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Professionalism Professional Values and Ethics in Nursing

As per the Revised Syllabus for BSc Nursing



Suresh K Sharma
Asha P Shetty

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UNIT 2

Professional Values

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CHAPTER 4

Professional Values

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Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this chapter, the readers should be able to:

- Define personal and professional values in nursing.
- Discuss need for professional values in the nursing profession.
- Explain about professional socialization.
- Describe the importance of professional values in nursing and health care

PROFESSIONAL VALUES

Values are the way one thinks, feel acts (makes decisions) in day-to-day life. It is very difficult to define value in a particular way. These are more than ethics, morals, and virtues. It is the foundation of perception that leads the action of an individual that reflects his or her identity as a member of various social groups such as family and organization. In short values are the *"guiding principles of an individual."*

Values are beliefs and goals that guide behavior and serve as a foundation for decision-making. Values provide a framework for evaluating behavior. Nursing is a profession that is grounded in many core values such as altruism, autonomy, the dignity of human beings, integrity, honesty, social justice, and fairness. These core values reflect the spiritual and human approach to nursing and are shared by the entire global community. The values of patient care are affected by the cultural, religious, and economic conditions in each country.

Ethical codes reflect professional values. The code of ethics is designed to help nurses understand the nature of their profession, how they should be treated, and what professional standards they must adhere to nursing, it is becoming more important to promote professional values due to the complexity and increasing number of

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ethical dilemmas in care settings. To promote the nursing profession, values must be acquired and internalized. They will guide practice and become the standard for nursing. To ensure the future success of nursing, it is important to integrate professional values into nursing education.

Definitions

- According to M. Haralambos, "a value is a belief that something is good and desirable".
- According to R.K. Mukherjee, "values are socially approved desires and goals that are internalized through the process of conditioning, learning or socialization and that become subjective preferences, standards, and aspirations."
- According to Zaleznik and David, "values are the ideas in the mind of men compared to norms in that they specify how people should behave. Values also attach degrees of goodness to activities and relationships."
- Values are defined by Schwartz (1994) as "guiding principles in the life of a person that motivates action, function as standards for judging and justifying action, and that is acquired both through socialization and through the unique learning experiences."

Characteristics of Values

- Values represent an individual's highest priorities based on their deeply held driving forces.
- Values are the powerful forces that affect behavior and personality of an individual.
- Values contain a judgment element, which helps to decide between right and wrong.
- Values are imparted by family, educational institutions, society and peer groups, religion/culture, media, and environment.
- Many values (innate or acquired) are relatively constant and durable.
- Values, norms, and ethics are interrelated concepts with a very fine difference between them.
- Values are fairly permanent, stable, and long-lasting.

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Types of Values

Values vary from person to person and some of the basic types of values are mentioned here.

- ***Positive and negative values:*** Desirable behavior which is socially acceptable is known as positive values. The exact opposite one is understood as negative values.
- ***Dominant and variant values:*** Dominant value is the behavior that cannot be violated in society, e.g., nonviolence. Variant values are the values in which an individual can make a choice, e.g. vegetarian or nonvegetarian.
- ***Innate and acquired values:*** Innate values are governed by genes and conscience whereas acquired values are imparted by social institutions such as family, school, and peer group.
- ***Intrinsic and extrinsic values:*** Intrinsic values are unique to an individual and are independent of other things. Extrinsic values are the means of achieving intrinsic value, e.g., playing music (extrinsic value) is the means of achieving happiness/inner peace (intrinsic value).

Value Clarification

Value clarification is the process of identifying and examining one's values and systems. There are many steps involved in value clarification. These include "choosing", which is the act of choosing from a variety of options and reflecting on the consequences. "Prizing" means that beliefs are valued and treasured. These beliefs are valued and treasured. "Acting" is incorporating them into your life and behavior. These steps will help in identifying personal values **(Fig. 4.1)**.

Values clarification refers to a process by which individuals can identify, evaluate, and develop their values. Raths Harmin and Simon called it a "valuing procedure:"

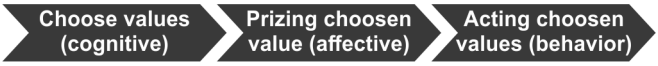

Fig. 4.1: Process of value clarification.

