ethical conflicts and concerns with one another. • Cooperating in regulatory functions. • Demonstrating regard for maintaining commitments to the nursing profession by following standards and practice expectations of the profession. • Offering input into formal organizational initiatives that address ethical issues. 		
<p>Truthfulness: Speaking or acting without intending to deceive. Also providing enough information to ensure the client is informed. You meet this indicator by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting informed decision-making. • Advocating for the client to get information about the proposed treatment before consenting to or refusing care treatment, or participating in research. 		

<p>Fairness: Allocating health care resources on the basis of objective health-related factors. You meet this indicator by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying personal values and ensuring they do not interfere with professional practice. • Contributing to environments that promote and support safe, effective and ethical practice. • Demonstrating a willingness to explore alternative ways of providing care. • Advocating for input into policies and procedures about the use of resources. • Discussing and advocating for adequate resources to provide safe, effective and ethical nursing care. 		
<p>During the Self-Assessment process, incorporate the following four elements into your reflection.</p>		
	<p>Area of strength</p>	<p>Area of improvement</p>
<p>Entry-to-practice competencies: Expectations that all nurses must maintain throughout their career. The RN, RPN and NP competency statements are available at www.cno.org/qa.</p>		
<p>Advances in technology: The introduction of new, innovative or different skills, processes or knowledge into a nurse's practice setting. For example, learning how to use a new electronic documentation system.</p>		
<p>Changes in the practice environment: Changes that require additional knowledge, skill and judgment for a nurse to deliver safe, effective and ethical nursing care. For example, changes in the client population, nursing care delivery systems or legislation.</p>		
<p>Interprofessional care: The provision of comprehensive health services to patients by multiple health caregivers who work collaboratively to deliver quality care within and across settings.</p>		