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INTRODUCTION

The Code of Professional Conduct for Registered Nurses and Midwives in Brunei Darussalam has been developed for the nursing and midwifery profession registered with the Nursing Board for Brunei, Ministry of Health. It is relevant to all levels of nurses and midwives and areas of practice including those encompassing clinical, management, education and research domains.

Professional conduct refers to the manner in which nurses and midwives behave while acting in a professional capacity. The Code of Professional Conduct for Registered Nurses and Midwives in Brunei Darussalam is a set of expected national standards of conduct for nurses and midwives. The profession of nursing and midwifery has a commitment which is shared with other health care professions to ensure efficient and high quality health services in Brunei Darussalam.

The Code of Professional Conduct for Registered Nurses and Midwives in Brunei Darussalam is supported by, and should be read in junction with other companion documents. These companion documents provide a framework for legally and professionally accountable and responsible nursing and midwifery practice in all clinical, management, education and research domains.

This code is not intended to give detailed professional advice on any specific issues and / or any specific areas of practice, rather it identifies the minimum requirements for conduct in the profession. A breach of the Code of Professional Conduct may represent professional misconduct or unprofessional conduct. The profession expects that all levels of nurses and midwives will conduct themselves personally and professionally in a way that will maintain strong public confidence and care excellence in the profession. Nurses and midwives have a responsibility to provide safe and competent care which is responsive to the individual, family, community needs and the profession.

There are some overlap and repetition in the concepts of the conduct statements, reflecting the reality that the issues are not distinct and discrete, nor are these concepts and the information static. It is a contemporary document, and therefore, comments and suggestions for enhancing the understanding and usefulness of this document are welcomed.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Code of Professional Conduct is to:

- set an expected national standard of conduct for the nursing and midwifery profession;
- inform the community of the standards for professional conduct of nurses and midwives in Brunei Darussalam ; and
- provides consumer, regulatory, employing and professional bodies with a basis for decisions regarding standards of professional conduct for nurses and midwives in Brunei Darussalam.

Chair & Registrar
Nursing Board for Brunei
Ministry of Health
Brunei Darussalam

EIGHT (8) PRINCIPLES ON THE CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR NURSES AND MIDWIVES

As a nurse or midwife, you are personally accountable for your practice. In caring for clients, you must :

1. *Respect their dignity, culture, ethnicity, values, religion and beliefs of client in the provision of nursing and midwifery care;*
2. *Practice in a safe and competent manner;*
3. *Obtain informed consent before giving any treatment or care;*
4. *Treat personal information obtained in a professional capacity as private and confidential;*
5. *Co-operate with others in the health care team;*
6. *Maintain professional knowledge and competence;*
7. *Practice reflectively and ethically;*
8. *Practice in accordance with the legislations of Brunei Darussalam and the Malay Islamic Monarchy or 'Melayu Islam Beraja (MIB)' philosophy.*

CONDUCT STATEMENT 1

Respect the dignity, culture, ethnicity, values, religion and beliefs of client in the provision of nursing and midwifery care

Explanation:

Dignity is a feeling of self-esteem and self-respect and is a basic value of nursing and midwifery practice. The nurse or midwife aims to promote, protect and advocate the dignity of those clients who are vulnerable and incapable of protecting their own interest.

1. In planning and providing effective care, nurses and midwives uphold the standards of culturally informed and competent care. This includes due respect and consideration to the cultural knowledge, values, beliefs, religion, personal wishes and decisions of the client being cared for as well as their partners, family members and other members of their nominated social network.
2. Nurses and midwives must promote and protect the interests of client receiving treatment and care. This includes taking appropriate action to ensure the safety and quality of their care is not compromised because of harmful prejudicial attitudes concerning race, culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, religion, politics, social status, health status, lifestyle or other factors.
3. Nurses and midwives must refrain from expressing racist, sexist and other prejudicial and discriminatory attitudes and behaviors toward colleagues, clients and their friends. Nurses and midwives must take appropriate action when observing any such prejudicial and discriminatory attitudes and behaviors, whether by staff, clients and other professionals in the related areas of healthcare.
4. Nurses and midwives must promote the interest of clients. This includes helping them to gain access to health services, social care, information and support, relevant to their needs.

CONDUCT STATEMENT 2

Practice in a safe and competent manner

Explanation:

The term '**safe** and **competent** manner' is related to professional roles, and the ability to perform those roles legally, safely and with minimal supervision. Nurses and midwives are personally accountable for the provision of safe and competent nursing care. It is the responsibility of each nurse and midwife to maintain competency in current practice. Maintenance of competence includes participation in ongoing professional development to maintain and improve knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to practice in the clinical, management, education and research domains.