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Strategies for Value Clarification

There are numerous strategies used for value clarification. The following are the brief description of strategies that can be used for value clarification relevant to the nursing discipline.

a. **The strategy I—name tag:** Take a piece of paper and write down the name of the nurse in the middle. In the four corners of the paper, write the answer to the following questions.
   - What two things you would like to hear from your colleagues to say about you?
   - The most important thing you will do to improve the nurse-patient interaction
   - What do you do daily to value your health?
   - What are the three values that are most important to you?

   Once the answers are ready one must look into the matter and find out whether they felt any difficulty in answering the questions or if they identified another interlinked question that needs to be answered. In this way, one can reach their value clarification.

b. **Strategy II, Patterns:** In this strategy, an individual identifies their patterns and also reflects whether they require any improvement or alteration in the pattern or not.

> The following are some of the patterns of values. Underline some of these values you feel most accurately describe you as a professional person. Try to answer some questions for a personal reflection of your values.
>
> **Ambitious, reserved, assertive, easily hurt, outgoing, generous, independent, reliable, self-controlled, suspicious, capable, indifferent, dependent, fun-loving, obedient, self-discipline, helpful, moody, imaginative, emotional, affectionate, compromising, argumentative, and solitary**
>
> 1. Are you happy with your patterns of values?
> 2. Do you choose to change the patterns of values you have? Why?
> 3. List some goals for life-based on the pasterns of values.
> 4. What patterns do you feel a nurse should ideally possess?
>
> *Adapted from Diane B. Uustal (1978)*

c. **Forced choice rank**

In this method, an imaginary situation and a list of probable reactions are given to the individual from which the individual has

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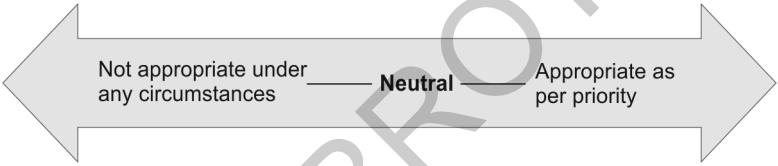
to choose his/her probable reaction. Once the reaction is chosen; the individual is asked to affirm the choice and explain why he/she might feel in that particular way and what might be the pros and cons of the reaction and the value clarification is achieved with the preceding question.

E.g. With whom among your students, you will get most angry? The student

- Who never submits assignments timely
- Who refuses to work with a comatose patient in the ward.
- Rarely helps others or participates least in group projects.

d. **Values continuum:** In this method, the individual is asked a series of question/a single questions. After careful consideration of the questions, the individual indicates his/her standpoint along with a written explanation.

For example, how do you feel about abortion?



e. **Values voting**: In this method, a list of positive and negative statements are given and the individual has to answer the responses as strongly agree (SA), agree (A), undecided (U), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD)

For example, continuing education in nursing is worthwhile to ensure professional identity? Indicate whether you SA, A, U, D, SD, and why?

f. **Unfinished sentence**: In this method, a sentence is given to the individual and they are asked to finish it on their own. These sentences promote thinking at the individual level.

For example, **I wish my clinical instructor would have**_____
I wonder about _____

g. **Alternative search:** Here, an imaginary situation is given and the individual is asked to solve the situation with possible alternatives that they—(i) will try, (ii) will consider trying it, or (iii) will not consider.

Value Neutrality

It is the ability to care for patients while ignoring personal values. Equality of care and support for every patient is possible by being neutral and nonjudgmental. Trust is built between the patient

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and nurse by offering unconditional support, listening to, and acknowledging their feelings. Conflicting values almost always lead to ethical dilemmas. It is important to recognize the difference between value, fact, or opinion to resolve ethical dilemmas. People sometimes have strong values and consider the facts. Sometimes, people can be so passionate about their beliefs that they cause conflict by provoking judgmental attitudes. Clarifying the values, whether they are own or those of patients, is an essential part of ethical discourse. Values clarification helps to accept differences and often, although not always, it is the key to solving ethical dilemmas. For instance, some people may prefer to be silent during crises while others express it to others to get support and better understanding.

