

CH. 19: ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses

I believe that in nursing there can be many different ethical issues that come up along the way in healthcare. I believe one very important ethical issue is protecting patient privacy and confidentiality. There can be many times in nursing where a patient's privacy is not confidential. Many healthcare workers may come into contact with a patient that they may know personally, when going home and talking about their workday they can easily tell their family members about the patient that they knew that they were caring for. Another example would be when nurses are giving reports. There could be patients listening to the report or walking the halls that hear report about another patient and then share that information. Therefore, the reported patient's privacy is no longer confidential. If one is not being respectful of a patient's privacy it can result in legal consequences. Although all nurses are right in protecting their patient's rights, they are also obligated to respect the patient's autonomy. This allows the patients to make their own decisions. This includes respecting patients' wishes if they wish to refuse a medication or treatment. At this point, the nurse can provide further education to the patient about the medication or treatment, but the patient still has the right to refuse. Protecting patient privacy and confidentiality relates to the ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses statement, the nurse promotes, advocates for, and protects the rights, health, and safety of the patient. I believe one of the most important items when it comes to patient privacy is the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). This is a federal law, protecting any and all patient's privacy. As stated under HIPAA Privacy Rule, "A major goal of the Privacy Rule is to make sure that individuals' health information is properly protected while allowing the flow of health information needed to provide and promote high-quality healthcare, and to protect the public's health and well-being." (Koplan, 2022). In the end, it is very important that all healthcare professionals are always respecting the privacy of each patient they encounter and that they are following all of their legal obligations.

Reference:

Koplan, J. (2022, June 27). *Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
<https://www.cdc.gov/phlp/publications/topic/hipaa.html#privacy-rule>