



The *Professional Standards* document provides an overall framework for nursing practice, and links with the College's other practice standards, guidelines and competencies.

*Professional Standards* includes seven broad standards. Ethics is one of these standards.

## Ethics

### Standard statement

Each nurse understands and upholds the values and beliefs described in the College's *Ethics* practice standard.



Click here to read the [Ethics practice standard](#)

The standard statement for ethics states each nurse understands and upholds the values and beliefs described in the *Ethics* practice standard.

## Indicators For All Nurses

- practice according to ethical values, act with integrity, honesty and professionalism;
- identify personal values and ensure lack of conflict; and
- take action to resolve ethical issues.

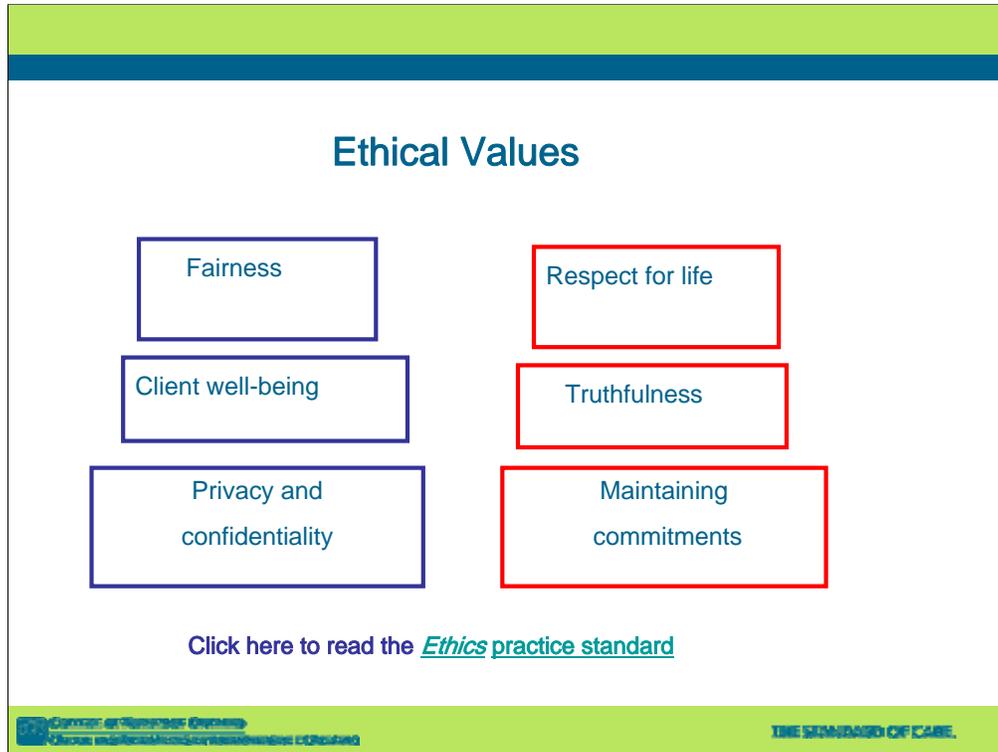
Ethical nursing includes acting with integrity, honesty and professionalism when dealing with the clients and other health care team members.

It is important for nurses to be aware of the importance of clarifying their own beliefs, attitudes and values before reacting or acting in a client situation. Nurses need to ensure that they are representing the client's point of view when advocating.

## Ethical Nursing Care Is

- promoting the values of client well-being;
- respecting client choice;
- assuring privacy and confidentiality;
- respecting quality of life;
- maintaining commitments;
- respecting truthfulness; and
- ensuring fairness in the use of resources.

Ethical nursing care is defined as promoting the values of client well-being, respecting client choice, assuring privacy and confidentiality, respecting quality of life, maintaining commitments, respecting truthfulness and ensuring fairness in the use of resources.

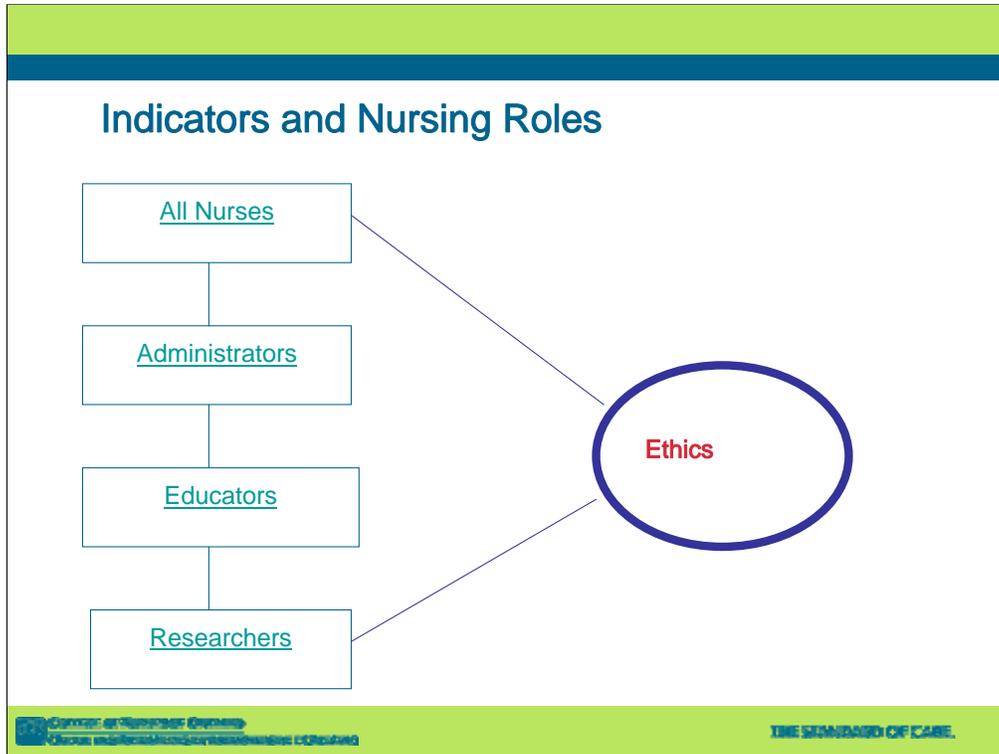


The College has identified the following values as the most important to providing nursing care in Ontario: fairness, respect for life, client well-being, truthfulness, privacy and confidentiality, and maintaining commitments (to oneself, the client, colleagues, the profession and the practice setting).