Value Formation

Each culture has its expressions of the fundamental need to nurture and love children and the formation of values is a process that involves schools, government, religious traditions, as well as other social institutions. As children grow, there will be variations in the way that they are raised. These can reinforce or challenge family values. Individuals acquire values over time by choosing the ones they feel most strongly about and possibly discarding or changing others. Individual experiences, i.e., the adverse events of life, can also influence value formation. One who has suffered a lot in their early years of life may be more likely to value things than someone who has not experienced such loss.

A value is an individual belief about the value of a certain idea or custom. This belief sets standards that can influence behavior. Nursing is a profession that requires intimacy. Nursing calls for an interaction with patients emotionally, spiritually, and psychologically. These values are influenced by cultural and social factors. They change and evolve. The nurses inevitably have to work with patients or colleagues who have different values. Therefore, it is crucial to understand our values and be able to communicate our opinions and values to others. In some cultures, decisions regarding health care are made in a group or family-based discussion and not by an individual. This practice can challenge the commitment to the nursing profession and patient autonomy.

Critical Thinking
What are the professional values in nursing that distinguish Indian nurses from Western nurses?

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Personal and Professional Values

Personal values are the values that one carries with him or her from the culture and society in which he/she lives. To feel accepted, people, need to be able to identify with their culture and have personal values. The professional values are those acquired through socialization in nursing from codes and ethics, nurse's experiences, and peers.

Personal Values

Personal values are the "broad desirable goals that motivate people's actions and serve as guiding principles in their lives."

The ten most important personal values according to Schwartz's value theory (1992) are described as follows:

1. **Self-direction:** The ability and freedom to cultivate one's ideas and abilities (thoughts) and freedom to determine one's actions. These are reflected in choosing own goals, independent thoughts, creativity, curiosity, and exploring the environment.
2. **Stimulation:** This is the ability to feel the presence of excitement, novelty, and challenge in life which are necessary to enrich the experience of an individual.
3. **Hedonism:** This is the ability to have pleasure, enjoyment, and sensuous gratification for oneself.
4. **Achievement:** This is the ability to succeed while demonstrating socially acceptable competence (being ambitious, capable, influential and successful).
5. **Power:** It is the social status and prestige that one possesses along with dominance upon people and resources (social power, wealth, and authority) while maintaining one's public image and avoiding humiliation.
6. **Security:** This includes safety, harmony, and stability of social relationships, and self. Actions directed toward the personal environment (self, family, friends, and reciprocation of favors) and society at large.
7. **Conformity:** This is the ability to control actions and impulses that are likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations. A person must be polite, obedient, have self-discipline, and respect for elders.
8. **Tradition:** This is considered as the feeling of respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas of traditional culture and religion.

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9. **Benevolence:** This is the value that one cultivates for the welfare of the people with whom one is in frequent personal contact. It includes being loyal, responsible, honest, helpful, forgiving reliable, and trustworthy.
10. **Universalism:** It is the ability to understand, appreciate, be tolerant, and protective of the welfare of people and nature.

Professional Values in Nursing

Professional nursing values are defined as important professional nursing principles of human dignity, integrity, altruism, and justice that serve as a framework for standards, professional practice, and evaluation. ***—Bonnie J Schmidt, 2018***

Some of the professional values relevant to nursing are discussed here.

- **Human dignity means** giving respect to individuals. It includes respecting persons, their families, and the sociocultural background of the patient. Society has been mentioned as an important nursing ethical value. In nursing, respecting human dignity is consideration of human's innate values, respecting patient's beliefs and preservation of their dignity and privacy during clinical procedures, communicating with the patients with due respect, understanding the patients, and devotion to fulfilling clients' needs. For example, in a clinical setting, the nurse must call the patient with due respect by name instead of calling them "uncle" or "aunty".
- **Social justice** is the fair distribution of resources and provision of equal treatment and cares to individuals irrespective of economic, social, and cultural status.
- **Altruism** means the spirit of selflessness and helpfulness toward others. In this value, humans are the axis of attention. It denotes, helping others, making provision of the utmost health and welfare for the clients, their families, and society, selflessly with self-devotion.
- **Autonomy in decision making:** This means the right of independence in decision making, the right to accept or reject suggested treatments, interventions, or care. Nurses must help the client in decision-making by giving appropriate and adequate information to the clients and, to their families when necessary.
- **Precision and accuracy in caring** are indicated as the most important nursing value. Nursing care should be based on a sound

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standard of practice which must be precise, safe, appropriate, multidimensional, kind, and satisfying. The care must be safe enough to promote their health and relieve their pain and suffering.