1. Nurses and midwives must be aware that undertaking activities that is not within their scope of practice may compromise the safety of clients. This scope of practice is based on each nurse's and midwife's education, knowledge, competency, extent of experience and authority.
2. Nurses and midwives are in their duties to inform an appropriate person or authority any circumstances that may compromise professional standards, or any observation of questionable, unethical or unlawful practice, and intervene to safeguard the client if the concern is unresolved.
3. Nurses and midwives must ensure that the delegation does not compromise the client's safety or quality of care rendered.
4. Nurses and midwives must practice in a safe and competent manner that is not compromised by personal health limitations, including the use of alcohol or other substances that may alter a nurse's and midwife's capacity to practice safely at all times. In a situation where their health threatens their capacity to practice safely and competently, they have a responsibility to seek assistance to address their health needs.

CONDUCT STATEMENT 3

*Obtain informed consent before giving any treatment
or care*

Explanation:

Informed consent is a process of communication between a client and a nurse or midwife that gives the choice either to accept or refuse any intervention. All discussions regarding consent should be documented in the client's medical record.

Informed consent should have two elements :

- ✓ Information given to the client about a procedure and/or treatment.
 - ✓ Consent obtained from the patient, which means agreement to the procedure and/ or treatment.
1. Informed consent must be obtained before any care or treatment given to the client. In relation to obtaining consent for a child, the involvement of those with parental responsibility in the consent procedure is usually necessary.
 2. All clients have the right to receive information about their condition. Nurses and midwives must be sensitive to their needs and respect the wishes of those who refuse or are unable to receive information about their condition.
 3. Nurses and midwives may need to seek professional advice, or guidance from their superior, in relation to the giving or withholding of consent. Information in consent should be accurate, truthful and presented in such a way as to make it easily understandable.

4. When obtaining valid consent, nurses and midwives must be sure that it is :
 - given by a competent client;
 - given voluntarily; and
 - informed.
5. Nurses and midwives must ensure that all their discussions and associated decisions relating to obtaining consent are documented in the client's medical record. Clients, who are competent, may give consent in writing, orally or by co-operation.
6. Nurses and midwives must provide care in any emergency situation where treatment is necessary to preserve life without the client's consent if they are unable to give it, provided the nurses and midwives has the ability to demonstrate that they are acting in the client's best interest.

CONDUCT STATEMENT 4

Treat personal information obtained in a professional capacity as private and confidential

Explanation:

Confidentiality means protecting all information concerning clients.

Privacy means limiting access to a client, the client's body, conversation, bodily function and objects immediately associated with the client, unless access is necessary to give care or treatment.

1. Nurses and midwives have ethical obligations to protect the privacy of the client who is requiring and receiving care and treatment. This encompasses treating information as confidential and restricting the use of the information gathered for professional purposes only.
2. Nurses and midwives must safeguard against breaches of confidentiality by protecting information from improper disclosure at all times. Nurses and midwives should ensure that the client understand that some information may be made available to other health care professional who is involved in the delivery of care. Therefore it is impractical to obtain consent in sharing information with other health care professionals.
3. Nurses and midwives should seek consent from the client or their representatives before disclosing information. In the absence of consent, nurses and midwives must act in their professional judgments regarding the necessity to disclose particular details, giving due consideration to the interests, wellbeing, health and safety of the client in their care. Nurses and midwives recognize that they may be required by law to disclose certain information for professional purposes only.

CONDUCT STATEMENT 5

Co-operate with others in the health care team

Explanation:

The **team** includes the client, his/her family, informal carers and other health care professionals. The delivery of healthcare is a complex process that requires a multidisciplinary approach to meet the health needs of the clients and society.

1. Nurses and midwives must work co-operatively within teams and to respect the skills, expertise and contributions of the health care team. They must treat others in the team fairly and without any discrimination.
2. Nurses and midwives should communicate effectively and share their knowledge, skill and expertise with other members of the health care team as required for the benefit of the client, family and communities as a whole.
3. Medical records are a tool of communication within the health care team. Medical record is a systematic documentation of a client's individual medical history and care. It allows health care providers to provide continuity of care to individual clients. Medical records are intensely personal documents and there are many ethical and legal issues surrounding it. Nurses and midwives must ensure that the medical record for the client is an accurate account of treatment, care planning and delivery. It should be consecutive, written with the involvement of the client wherever practicable and completed as soon as possible after an event has occurred. It should provide clear evidence of the care planned, the decisions made, the care delivered and the information shared.

