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### Patient Privacy & Confidentiality

A current issue that I have noticed in nursing today is confidentiality. With the advancements made over the last few decades regarding technology, it has become apparent that some people find it difficult to keep things private and off the internet. This unfortunately involves the medical field and even nursing practice itself. This is not something that needs to be appropriated and needs to be done away with immediately.

In order to protect patients from their information being shared without their consent, there is an act in place called the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, or HIPAA. What this act does is allow patients to have their health information be private, secured, and enforces those who have access to this information to keep it from being shared outside of the healthcare team. This ethical issue relates to principle one “Respect for patients’ values, preferences and needs”. This issue encompasses the idea that while these patients are in such a vulnerable time in their lives, they still should be treated with respect and dignity. According to *Healthcare Compliance Pros*, “DO understand what is considered a HIPAA violation on social networks” and this just means that if you are not sure if you should put it out there publicly, then you probably should not share it. They also state that you should “AVOID posting anything you wouldn’t say in an elevator or coffee shop”, so essentially if you would not talk about this in a public space to others, then do not share it to even more people on social media.

To conclude, patient information should stay within the workplace and better yet within the care team of the patient only. This principle is something that needs to always stay in mind

when considering sharing information online regardless of if it includes the patient's identifiers (name and DOB). Patients are still people and should be treated as such in such difficult times.

Schiffman, C. (2018, February 11). *Posting with caution: Social Media and HIPAA violations*. Healthcare Compliance Pros. <https://www.healthcarecompliancepros.com/blog/posting-with-caution-the-dos-and-donts-of-social-media-and-hipaa-compliance>