- **Responsibility** is defined as the commitment to giving evidence-based care, being responsible toward patients, and respecting the patient's rights in decision-making.
- **A human relationship** is the ability of the nurse to maintain honesty in words and practice, be sympathetic, and have mutual understanding, courtesy, and friendliness with clients. Standard of practice in patient care is possible when humanistic, efficient, and effective relationships, a relationship is made with clients.
- **Individual and professional competency** is defined as the traits of struggling to make nursing a profession, feeling the need to acquire personal and professional competency in the direction of adaptation of new technology and new evidence. Personal and professional competency is usually achieved by lifelong learning, participating in continuing education, research, and quality control activities.
- **Sympathy** is the trait of understanding patients' and their families' needs and giving care based on making fair communication. Empathy is an integral part of sympathy. It is characterized by nurse's ability to understand the feeling, experiences, or psychosocial abilities of their patients by placing themselves in their situation.
- **Trust** is the trait of honesty in words and practice. Nurses should gain patient's, their families,' and society's trust through understanding patient's situation and status and appropriate conformation with them.

PROFESSIONAL SOCIALIZATION: INTEGRATION OF PROFESSIONAL VALUES WITH PERSONAL VALUES

The term "socialization" describes the process through which people acquire the knowledge, abilities, and attitudes needed for them to be able to contribute to their community. Learning about one's self-concept, subcultures, and family roles and norms is the first step in socialization. People can develop their self-concept by joining new groups as they get older and take on new roles, learn new norms, and do so.

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People who wish to be a professional must undergo professional socialization. Professional socialization refers to the process of becoming a legitimate member of a professional organization.

This idea was relatively obscure until the 1940s, but after World War II, it caught the attention of numerous academics and philosophers across many fields, and it was added to dictionaries. Professional socialization is the essence of a successful academic experience. Any dissatisfaction or distressing experience might lead to a pupil dropping out of the institution and the profession itself. The proper understanding of personal values increases the awareness of professional values which will eventually reflect professionalism. The pioneer of the nursing profession, Florence Nightingale emphasized character development and professional socialization during the training period to ensure the successful transition from a student nurse to a professional nurse.

The journey to professional socialization looks like an adventure that takes the person from being marginal to fully participate in a professional society. However, professional socialization is not the same as mere education. In any profession, training is the process of learning new information and skills. Socialization is the combination of this knowledge with a new sense of self. For a successful academic experience, professional socialization is vital. Thus professional socialization is a process to acquire specialized knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, norms, and interests within nursing.

Definition

- "Professional socialization is defined as the knowledge and skill that characteristics of a profession" (Becker-Hentz, 2005).
- "Professional socialization is a process through which a person acquires the knowledge, skills, values and ethical standards to form a professional identity." (Hao, Niu, Li, Yue, and Liu, 2014).

Importance of Professional Socialization

- Promotes effective communication with patients and healthcare team members.
- Increases self-awareness leading to self-development in terms of development of character and personality.