4. Nurses and midwives must remain accountable for their professional conduct on any care they provide and any omission on their part, when working with member(s) of the health care team.
5. Nurses and midwives may be expected to delegate care delivery to others who are not nurses or midwives. Such delegation must not compromise existing care but must be directed to meet the needs and serving the interests of the clients, families and communities.
6. Nurses and midwives remains accountable for the appropriateness of the delegation ensuring that the nurses and midwives delegated is able to perform and an adequate supervision or support is provided upon delivering the care or treatment.

CONDUCT STATEMENT 6

Maintain professional knowledge and competence

Explanation:

Professional **knowledge** and **competence** is the knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired through education and experience. Clinical competence is related to professional roles as defined by the scope of professional practice, standards of practice and guidelines that govern safe and effective practice.

1. Nurses and midwives must keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date throughout working life. In particular, they should take part regularly in learning activities that develop competence and performance.
2. Nurses and midwives must possess the knowledge, skills and abilities required for lawful, safe and effective practice without direct supervision. They must acknowledge the limits of their professional competence and only undertake practice and accept responsibilities for those activities in which they are competent. If an aspect of practice is beyond their level of competence, or outside their area of registration, they must obtain assistance and supervision from a competent practitioner nurse or midwife until they and their supervisor consider that the nurse or midwife has acquired the requisite knowledge and skill competently to perform effective care and treatment.
3. Nurses and midwives have a duty to facilitate the development of knowledge and competence for the students of nursing and midwifery.
4. Nurses and midwives have a responsibility to deliver care based on current evidence, best practice and, where applicable, validated research when it is available.

CONDUCT STATEMENT 7

Practice reflectively and ethically

Explanation:

Reflection can be defined as the throwing back of thoughts and memories in cognitive acts such as thinking, contemplation, meditation and any other form of attentive consideration in order to make sense of them, and to make contextually appropriate changes if they are required. The domain of critical thinking and analysis relates to reflective practice.

Ethics has been a part of nursing practice from the early foundations of modern nursing. It has always entailed a respect for human rights of the persons in their care.

1. Nurses and midwives must practice nursing reflectively and ethically, in accordance with the nursing and midwifery legislations in order to learn from experience and contribute to personal and professional practice.
2. Nurses and midwives should develop and maintain appropriate and current quality nursing advice, support and care for each client requiring and receiving care.
3. Nurses and midwives must evaluate and maintain competency level according to the requirements and standards of the profession.
4. Nurses and midwives must contribute to the professional development of nursing and midwifery colleagues and students.
5. Nurses and midwives should participate in research in accordance with recognized research guidelines and do not violate their duty of care to persons receiving nursing care.

CONDUCT STATEMENT 8

Practice in accordance with the legislations of Brunei Darussalam and the Malay Islamic Monarchy or 'Melayu Islam Beraja (MIB)' philosophy.

Explanation:

Legislation refers to law or laws enacted by the government of Brunei Darussalam such as the Nurses Registration Act 1961 and Midwives Act 1955.

Malay Islamic Monarchy or *Melayu Islam Beraja (MIB)* is the adopted national philosophy of Brunei Darussalam. Malay Islamic Monarchy philosophy is described as a blend of Malay language, culture and Malay customs, the teaching of Islamic laws and values and the monarchy system which must be esteemed and practiced by all. It helps to guide conduct, attitude and behavior with regards to relationship between all health care teams, clients, their families and the communities as a whole.

1. Nurses and midwives must adhere to the Malay Islamic Monarchy philosophy in their professional practice where practicable in the organization.
2. Nurses and midwives have a responsibility to conduct themselves according to the Malay Islamic Monarchy philosophy and standards in what they do, and in their interaction with clients receiving care as well as with families, communities and other members of the health care team.
3. Nurses and midwives must adhere at all times, to the Work Ethics guidelines in their professional practice and the regulations as required in the General Order for civil servants.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accountable

The state of being answerable for one's decisions and actions. Accountability cannot be delegated.

Adhere

If you adhere to a rule or agreement, you act in the way that it says you should.

Advocate

A person who argues or defends the cause of another. Nurses or midwives may find they need to advocate for their clients.

