

Code of Ethics in Nursing Education

(May 31, 2024)

On the Revision:

The Japan Association of Nursing Programs in Universities (JANPU) issued the “Ethical Guidelines for Nursing Education” in 2007 with the aim of improving nursing education, and it made its first revision in 2008. In the 16 years since then, both the domestic and international situations surrounding nursing education have changed dramatically. In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic and advances in science and technology have had an impact on educational methods and the types of healthcare professionals that are needed.

The “Code of Ethics in Nursing Education” is a revised version of the “Ethical Guidelines for Nursing Education”; it is based on Japan’s aspirations for its society and international standards, and summarizes the ethical requirements for nursing education in the future.

I. Purpose

The Code of Ethics clearly defines ethics in nursing education as the code of conduct for all faculty members involved in nursing education. Ethics in nursing education is embodied in the discretion of each faculty member. It is intended to be used by faculty members as a guiding principle for their own teaching activities. Furthermore, it is expected that each institution with a nursing program provides systematic support to enable the principles.

Colleges and Universities Offering Nursing Programs

II. Basic Principles

The Code of Ethics complies with the academic freedom, freedom of thought and conscience, and the right to education as outlined in the Constitution of Japan, as well as the purpose of education and the responsibilities of educators as set forth in the Fundamental Law of Education.

In addition, faculty members are expected to comply with the professional ethics of the nursing profession and to act as a role model for students in the provision of nursing education, and they are therefore required to comply with various national and international ethics guidelines for nursing professionals and educators, such as the “Code of Ethics for Nursing Profession” of the Japan Nurses Association (2021), the “ICN Code of Ethics for Nurses” of the International Council of Nurses (2021), the “Ethical Principles of Nursing Education” of the National League for Nursing (2012), and the “Model Code of Ethics for Educators” of the National Council for the Advancement of Educator Ethics (2023), as well as the literature on ethics for educators in higher education in Japan.

Furthermore, based on the visions of the future of higher education as outlined in the “Grand Design for Higher Education toward 2040 (Report)” (2018), the “Sixth Science, Technology, and Innovation Basic Plan” (2021), and the “Ideal State of Universities and Society that Drive Japan’s Future” (2022), this Code of Ethics discusses additional ethical considerations in nursing education for the near future based on environmental protection and the development of information and communication technologies.

III. Ethical Guidelines for Nursing Education

The Japanese Association of Nursing Programs in Higher Education established five ethical guidelines founded on the basic principles as follows.

1. Faculty members involved in nursing education shall respect the personalities of students, recognize diversity, and ensure dignity.

By developing educational activities in which faculty members demonstrate respect of the personalities and dignity of students, students will also understand the importance and necessity of respecting the values of those who are the recipients of nursing care and will grow into professionals with high ethical standards.

Faculty members shall avoid words and actions that can potentially lead to discrimination not only against students, but also against others, and avoid evaluating and criticizing students based solely on their own sense of values. Faculty members shall show understanding of students’ values and support their creativity and freedom of career planning. In addition, faculty members shall be aware that harassment may occur in their educational activities and in their relationships with students and should strive to prevent such harassment.

Furthermore, because nursing is a study of people, the cultivation of students’ personal growth is also part of the educational activities of nursing. Many nursing students are faced with the developmental challenges of adolescence, and while facing and struggling with their own developmental challenges, they are boldly working to understand the developmental challenges and solve the health problems of a wide range of individuals receiving nursing care. Faculty members shall understand that students are in the process of personal growth and be willing to accept students and support their growth.

2. Faculty members involved in nursing education shall guarantee students’ right to education from a learner-oriented standpoint and conduct fair and impartial grading.

Students have the right to receive education that is appropriately structured in accordance with the goals set forth by the institution that admitted them. Faculty members shall understand the

importance of learner-oriented education and shall cooperate and collaborate with each other in developing educational activities.

Faculty members shall be aware that the relationship between faculty and students in the form of evaluators and evaluatees can easily create an authority gradient. Faculty members shall be open to listen to students' criticisms, avoid excessive assignments and one-sided guidance, and ensure that each student receives education according to that student's individual intentions and abilities. In addition, when students are engaged in on-site practical training or other activities that may make them nervous, care should be taken with the in-person and physical environment to reduce stress and avoid distress for the students.

