Lesotho Nursing Council

Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses and Midwives

October 2013
Acknowledgments

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The LNC would also like to acknowledge the Task Team members who took part in the development of this code of conduct. Members of the Task Team include:

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Introduction

The Code of Professional Conduct for nurses and midwives identifies the standards of professional conduct that are expected of all nurses and midwives in practising in The Kingdom of Lesotho. Nurses and midwives are held to providing the best possible standard of care in a competent, safe ethical and accountable manner. This code is complementary to the Code of Ethics of the Lesotho Nurses Association, the Confederation of Midwives International Code of Ethics for Midwives¹, and the International Council of Nurses’ Code of Ethics for Nurses.

The code comprises of four main areas each of which contain statements that provide guidance for action. The four areas are:

1. Safe, competent, respectful and ethical practice
2. Accountability
3. Responsibility to the profession
4. Working with others

I. Safe, competent, respectful and ethical practice

1. Your primary professional responsibility is to people requiring nursing or midwifery care.

2. Every nurse, midwife and nursing assistant must:

   ✓ treat people as individuals and respect their dignity and provide care in with integrity, respect and compassion as well being responsive, and trustworthy when providing such services.

   ✓ respect human rights, values, customs and spiritual beliefs of the individual, family and community and not discriminate in any way against those in your care.

   ✓ be familiar with relevant laws to ensure that you do not engage in practices prohibited by such laws or delegate to others activities prohibited by those laws.

   ✓ practise in accordance with the Lesotho Nursing Council standards.

   ✓ deliver care based on the best available evidence or best practice.

   ✓ ensure that use of technology and scientific advances are compatible with the safety, dignity and rights of people.

   ✓ give accurate, sufficient and timely information in a culturally appropriate manner on which to base consent for care and related treatment.

   ✓ keep timely, clear, accurate, dated and signed records of the discussions, the assessments, the treatment and medicines you give, and how effective these have been.

   ✓ not tamper with original records in any way.

   ✓ ensure all records are kept secure and meet confidentiality standards.

   ✓ fully explain the advantages and disadvantages of alternate products or services so that an individual can make an informed choice when you provide advice about any product or service.

   ✓ ensure that you gain consent before you begin any treatment or care.

   ✓ respect and support people’s rights to accept or decline treatment and care.

   ✓ uphold people’s rights to be fully involved in decisions about their care

   ✓ treat personal information obtained in a professional capacity as confidential.

   ✓ actively maintain clear professional boundaries at all times with people in your care, their families and carers.

   ✓ establish and maintain clear sexual boundaries at all times with people in your care, their families and carers.

   ✓ refuse any gifts, loans, favours or hospitality from patients, clients, their relatives and friends that might be interpreted as an attempt to gain preferential treatment.
3. In an emergency, in or outside the working setting, you have a professional duty to provide care that would be judged against what could reasonably be expected from someone with your knowledge, skills and abilities when placed in those particular circumstances.

II. Accountability

1. You must:
   - take personal responsibility and be accountable for your practice.
   - acknowledge limitations of your professional competence and only accept responsibilities and undertake practice for those in which you are competent and are have the legal authority to practice.
   - maintain the competence necessary for current practice through on-going professional education.
   - maintain a standard of personal health, physical and mental, such that the ability to provide care is not compromised.
   - use judgement of the competence of the individual to whom you are delegating responsibility and confirm that the outcome of any delegated task meets required standards.
   - act without delay if you have good reason that you, a colleague or anyone else may be putting someone at risk as they may not be fit to practise for reasons of conduct, health or competence.
   - report your concerns in writing if problems in the environment of care are putting people at risk.
   - inform someone in authority if you experience problems that prevent you working within this code or other nationally set standards.

2. You may refuse to participate in activities for which you hold deep moral opposition; however, the emphasis on individual conscience should not deprive patients/clients of essential health services.

III. Responsibility to the profession

You must:
   - at all times maintain standards of personal conduct which reflect well on the profession and enhance its image and public confidence.
   - not use your professional status to promote causes or products that are not related to health.
   - refrain from engaging in exploitation, misinformation or misrepresentation in regard to your professional qualifications, health care products and nursing or midwifery services.
IV. Working with others

You must:

✓ work cooperatively within teams and respect the skills, expertise and contributions of your colleagues.

✓ work with other members of the team to promote health care environments that are conducive to safe, therapeutic and ethical practice.

✓ treat your colleagues fairly and without discrimination.

✓ be willing to share your skills and experience for the benefit of your colleagues.