



THE EUROPEAN NURSE DIRECTORS' PROTO-CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT

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Preamble

This ENDA Proto-Code of Ethics and Conduct offers a platform for reflection for nurse directors, nurse leaders and managers as well as for competent authorities and researchers, based on ethical principles and values.

The purpose of this Proto-Code of Ethics and Conduct is to serve as a basis for the discussion of policies that harmonize and enhance awareness of standards of ethics and professional practice for nurse directors throughout the European Union. Patient safety and public protection can only be achieved through a common understanding of the values that govern nurse directors in Europe.

ENDA encourages nursing associations of the European countries in which nurse directors function to develop their own codes of ethics and conduct according to their specific historical and social context. These associations are encouraged to draft their respective codes of ethics ex novo on the basis of the indications and principles stated in this proto-code for their professional use and advancement.

Nurse Directors' Ethical Basis

- Nurse directors place individual persons' rights at the centre of all their actions.
- Nurse directors uphold and foster ethical and professional values.
- Nurse directors are expected to act with personal integrity, courtesy, honesty, trust and mutual respect.
- Nurse directors foster personal responsibility and promote professional accountability in themselves and their employees.
- Nurse directors challenge discrimination of any kind.
- Nurse directors contribute to the development and implementation of policies that ensure respect for patients' rights, dignity and safe care.
- Nurse directors respect the confidentiality of information they gain, and the privacy of the people they manage directly and indirectly, disclosing confidential information only if required by the law of the country in which they practise.

- Nurse directors ensure that persons receive clear and full information designed to meet individual needs.
- Nurse directors are accountable both to the staff and general public for the initiatives and resources they manage, acting with respect and according to the principles of distributive justice, equity, efficacy and efficiency.
- Nurse directors create the organizational conditions that enable core professional values to be practised and the professional identity of nursing to be enhanced.

Principles of professional practice

Competence

- Nurse directors carry out their work with competence and commitment to achieve excellence.
- Nurse directors support health promoting activities and development.
- Nurse directors build conditions for all care givers to work optimally and in accordance with principles of best practice.
- Nurse directors support cultural awareness and sensitivities.
- In conflict situations, nurse directors help individuals and/or organizations to address challenges, search for resolution through dialogue and appropriate actions.

Care

- Nurse directors have an active role in designing environments for optimum care.
- Nurse directors build dynamic and flexible approaches to high quality care.
- Nurse directors ensure that appropriate systems are designed and implemented to promote excellence in care.
- Nurse directors support ethically sound research and the creation and use of data bases to develop and implement evidence-based nursing and to establish integrated care.

Safety

- Nurse directors ensure that the people they employ are safe to practise.
- Nurse directors have a key responsibility in risk and quality management by promoting a fair blame culture and ensure that lessons are learned from mistakes.

Staff

- Nurse directors support staff to contribute to the formulation of policies.
- Nurse directors ensure that staff develop and apply effective communication skills.
- Nurse directors facilitate the participation of nurses in the organization's clinical governance, audit, and ethics systems and processes.
- Nurse directors encourage staff to become active members of professional associations.

Life-long learning

- Nurse directors develop their own skills, competence and knowledge base throughout their career.
- Nurse directors ensure that accredited and continuing professional development and lifelong learning is maintained in their organizations.
- Nurse directors support mentorship at all levels and encourage career development.

Multi-sectorial working

- Nurse directors foster networks and collaboration between and among health care teams and multi-sectorial organizations.
- Nurse directors encourage inter-agency relationships and collaboration with professional and regulatory organizations.

The proto-code's basic values and ethical principles are:

- To uphold the highest moral and ethical standards.
- To accept personal responsibility and recognise personal strengths and limitations.
- To be committed to and honour equal rights and dignity in every domain.
- To uphold and foster principles of truth-telling and honesty at every level.
- To uphold and foster principles of justice and fairness and to challenge injustice in any situation.
- To uphold and foster principles of individual freedom.
- To do good and do no harm.

This Proto-Code is intended to evolve over time and be updated every three years to keep pace with advances in nurse directors' professional and service delivery across Europe.

This proto-code is published on the ENDA website: <http://www.eu-nurse-leaders.org/site/>

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