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- ❖ Improves participation, performance, and job satisfaction which leads to retention within the profession.
- ❖ Helps in resolving role conflicts as they adopt and adapt to professional roles
- ❖ Enhances behavioral and professional commitment
- ❖ Helps in the identification of the philosophy of the profession and motivates career progression

Factors Affecting Professional Socialization

a. *Professional factors*
   - Difference between theory and practice in terms of application of knowledge and skills.
   - Tacit knowledge gained through communication within the group.
   - Discrimination and isolation based on educational qualification and years of experience.
   - Quality and support of the administrators.

b. *Personal factors*
   - Personal sociocultural context and beliefs
   - Coping ability and adaptability
   - The ability of time management
   - Educational experiences
   - Choice of defense mechanism
   - Openness to others, communication patterns specifically social interaction pattern
   - The practice of reflection and role observation
   - Ability to maintain balance
   - Desire to update professional knowledge
   - Internal motivation for forming professional identity

c. *Educational factors*
   - Student-teacher relationships such as interaction patterns and a supportive environment
   - Curricular pattern
   - Extracurricular activities
   - Resilience to maintain professional ideals
   - Years of education and experience

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Ineffective professional socialization can have various negative impacts on nurses which are as follows:

- Demoralization and poor performance leading to low quality of service
- Reduced productivity
- Nonacceptance of the role leads to frequent job changes
- Lack of interest and leaving the organization or profession
- Negative body image and psychological stress

Measures to Promote Professional Socialization in Nursing Educational Setting

To encourage professional socialization in nursing, the following actions must be taken:

- Orientation of students must be done on exposure to a new clinical area.
- Genuine interest and involvement in student's professional life by comprehending their educational and instructional requirements, and acting accordingly.
- Maintain a positive and growing relationship with students'
- Appreciate the contribution of students to the interdisciplinary team.
- Working together with clinical nurses to support students in integrating theory and practice by fostering discussion and implementing reflective exercises.
- Provide students with constructive criticism and guidance as they develop appropriate behavior.
- Encouraging dialog and initiating brainstorming activities, role-playing, simulation, and supervised clinical observation sessions which must be followed by a reflective learning exercise for understanding the unpredictable clinical environments.
- Emphasis on competency development, while taking into account learning objectives, the minimum number of hours required, and available clinical facilities.
- Ensure meaningful learning opportunities for the students'
- Regular communication about issues involving students with the appropriate stakeholders.
- Avoid all measures of inequalities such as gender, religion, and caste biases.

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- Have access to counseling services for students whenever necessary.
- Create awareness of the various legislative measures among students to avoid violation of ethical principles.
- Monitor students for any misconduct and follow the standard guidelines for dealing with misconduct rather than personal judgment.
- Create a positive learning environment where everyone is treated with dignity which will help students to identify an ideal work environment.

Integration of Professional Values with Personal Values

Integration of professional and personal values occurs with the interplay of various factors. Philip J. Osteen published the following model in 2013, which helps to clearly understand how this integration occurs **(Fig. 4.2)**.

According to this model, the integration of personal and professional values has three distinct but related components—

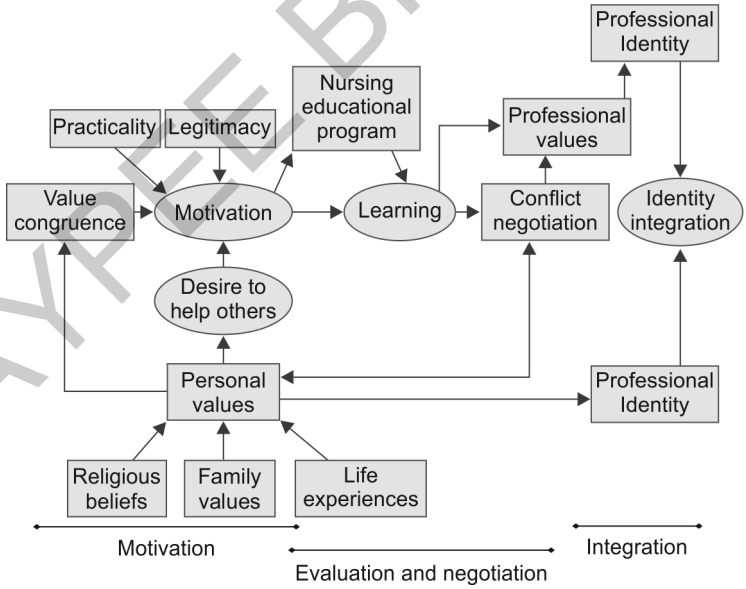

Fig. 4.2: Model of integration of professional values with personal values.

Source: Adapted from Philip J. Osteen (2013).

