

Introduction to Medical Ethics

OBJECTIVE/RATIONALE

Professional integrity is dependent on ethical behavior. Health care workers must understand ethical responsibilities, limitations, and the implications of actions taken. The student is expected to identify the responsibilities of ethical behavior.

TEKS 121.2 (c) 2B

TAKS ELA 1, 3, 4

KEY POINTS

See [Code of Ethics Lesson](#)

- I. Personal ethical/moral beliefs affect professional actions.
- II. Professional associations for health careers have formalized codes of ethics to govern behavior of members and to increase the level of competence and standards of care within the profession.
- III. Ethics-standards of behavior and the concept of right and wrong.
 - A. Ethics are based on moral values – formed through the influence of family, culture, and society
 - B. The standards of behavior required by a health care provider to carry out their duties are:
 1. confidentiality
 2. accuracy
 3. honesty
 4. dependability
 - C. General ethical guidelines for Health Science Technology students
 1. In caring for the sick, students will help preserve life, ease the suffering of patients, and work toward restoring health to all patients,
 2. Maintain good moral character, be loyal to employer, to patients, and to co-workers,
 3. Practice sound health habits in order to maintain personal health and to be able to carry out duties,
 4. Give care on the same level to all patients, showing no difference regardless of race or religious belief,
 5. Cooperate with other workers, carry out duties responsibly,
 6. Do not discuss confidential information given by a patient, never discuss diagnoses except with the patient's doctor or nurse,
 7. Never perform a procedure or give a treatment that you are not qualified to perform, and
 8. Do not discuss your own problems or personal affairs with patients.
 - D. Confidentiality of information
 1. Information about patients

- a. The personal records of the patient, which include history, physical examination, medical or dental procedure, etc., must be treated with strictest confidence. If any such information must be discussed with other personnel in the office or hospital, such discussion should take place in private, not in the elevator, hall or coffee shop, where it might be overheard.
 - b. A safe rule to follow in discussing patients is to tell only the information you read in the newspaper. If you are not sure...don't say anything.
 - 2. Information about personnel
 - a. Never repeat any information about anyone at work outside the office or hospital.
 - b. Personal information about employees must be treated with complete confidentiality.
- E. Limitations on technical information given to the public
 - 1. Health Science Technology students are thought to know more about health because of their work and training. People frequently ask questions about health problems and may rely on the answers given by the Health Science Technology students. Students must answer such questions with greatest care. They should always suggest the patient ask the doctor. Students should be constantly aware of their limitations in such instances.
- F. Ethical guidelines to be followed at work
 - 1. Be accurate in following directions and in reporting. Report any error or accident to superior at once.
 - 2. Take proper care of equipment and supplies. Not only is medical equipment expensive, it is inconvenient and inefficient if it is not in working order at all times. Do not steal office or hospital supplies or equipment.
 - 3. Treat co-workers with respect and courtesy. Everyone is important to the smooth operation of the health care facility. Every person and every task deserves respect.
 - 4. Complete assigned tasks. Ask questions to be sure you understand an assignment before starting it. Consult supervisor when help is needed or when unsure of what to do.
 - 5. Do not grant a patient's request that is not mentioned on the chart without checking with the supervisor.
 - 6. Do only those things for which training has been provided and is legally allowable.
 - 7. Accept no money or expensive gifts from patients.
 - 8. Respect the privacy of patients and their families.
 - 9. Know and follow the health care facility's rules and policies.
 - 10. Do not discuss personal problems and affairs with the patients. Avoid inappropriate, flippant, or unbecoming behavior.
 - 11. Treat all patients with compassion, kindness, and respect. Help patients to maintain their dignity and confidence.
 - 12. Respect the religious beliefs of patients.

ACTIVITIES

- I. Brainstorm and list words related to the term 'ethics'.
- II. Develop a definition for 'ethics' through class discussion.
- III. Complete 'Moral Belief' worksheet.
- IV. Compile the information from the 'Moral Belief' worksheet recording information from the worksheet through voluntary participation. Participate in a panel discussion on the information compiled from the 'Moral Belief' worksheet.
- V. Write to the professional organization of a career of choice and obtain the code of ethics for that profession. (Use *Hot Jobs* as a resource for addresses.)
- VI. Compare similarities and differences, through class discussion, of the various professions' code of ethics obtained.
- VII. Have the class break up into groups or as a class discuss some of the current medical issues about the ethics on: The right to die, abortion, cloning, organ transplant, or add some of your own.

MATERIALS / RESOURCES

Moral Belief worksheet

Hot Jobs

ASSESSMENT

Completion of 'Moral Belief' worksheet.

ACCOMMODATIONS

For reinforcement, the student will develop questions for an interview with a healthcare professional related to professional ethics.

For enrichment, the student will critique current events for ethical issues related to healthcare.

REFLECTIONS
