

Code of Professional Ethics of nurses and midwives in the Republic of Poland

VOW

I accept the title of Nurse/Midwife with deep respect and honour and I hereby solemnly vow to:

1. Exercise professional care over human life and health;
2. Counteract suffering, prevent diseases, and participate in the therapeutical process according to my best knowledge;
3. Help all humans, regardless of their race, religion, nationality, political views, property status, and other differences;
4. Show due respect to patients and not to abuse their trust, and maintain professional secrets;
5. Protect the dignity of the profession of nurse/midwife, approach my co-workers in a polite and respectful way, not to challenge their trust, remain impartial, and treat the interest of the patient as the uttermost priority;
6. Introduce to my practice the new achievements of medical and social sciences and humanities, and improve my skills and knowledge regularly for the good of the profession;
7. Perform my duties that result from my profession in a reliable way.

GENERAL PART

!Principles of professional ethics are derived from universal ethical principles and oblige nurses and midwives to respect the patient's rights and to protect the dignity of the profession.

!The professional activity of a nurse and a midwife consists in consciously and voluntarily taking professional actions for the benefit of the patients, regardless of their medical and social situation.

!The nurse or midwife should maintain the prestige of the profession and improve its significance in the society by her personal, professional, and social attitude.

!The professional actions of a nurse or midwife cannot be used to commit unlawful acts or cause damage to human health.

!A fully licensed nurse or midwife bears personal responsibility for her or his actions.

!Nurses or midwives should always act in the interest of their patients, in particular in situations, when their lives may be in danger.

!Any detailed arrangements concerning the supplementary professional activity of a nurse or midwife with respect to academic and research, educational, administrative, and organisational activities should take into account the general principles above.

SPECIFIC REGULATIONS

I. The nurse/midwife and the patient

1. In performing their professional duties, the nurse or midwife shall:
 - a) provide due care to all patients, in compliance with the binding standards of care;
 - b) provide first aid in emergency situations and in situations when human life is in danger;
 - c) give the patient reliable and clear information about the care process.
2. In working with the patient, the nurse or midwife should be friendly, understanding, and patient, to create an atmosphere of mutual understanding and trust.
3. The nurse or midwife is obliged to comply with the following principles derived from the patient's rights:
 - a) respect the patient's right to privacy and personal dignity while providing medical care;
 - b) provide nursing services upon the consent of the patient, if the patient is able to grant such consent;
 - c) if the patient refuses consent, to inform the patient about the potential consequences of this decision and to attempt to convince the patient to change their mind.
4. A nurse/midwife is obliged to maintain confidential all information about the patient and their background (family, social background) obtained in connection with performing their professional duties.
5. A nurse/midwife shall enable the patient to contact their family, assist the family in providing care to the patient if necessary and educate family members in the further stages of the care process.
6. On request of the patient or their family, the nurse or midwife shall enable the patient to contact a clergy person and, if possible, to create the appropriate conditions.
7. The nurse/midwife shall make all efforts to ensure humanitarian terminal care for the patient, and to ensure dignified dying conditions, respecting the values of the patient.
8. The midwife should contribute to creating good conditions and a family-friendly atmosphere during labour.
9. The nurse or midwife must not demand additional remuneration from patients or make the services dependent on obtaining material benefits.

II. The nurse/midwife and professional practice and education

1. The nurse/midwife shall continuously improve their professional qualifications.
2. The nurse/midwife must not perform any doctor's orders without a clear written order that enables the identification of the physician and of the patient, with the exception of emergency situations when the patient's life is in danger.
3. The nurse/midwife has the right to access information which is important for performing professional duties and is related both to the personal safety of the nurse and the safety of the patient.
4. The nurse/midwife shall maintain detailed documentation of their professional activity and to secure the documents.
5. A nurse/midwife who informs other members of the healthcare team about the patient's condition does not violate professional confidentiality.
6. A nurse/midwife may refuse to participate in procedures and biomedical experiments that are contrary to their ethical standards.
7. A nurse or midwife shall actively promote health.
8. A nurse or midwife who becomes aware that an error has been made in the medical treatment (especially if the error causes a threat to the life or health of the patient) should

immediately notify the competent members of the healthcare team.

9. A nurse or midwife should participate in the activities taken by the national and international organisations that associate nurses and midwives with the aim to protect the health of the community, thus contributing to the prestige of the profession.
10. A nurse or midwife shall participate in the development of scientific research in the fields of nursing, midwifery and educating the professional group, as far as possible.
11. A nurse or midwife should value and respect their profession, protect its dignity and in performing professional duties act in a manner that evokes respect and trust.
12. A nurse or midwife should abstain from any actions that might be detrimental to the reputation of the profession.
13. A nurse or midwife should respect the history and tradition of the profession and maintain its positive image.
14. A nurse or midwife should protect the professional interest by abstaining from cooperating with organisations whose goals are in conflict with professional and moral standards.
15. A nurse or midwife should disseminate the research and scientific achievements connected to their profession by means of presentations and publications. Such publications should be reliable and devoid of any sensational aspects.

III. Nurse/midwife and the self-government of nurses and midwives

1. Nurses and midwives should support the activities of their professional self-government, whose aim is to ensure their appropriate position in the society.
2. A nurse or midwife is obliged to comply with the resolutions taken by the competent bodies of the professional self-government.
3. The relations between members of the self-government should be based on mutual respect, loyalty, camaraderie and professional solidarity. They should share experiences and support each other. The assessment of colleagues should be fair, and criticism should be formulated in an objective way and communicated first of all to the person in question. In the event of no reaction and repeated errors, the nurse or midwife should notify the relevant Regional Council via the competent Regional Chamber of Nurses and Midwives.

IV. Nurse/midwife and co-workers

1. A nurse or midwife who has longer professional experience should transfer the knowledge and professional skills to the younger colleagues and act as a role model as far as personal culture and respect to others are concerned. The nurse or midwife is morally obliged to build a sense of responsibility for the performed work, and the habits of honesty, reliability, conscientiousness, and hard work.
2. A nurse or midwife should not disparage the actions of other members of the healthcare team, in particular in the presence of third parties.
3. A nurse or midwife who is a teacher should pass on to her students the principles of professional ethics and supervise their implementation in their professional activity.
4. Unfair competition between members of the self-government is particularly reprehensible.
5. Nurses or midwives who perform managerial duties should demonstrate a sense of responsibility for the professional and educational development of their subordinates.
6. A nurse or midwife is jointly responsible for the effects of the therapeutic process and for

his or her actions that result from the nursing care process.

V. Nurse/midwife and the principles of conduct in the society

1. A nurse or midwife should actively participate in combating manifestations of social pathology, in compliance with their knowledge and skills.
2. A nurse or midwife should actively participate in the community life and in actions aimed at protecting the natural environment, as well as counteract practices that are considered by science as worthless and harmful for human health.

VI. Final provisions

1. In cases not foreseen in the Code of Professional Ethics of Nurses and Midwives of the Republic of Poland, the nurse or midwife should comply with the provisions of:
 - a) the Act on the professions of a doctor and a nurse;
 - b) the jurisprudence of the Supreme Tribunal of Nurses and Midwives,
 - c) the resolutions of the bodies of the self-government of nurses and midwives and the principles of best practices.
2. Any modifications to the Code may be introduced only by the National Assembly of Nurses and Midwives.
3. The Code shall become effective after being adopted by resolution by the National Assembly of Nurses and Midwives.