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(1) motivation, (2) evaluation and negotiation, and (3) integration.

1. **Motivation** is denoted on the left-hand side of the model, which illustrates the different types of motivators that influenced student's decisions to enter a professional educational program such as nursing. These motivational factors are mentioned here.
   - **Personal values** are influenced by *family values* (in which a person grows up) *religious beliefs* (belief in the supreme power) and the day-to-day *life experiences* that a person gathers.
   - **Desire to help others** stem from the personal values which motivate a person to pursue a carrier in nursing or other professional courses.
   - **Value congruence** explains the reason behind a person's willingness to follow rules, regulations, and values. It refers to the extent to which the personal values of a person are as per the surroundings.
   - **Practicality and legitimacy are the motivational factors denoting the desire for** being successful in life and focusing on acquiring the skills and knowledge to practice competently.
2. **Evaluation and negotiation** are the second components of the integration of personal and professional values which usually develop with the learning experiences of the nursing program. A motivated student is self-directed to gather knowledge and skills which are provided in the professional curriculum. Further, he/she goes through a continuous evaluation and negotiation of personal and professional values. Any in congruence between these values must be discussed or negotiated with their professional mentors (conflict negotiation) for nurturing the professional values.
3. **Integration** consists of the synthesis of personal and professional identities based on the outcomes of the evaluation of their professional values. The process of integration occurs in three stages namely—(1)integrated, (2) nonintegrated, and (3) evolving. Nursing students who mention themselves as "nurse" in social gatherings are at the "integrated" stage. Students who feel uncomfortable expressing themselves under the label of "nurse" to describe their professional selves can be labeled "nonintegrated". This can happen with practicing nurses as well who manage to express themselves as "teachers" only in society rather than "a nursing teacher/a nursing faculty". "Evolving" applies to those students who gladly express themselves as "student nurses" in society. Personal and professional value integration aims to reach the "integrated" stage.

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PROFESSIONAL VALUES IN NURSING

Importance of Professional Values in Nursing and Health Care

Values are the guiding principle of personal and professional life. The following list of factors highlights the significance of professional values in nursing and healthcare **(Fig. 4.3)**:

- Professional values help in decision-making in the clinical or community setting.
- It helps in understanding nurse's behavior and its modification as per the requirement.
- It improves understanding of the client and his or her surroundings. This develops a healthy interpersonal relationship between nurses and clients, nurses, and stakeholders involved in healthcare settings.
- Understanding professional values lead to the maintenance of standard nursing care, leading to improved patient satisfaction.
- Increases job satisfaction among nurses and prevents drop out, and migration of nurses.
- Motivates nurses to engage themselves in activities related to continuing education, research, and quality assurance. These ultimately refine the knowledge base of the nursing profession.
- Reduces health care costs by promoting early healing and making people knowledgeable about their health.
- Increases the trust of society toward the nursing profession.



Fig. 4.3: Professional values in nursing.

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Professionalism, Professional Values and Ethics in Nursing

Professionalism, Professional Values and Ethics in Nursing is precisely written as per the revised Indian Nursing Council Syllabus for the Basic BSc Nursing students. It may also serve as an introductory text for nurses and nursing students undertaking other courses. The book is an excellent attempt towards introducing students to the various principles of professionalism, professional values and ethics adopted in the field of nursing.

Salient Features

- ***Comprehensive and complete:*** This textbook presents complete required content very comprehensively to meet all the needs of Basic BSc Nursing students related to the revised Indian Nursing Council syllabus.
- ***Simple and lucid content:*** This textbook provides clear and concise content about concepts and principles of professionalism, professional values and ethics in a simple and lucid manner incorporating their applications to healthcare and nursing sciences.
- ***Easy-to-follow:*** This is an applied, user-friendly, and self-explanatory textbook with simple language and illustrative presentation.
- ***An example-oriented book:*** This is an example-oriented book, where numerous examples are cited throughout the textbook for enriching understanding about the principles of professionalism, professional values and ethics in nursing.
- ***Illustrative presentation:*** Presentation of content has been supplemented with illustrations to facilitate quick review and recall of important concepts.

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