



**NURSING
COUNCIL
OF KENYA**

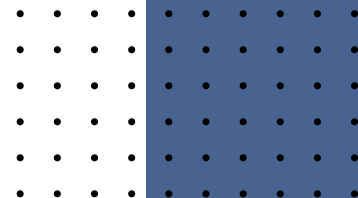


POLICY BRIEF

CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS FOR NURSES' AND MIDWIVES' IN KENYA

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CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS FOR NURSES' AND MIDWIVES' IN KENYA



KEY MESSAGES

- **The Nursing Council has revised the Code of Conduct and Ethics which is an important element of nursing and midwifery practice in Kenya;**
- **Non-adherence to the Code of Conduct is a key challenge in nursing and midwifery practice.**
- **It is estimated that 80 per cent of all the inquiries/cases are from clinical areas that stem from violations of the code of conduct and ethics.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Nursing Council of Kenya is a statutory body mandated to regulate nursing and midwifery education and practice in Kenya. The Council sets and monitors standards in the interest of the public and the profession. Therefore, professional code of conduct is a critical aspect of nursing and midwifery practice.

Code of Conduct and Ethics for Nurses and Midwives in Kenya sets minimum standards expected to be upheld both within and out of professional domain in order to safeguard the reputation of nursing and midwifery profession, it also provides a framework for legally and professionally accountable and responsible nursing and midwifery practice. From our analysis, 80% of the inquires cases have been as a result to non-adherence to the code of conduct and ethics. This communique highlights key roles of nurses and midwives as they interact with the public in the clinical areas.

2. KEY HIGHLIGHTS

a) Guiding Ethical Principles

The Council requires all nurses and midwives to subscribe to the following core values that are central to the code of ethics: -

- Promotion of health
- Preservation of autonomy
- Respect for dignity
- Maintenance of confidentiality
- Promotion of equity and fairness
- Uphold professional responsibility and accountability
- Enhance teamwork and collaboration
- Uphold quality of practice

b) Standards of professional Conduct

For effective and efficient integration of the Code of Ethics, the nurses and midwives shall observe the following standards: -

- Integrity
- Discipline
- Competence
- Trustworthy
- Emotional intelligence
- Efficiency

c) Elements of the Code

The need for nursing and midwifery care is universal, therefore, nurses and midwives have four fundamental responsibilities namely; promote health, prevent illnesses, restore health, and alleviate suffering. To achieve this, nurses and midwives undertake the roles highlighted below.

ROLE OF THE CLINICAL NURSE AND MIDWIFE

i. To the Public - The nurse and midwife promotes an environment that respects the human rights, provide accurate and timely information while maintaining confidentiality, establishes and maintain collaboration with the society, protects and sustains the natural environment, facilitates respectful and timely actions towards clients' care, advocate and provider safety for all clients; and promotes achievement of universal health coverage for all populations.

ii. To the Practice - The nurse or midwife ensures they are fit to practice state, maintains individual competence, uses technology and scientific advancements appropriately, sustains a collaborative working relationship with team members while acting in best interest of clients to facilitating ethical standards of care, and mentors' students and colleagues.

iii. To the profession - The nurse or midwife is required to uphold professionalism, advocates for the nursing and midwifery profession; and establish nursing practicing standards.

iv. To Global Health - The nurse or midwife advocates for policies that address social determinants of health, acts to protect the natural environment to promote health and well-being, upholds principles of justice of all human beings, participate in National and Global health policy development and implementation, contributes to population health, and supports ethical use of social media and technologies.

ROLE OF THE NURSE AND MIDWIFE MANAGER/LEADER

i. To the Public - The nurse or midwife as a manager/leader provides care that respects human dignity with emphasis on privacy and confidentiality, provide patients with sufficient information, promote nursing and midwifery professions, enhances quality of care, and advocate for and manage human and financial resources.

ii. To the Practice - The nurse or midwife as a manager/leader promotes quality care and a positive working environment, establish systems for professional appraisal, monitor and promote personal health of nursing and midwifery staff, provides an enabling environment for nurses and midwives to practice, learn and conduct research, mentor colleagues and other healthcare providers, support the continuing professional development, advocate for the growth of nursing and midwifery professions, provide advisory on nursing and midwifery matters; and promote succession management.

iii. To the profession - The nurse or midwife as a manager/ leader uphold standards of nursing and midwifery practice, foster workplace support of research activities, promote participation in professional associations, promote professional ethical values and conduct, ensure that only qualified and licensed nurses and midwives provide nursing and midwifery services, provide data on nurses and midwives and, foster the image of the profession.

iv. To Global Health - The the nurse or midwife as a manager/leader advocate for policies that address social determinants of health, collaborate and protect the natural environment, uphold principles of justice, uphold the dignity, freedom and worth of all human beings lead or contribute to global health policy development and implementation, contribute to population health and use media and technology ethically.

