

Component 2: The Culture of Healthcare

Unit 8: Professional Values and Medical Ethics

Lecture 8a: Tradition and Values in Healthcare Professionals

Objectives

- Define traditions, ethics, and values for medical professionals
- Describe the role of a professional code of ethics
- Compare and contrast professional codes of ethics from nursing and physicians.
- Compare the professional code of ethics to the legal responsibilities of physicians

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Objectives (continued)

- Describe the purpose of Medical Practice Acts
- Describe the Purpose of State Licensure of Healthcare Professionals

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Traditions, Ethics, and Values for Medical Professionals

- All medical professionals live by professional traditions, a code of ethics, and values.
- Although every health profession has a unique set of traditions, ethics, and values, they are all very similar to those of the physician.
- Traditions, ethics, and values are compiled by professional organizations that advocate for their membership.

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Traditions, Ethics, and Values for Medical Professionals (continued)

- Some professions have more than one professional organization that may correspond to a specialty group within that organization.
- These specialty professional organizations may tailor a more general code of ethics to meet their needs.
- The American Medical Association is a large professional organization that advocates for physicians.

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Traditions, Ethics, and Values for Medical Professionals (continued)

- AMA's Code of Ethics:
- **Preamble**
- The medical profession has long subscribed to a body of ethical statements developed primarily for the benefit of the patient. As a member of this profession, a physician must recognize responsibility to patients first and foremost, as well as to society, to other health professionals, and to self. The following Principles adopted by the American Medical Association are not laws, but standards of conduct which define the essentials of honorable behavior for the physician.

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Traditions, Ethics, and Values for Medical Professionals (continued)

- **Principles of medical ethics**

- I. A physician shall be dedicated to providing competent medical care, with compassion and respect for human dignity and rights.

Traditions, Ethics, and Values for Medical Professionals (continued)

- II. A physician shall uphold the standards of professionalism, be honest in all professional interactions, and strive to report physicians deficient in character or competence, or engaging in fraud or deception, to appropriate entities.

Traditions, Ethics, and Values for Medical Professionals (continued)

- III. A physician shall respect the law and also recognize a responsibility to seek changes in those requirements which are contrary to the best interests of the patient.

Traditions, Ethics, and Values for Medical Professionals (continued)

- IV. A physician shall respect the rights of patients, colleagues, and other health professionals, and shall safeguard patient confidences and privacy within the constraints of the law.

Traditions, Ethics, and Values for Medical Professionals (continued)

- V. A physician shall continue to study, apply, and advance scientific knowledge, maintain a commitment to medical education, make relevant information available to patients, colleagues, and the public, obtain consultation, and use the talents of other health professionals when indicated.

Traditions, Ethics, and Values for Medical Professionals (continued)

- VI. A physician shall, in the provision of appropriate patient care, except in emergencies, be free to choose whom to serve, with whom to associate, and the environment in which to provide medical care.

Traditions, Ethics, and Values for Medical Professionals (continued)

- VII. A physician shall recognize a responsibility to participate in activities contributing to the improvement of the community and the betterment of public health.

Traditions, Ethics, and Values for Medical Professionals (continued)

- VIII. A physician shall, while caring for a patient, regard responsibility to the patient as paramount.

Traditions, Ethics, and Values for Medical Professionals (continued)

- IX. A physician shall support access to medical care for all people.
- Adopted June 1957; revised June 1980; revised June 2001.

Role of Professional Code of Ethics

- As stated in the AMA Preamble, this code of ethics is not a law, but it is a recommended set of guidelines to live by.
- The professional organization develops the code through member collaboration. It is a document put together by the membership for the membership.

NLN Core Values

- Another way that an organization can help guide its membership in their actions is through core values.
- The National League of Nursing's four core values guide the mission of the organization:

NLN Core Values (continued)

- National League of Nursing Core Values:
 - CARING: A culture of caring, as a fundamental part of the nursing profession, characterizes our concern and consideration for the whole person, our commitment to the common good, and our outreach to those who are vulnerable. All organizational activities are managed in a participative and person-centered way, demonstrating an ability to understand the needs of others and a commitment to act always in the best interests of all stakeholders.

NLN Core Values(continued)

- **INTEGRITY:** A culture of integrity is evident when organizational principles of open communication, ethical decision-making, and humility are encouraged, expected, and demonstrated consistently. Not only is doing the right thing simply how we do business, but our actions reveal our commitment to truth telling and to how we always see ourselves from the perspective of others in a larger community.

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NLN Core Values(continued)

- **DIVERSITY:** A culture of diversity embraces acceptance and respect. We understand that each individual is unique and recognize individual differences, which can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. A culture of diversity is about understanding ourselves and each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the richness of each individual. While diversity can be about individual differences, it also encompasses institutional and system-wide behavior patterns.

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NLN Core Values(continued)

- **EXCELLENCE:** A culture of excellence reflects a commitment to continuous growth, improvement, and understanding. It is a culture where transformation is embraced, and the status quo and mediocrity are not tolerated.

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Comparing Codes of Ethics

- The AMA has the Code of Ethics
- The National League of Nursing has its core values.
- Both documents have the same purpose.
- How are the documents similar?

Legal Responsibilities of Healthcare Providers

- Every state has laws that govern the practice of medicine within its borders.
- These statutes are the Medical Practice Act.
- Purpose- to protect the health and safety of the public
- Each state legislature establishes a Medical Board to control licensure of physicians in a state.

Legal Responsibilities of Healthcare Providers (continued)

- States also establish boards for other healthcare providers
 - Board of Nursing
 - Physical Therapy Board
 - Respiratory Therapy Board
 - Board of Pharmacy

Legal Responsibilities of Healthcare Providers (continued)

- Medical practice acts
 - Establish the Boards that hold authority to license health care providers
 - Establish baseline for practice in that state
 - Determine licensure requirements
 - Forbid practice without a license
 - Set criteria for license renewal, suspension, and revocation

Legal Responsibilities of Healthcare Providers (continued)

- The medical practice acts also usually define the scope of practice for a healthcare professional
 - Scope of practice details the tasks and duties that a healthcare professional is allowed to perform in that state.
 - For example, dental hygienists in Oregon can place fillings, while dental hygienists in California cannot place fillings.

Legal Responsibilities of Healthcare Providers (continued)

- Not all healthcare professionals are licensed!
 - Licensed professionals- nurses, pharmacists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, respiratory therapists, mental health professionals, and emergency medical technicians
 - Non-licensed professionals (in some states)- x-ray technician, medical laboratory professionals, phlebotomists, medical assistants, surgical technologists, and veterinary technicians