When two or more ethical values, like client well-being and truthfulness, conflict in a situation, an ethical conflict or dilemma exist.

Nurses may experience ethical uncertainty when faced with a situation in which they are unsure of what values apply or even what the moral problem is. Nurses may also experience ethical distress when they know the right thing to do but various constraints make doing the right thing difficult. Nurses are expected to work through and understand these situations, and take action to resolve ethical issues. This may involve consulting with colleagues and/or ethics experts.

Ethical values in nursing is more fully explained in the College's *Ethics practice standard*.



Nurses work in a variety of roles. Some nurses provide direct client care, while others practice in the administrator, educator or researcher role. The indicators on the following slides illustrate how the standard may be demonstrated by nurses working in different roles.

Nurses in the administrator, educator and researcher role have additional indicators, therefore they should review the All Nurses section and the specific section matching their role. To review this presentation by specific roles, use your mouse and click on your choice.

## Indicators For The Administrator Role

- create an environment that promotes safe, effective and ethical practice; and
- value time taken to resolve ethical issues.



In addition to the indicators for all nurses, nurse administrators have additional expectations. Nurse administrators have a responsibility to create an environment that supports ethical values. They should also value time taken to resolve ethical issues, ensure mechanisms allow for staffing decisions that are in the best interest of the client and ensure appropriate use of, and supervision of, staff.

## Indicators For The Administrator Role

- advocate for resources and establish mechanisms to assist with ethical issues;
- support nurses in developing skills to manage ethical issues; and
- advocate for nurses on ethics committees.

Click here to read the [Ethics practice standard](#)

Because of the nature of ethics, it is sometimes difficult to identify the issue causing the ethical situation. Working through ethical situations begins with understanding the values of all concerned.

Nurse administrators should develop supports to help staff understand and identify ethical conflicts; and provide opportunities and resources for staff to resolve ethical dilemmas. For example, nurse administrators can encourage staff to consult with colleagues and a person with expertise in ethics. The College strongly encourages nursing involvement on ethics committees as the input from nurses in direct practice is vital for high level facility decision-making that impacts client care.

More information about ethics can be obtained by reading the College's *Ethics practice standard*.

## Scenario

I am a nurse manager for a practice setting that provides palliative-care services. Recently, a nurse struggled with a client's choice for end-of-life care.

What role do I play in such ethical issues?

Read the scenario and answer the question following this slide.

**Choose the most appropriate response.**

- A) Nurse administrators are expected to direct nurses to research current laws on this issue and share their conclusions with the team.
- B) Nurse administrators are expected to support nurses in developing the skills to recognize and manage ethical issues.

Read the following question and use your mouse to click on the circle beside the appropriate response.

## Question Discussion

The answer is B.

Nurse administrators are expected to help staff understand and identify ethical conflicts, and discuss ways to resolve ethical issues. For example, the nurse administrator could provide individual support to the nurse and also organize monthly meetings for staff to discuss ethical issues.

Read the discussion notes on this slide.

When reading the answer did you consider the statement in answer A) which stated, "... and share their conclusions with the team"? Nurses often think ethical dilemmas have a right and wrong answer. Nurse administrators can help staff identify the elements of an ethical dilemma, and help them develop the skills necessary to resolve conflicts.

## Nurse Administrator

Your score	{score}
Max score	{max-score}
Number of quiz attempts	{total-attempts}

## Indicators For The Educator Role

- encourage and support critical thinking and dialogue about ethical issues; and
- obtain resources to improve recognition and resolution.



*Click here to read the [Ethics practice standard](#)*

In addition to the indicators for all nurses, nurses in the educator role have additional expectations. They are expected to encourage and support critical thinking and dialogue about ethical issues and/or obtain resources to help nurses recognize and resolve ethical issues. This may include facilitating nursing access to an ethics expert and/or bioethics or health care related ethics books and articles. Or by contacting the continuing education philosophy or nursing departments at universities or community colleges to inquire about the availability of courses and conferences.

## Indicators For The Researcher Role

- ensure the client has information to make decisions;
- participate in an ethical review of research; and
- ensure ethical guidelines are followed.



*Click here to access the [Consent practice guideline](#)*

In addition to the indicators for all nurses, nurses in the researcher role have additional expectations.

The nurse in the researcher role must place the safety and well-being of the client above all other objectives including the search for knowledge. Nurses in researcher roles should ensure the client has all the information necessary to make an informed decision including: the nature of the treatment; expected benefits, material risk and side effects of the treatment; alternative courses of actions; and likely consequence of not having the treatment.

To protect research participants, nurses in the researcher role should participate in an ethical review of the research and ensure ethical guidelines are followed, including confidentiality and privacy standards and laws.

## Professional Standards

Accountability  
Continuing Competency  
Ethics  
Knowledge  
Knowledge Application  
Leadership  
Relationship



To work through another chapter from *Professional Standards*, close the presentation and return to the Learning Centre.