Since nursing education is linked to national certification, grading is directly related to students' achievement of certification. In grading, evaluation criteria and methods shall be clearly defined, and fair and impartial evaluations shall be conducted.

3. Faculty members involved in nursing education shall be aware of their responsibilities as educators and shall strive to assure the quality of education, as well as to continually work on self-improvement to further improve the quality of education.

Faculty members set educational goals based on the educational philosophy of their own university and in accordance with diploma policy, curriculum policy and admission policy. In doing so, it is necessary to protect the rights of students in learning and practicing nursing and consider the rights of those who receive nursing care to carefully examine and set educational goals. In addition, the set goals should be presented to students, and students should be supported individually to foster students' subjective learning to achieve such goals. It is important to clarify "what students can learn and acquire" and to visualize the outcomes of their studies so that students themselves can realize what they have achieved. Furthermore, confirming what students have learned as the results of their studies is also essential in assuring the quality of education.

In addition to these activities, faculty members are expected to contribute to the development of nursing science through their own involvement in academic activities in order to provide the latest knowledge and skills to their students.

4. Faculty members involved in nursing education shall recognize the value of personal information and the importance of protecting personal information in their educational, research, and clinical practice activities, and shall strive to comply with and educate their students about information ethics.

Nursing originally encompasses the function of interpreting and integrating selectively collected subject data and transforming such data into meaningful information, and sharing and using such information with others. Recognizing the value of personal information and the importance of

protecting personal information, faculty members need to maintain up-to-date information literacy and provide education to ensure the availability, confidentiality, and integrity of information and to enable high-quality information processing.

In addition, faculty members must always be aware that their own actions serve as a model for students and comply with laws, regulations, and guidelines. Furthermore, they shall demonstrate ethical judgment to deal with new issues arising from advances in information and communication technologies that have become widespread in nursing practice and the surrounding environment, and strive to comply with information ethics in each of their own educational, research, and clinical practice activities. This includes appropriate handling of personal information, respect for privacy, protection of intellectual property rights, online etiquette, information security measures, and other actions to ensure that they are neither victims nor perpetrators.

5. Faculty members involved in nursing education shall have an interest in various social issues toward the realization of a sustainable society and shall demonstrate consideration to the global environment

Nursing, which is deeply concerned with the lives and health of people, is always deeply related to the state of society. Faculty members are expected to maintain a high level of interest in, and respond to, social issues occurring in and out of Japan. From the perspective of realizing a sustainable and resilient society and the well-being of its people, they should actively work to prevent environmental destruction and protect the environment, considering the impact of their educational activities on planetary health. By demonstrating these attitudes of concern for the global environment, we expect to increase students' interest in various social issues.

IV. The Role of Higher Education in Nursing

Colleges and universities offering nursing programs are expected to work systematically to provide nursing education based on the guidelines set forth in this Code of Ethics. This includes making the school's policy on ethics publicly available, building, inspecting, and maintaining a system to achieve such education, and supporting the self-improvement of each faculty member.

In embodying the ethical guidelines outlined in this Code of Ethics, there is a risk that faculty members may face ethical distress and exhaustion. Nursing colleges and universities are required to foster a harassment-free organizational climate in which mutual respect is maintained among faculty members and between students and faculty members. At the same time, it is expected that the well-being of faculty members is maintained without interference, and that efforts will be made to create an organization that can devote itself to educational activities.

At the same time, nursing colleges and universities are required to improve the educational environment both on- and off-campus. The on-campus educational environment includes the

physical environment such as lecture rooms and training rooms, personnel such as teaching and administrative staff, and information environment such as information and communication technology facilities, libraries, and databases. Since training at off-campus practical training facilities is also important in nursing education, it is also important to build consensus on ethical awareness with these external institutions.

V. Future Perspectives

In order to provide nursing education based on the ethical guidelines of this Code of Ethics, it is essential to secure educational resources such as a sufficient number of faculty members. Current challenges such as ethical distress and exhaustion of faculty members and multiple responsibilities or problems difficult to overcome associated with the shortage of faculty members can hinder the well-being of faculty members, as well as the provision of appropriate and optimal nursing education. As such, it is of utmost importance to secure educational resources in this society.

In addition, this Code of Ethics needs to be reviewed and revised on a regular basis in light of the constantly changing social conditions and educational methods surrounding nursing science.

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