

Professional Codes of Ethics

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1. Introduction

- A professional code of ethics is a set of standards guiding the conduct of practitioners.
- Codes promote trust, accountability, and consistent quality of care.

2. Purpose

- **Guidance:** they help practitioners make ethical decisions in daily practice.
- They protect patients and uphold the reputation of the profession.
- Codes also set a benchmark for evaluating professional behaviour.

3. Common Provisions

- Duties to respect patient autonomy, confidentiality, and dignity.
- Commitment to competence, honesty, and avoiding conflicts of interest.

4. Examples and Bodies

- **Professional councils:** regulatory bodies that publish and enforce codes for doctors, nurses, and allied staff.
- Historic statements such as the Hippocratic Oath influence modern codes.

5. Enforcement

- Breaches may lead to disciplinary action, including suspension or loss of licence.
- Continuing education helps practitioners stay aligned with current standards.

6. Summary

- Professional codes of ethics define expected conduct, protect patients, and maintain public confidence, with regulatory bodies enforcing compliance.