Breach or breaches of the Code of Professional Conduct / Confidentiality

The act of breaking or not maintaining it.

Client

Patient or the person receiving care or treatment from the nurses or midwives and other health care professionals which could include families, carers and communities as a whole.

Cognitive

Relating to the mental process involved in knowing, learning, and understanding things.

Contemplating

If you contemplate an action, you think about whether to do it or not.

Contextually

A contextual issue or account relates to the context of something.

Competent

The combination of skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, and abilities that underpin effective performance in a particular professional area.

Competent client

A client who has the mental capacity to consent to medical treatment. Someone who is able to take a decision for him/herself, who can understand and retain the information relevant to the decision, weigh that information as part of the decision making process and communicate that decision.

Compromise

Reach an agreement with them in which you both give up something that you originally wanted because they are considering the wishes of other people.

Consecutive

Consecutive periods of time or events happen one after the other without interruption.

Critical thinking

In its broadest sense has been described as "purposeful reflective judgment concerning what to believe or what to do."

Delegation

Delegation is the assignment of authority and responsibility to another person to carry out specific activities. However the person who delegated the work remains accountable for the outcome of the delegated work.

Disclose

If you disclose new or secret information, you tell people about it.

Discrimination

Discrimination toward or against a person/group refers to the treatment or consideration based on class or category rather than individual merit. It can be behavior on promoting a person/ group, or it can be negative behavior directed against a person/group.

Domains

A particular field of thought, activity, or interest, especially one over which someone has control, influence, or rights.

Encompasses

Surrounds or includes.

Entailed a respect

Involves or causes respect.

Esteem

Admiration and respect that you feel towards another person.

Reflective

Persistently or morbidly thoughtful and thinking deeply about something / practice.

Registered Midwife

A person licensed to practice midwifery under the relevant state or country regulation and who has completed midwifery training in an institution accredited by the Nursing Board for Brunei.

Registered Nurse

A person licensed to practice nursing under the relevant state or country regulation and who has completed nursing training in a Nursing Institution accredited by the Nursing Board for Brunei.

Guideline

If an organization issues guidelines on something, it issues official advice about how to do it. It can be used to help you plan your actions or to form an opinion about something.

Informal carer

Someone either a family member or a friend appointed to look after the affairs of another person / client.

Interaction

When people interact with each other or interact, they communicate as they work or spend time together.

Legislation

Legislation is law which has been enacted by a regulatory or governing body.

Meditation

Meditation is the act of thinking about something very carefully and deeply for a long time.

Multidisciplinary

Consisting of multiple disciplines or practice within the health care system.

Omission

Something that has not been included or has not been done, either deliberately or accidentally.

Obligation

Duty to look after them or protect their interests.

Parental responsibility

Parental is used to describe something that relates to parents in general, or to one or both of the parents of a particular child. It is the parent job, duty or responsibility to deal with their child and to take decisions relating to them.

Personal health limitation

Prevent or limit a particular activity / task due to personal illness or health condition.

Prejudicial attitudes

Prejudice is an unreasonable dislike of a particular group of people or things, or a preference for one group of people or things over another. It is an action or situation that is harmful to them.

Professional Development

The process or result of a profession to gradually become better and more advanced.

Preserve

Take action to save it or protect it from damage.

Racist

Influenced by the belief that some people are inferior because they belong to a particular race.

Rendered

Provide or serve.

Safeguard

To protect them from being harmed, lost, or badly treated.

Scope of Practice

A terminology used by licensing boards for various healthcare-related fields that defined the procedures, actions and processes that are permitted for the licensed individual. The scope of practice is limited to that which the individual has received education and clinical experience, and in which he/she has demonstrated competency.

Self-esteem

How you feel about yourself. If you have low self-esteem, you do not like yourself, you do not think that you are a valuable person, and therefore you do not behave confidently.

Sexist

Influenced by the belief that the members of one sex, are less intelligent or less capable than those of the other sex and does not need to be treated equally.

Systematic

Done according to a fixed plan, in a thorough and efficient manner.

Uphold

If you uphold something such as a law, a principle, or a decision, you support and maintain it.

Validate

Something that is valid is important or serious enough to make it worth saying or doing.

Violate

If someone violates an agreement, law, or promise, they break it.

Voluntarily

Voluntary actions or activities are done because someone chooses to do it and not because they have been forced to do so.

Vulnerable

Someone who is weak and without protection, with the result that they are easily hurt physically or emotionally.

Withholding

If you withhold something that someone wants, you do not let them have it.

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