

Professional Codes of Ethics

Professional Codes of Ethics

1. Introduction

- A professional code of ethics is a formal set of principles guiding the conduct of a profession.
- In healthcare it sets standards that protect patients and maintain public trust.

2. Purpose of Codes

- Define acceptable behaviour and professional values.
- Provide a reference for resolving ethical questions.
- Hold members accountable through disciplinary processes.

3. Common Principles

- **Beneficence and non-maleficence:** act for patients' good and avoid harm.
- **Confidentiality:** protect patient information.
- **Integrity and honesty:** practise truthfully and transparently.

4. Examples of Codes

- The Hippocratic tradition and modern medical association codes.
- Nursing and allied health councils each publish their own codes.

5. Enforcement

- Regulatory bodies investigate breaches and may suspend or revoke licences.
- Codes are supported by continuing education and self-regulation.

6. Summary

- Codes of ethics translate moral values into professional standards.
- They safeguard patients and uphold the credibility of the profession.