ROLE OF THE NURSE AND MIDWIFE EDUCATOR

i. To the Public - The nurse or midwife as an educator integrate the curriculum content on values, cultural norms, safety, competence, ethics, human rights, equity, human dignity, justice, disparities and solidarity as the basis for access to health care, align the curriculum content to regional and global health issues, incorporate soft skills to the curriculum, initiate and support action to meet the health and social needs of all people; and utilize technology that are compatible with safety, dignity and rights of clients.

ii. To the Practice - The nurse or midwife as an educator explore and adopt current concepts and innovative teaching and learning strategies, build partnerships and collaboration with healthcare stakeholders for education, nurture inter-professional education and practice, provide teaching and learning opportunities for ethical decision making, influence learners to safeguard the interests and develop skills for resilience and healthy workplace communities, mentor colleagues and learners, and possess requisite competencies for teaching of nursing and midwifery students.

iii. To the profession - The nurse or midwife as an educator inculcate the role of professional association, inspire others to join the profession; and, foster a positive image of the profession.

iv. To Global Health - The nurse or midwife as an educator build learners' competencies for local response to global issues, align the curriculum content to regional and global health issues, champion the inclusion in the curricula of human rights, SDGs related to health, universal access to care, culturally competent care, civic responsibility, equity and social, environmental justice and other emerging issues, seek opportunities to evaluate the ethical consequences of the use of diverse technologies, incorporate in teaching the consequences of climate change on health, create opportunities to support global health, participate in implementing healthcare technologies.

ROLE OF THE NURSE AND MIDWIFE RESEARCHER

i. To the Public - The nurse or midwife as a researcher apply ethical principles in conducting research, improve quality of health care services through evidence-based research, initiate relevant research, and utilize technology and scientific advances that are compatible with safety, dignity and rights of clients.

ii. To the Practice - the nurse or midwife as a researcher conduct and disseminate research, promote evidence-based care, build partnerships and collaboration with healthcare stakeholders for research, mentor and coach learner, and provide teaching and learning opportunities.

iii. To the profession - The nurse or midwife as a researcher conduct, disseminate and utilize research to advance the profession, develop and sustain professional values, and advocate for professional associations and international collaborations.

iv. To Global Health - The nurse or midwife as a researcher seek opportunities to evaluate the consequences of the use of diverse technologies, incorporate in research the consequences of climate change on health, foster opportunities to support global health at institutional and policy levels; conduct research about socio-political and economic issues that affect health, advocate for resources to conduct research; and collaborate with other researchers.

3. THE CODE OF CONDUCT

The code informs nurses and midwives of the standards of practice that they are professionally accountable for; it also explains the professional behaviour and ethical conduct that people expect of a nurse and a midwife during care delivery. A nurse or midwife is personally accountable for own practice and in exercise of professional responsibility and accountability, the nurse or midwife shall act to promote client's safety, utilize the nursing and midwifery process, accurately and timely document care provided, and maintain professional knowledge and competence.

A nurse or midwife shall also acknowledge any limitations in their knowledge and competence and act accordingly, uphold the principles of leadership and accountability, treat each client as an individual. Besides, a nurse or midwife shall avoid abuse of privileged relationship with clients and protect all client's confidential information.

It is the duty of the nurses and midwife to support professional colleagues to develop competences, avoid abuse of office, and desist from client and colleagues harassment, identify and report conflict of interest, conduct self with dignity and decorum in all spheres, ensure that their professional status is not used to unduly promote and/or advertise commercial products or services that would bring a negative image to the profession, ensure research ethics and standards are upheld at all times.

It is paramount that the nurse and midwife utilizes data in accordance with data protection legislations, shall not use any media appropriately, refrain from substance of abuse that may impair judgment and/or any illegal substance in the course of their duties, desist from behaviour and activities, which may impair work and/or lead to pecuniary embarrassment, dress decently, and in uniform, badges and insignia as prescribed in the Circulars/Nurses and midwives' Dress Code published by the Council and/or health care institutions, apply institutional Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs)/Guidelines for

safe custody of client's property, protect resources provided so as to ensure they are used in the best interest of clients, use appropriate language and/or gestures towards the public, clients, family and co-workers, use official languages in communication in the work place, protect and promote the human rights of a client, the client's family and significant others, conduct all interventions or treatments with consent as per SOPs, except in cases of emergency treatment and adopt and use current evidence-based knowledge and apply best practice standards in nursing or midwifery at all times.



4.RECOMMENDATIONS

Any nurse or midwife who does not adhere to the provision of code of conduct and ethics shall be subjected to disciplinary process as provided for by the law. We therefore recommend that all nurses and midwives to uphold high standards as provided for in the code of conduct and ethics.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Council appreciates all the contributors to this document that will go a long way in informing the nurses and midwives. We wish to acknowledge the Council for facilitating the process of development of this Brief.

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