

NURSE LIFE CARE PLANNING CONSENSUS STATEMENT

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND CONDUCT

Preface

The Code of Professional Ethics and Conduct for the American Association of Nurse Life Care Planners® is based upon the belief that all members have an ethical obligation to practice nurse life care planning with the utmost integrity, competency and accountability. The code of ethical conduct provides a guideline for the professional performance and behavior of nurse life care planners. As nurse life care planners, we also recognize and support the code of ethics and conduct of the American Nurses Association. Our goal is to assure the community we serve of our commitment to these codes by demonstrating that we abide by AANLCP® *Code of Ethics and Conduct*.

Introduction

All nurses make ethical decisions and each nursing specialty needs to recognize their own practice's ethical perspective. In their professional role, nurse life care planners may be performing as consultants to the insurance industry, legal practices, and other actual and potential organizations; therefore, they need to be able to recognize ethical dilemmas and choose the correct actions when conflicts of values or expectations of others with different priorities exist. It is important that nurse life care planners know how to interact with others and manage ethical decisions appropriately in following their standards of practice.

Ethics and Nurse Life Care Planners

The AANLCP® *Code of Ethics and Conduct* was developed as a guide to the core values and obligations of the profession. ANA's *Code to Ethics with Interpretive Statement* was looked to as a resource with the belief that all nursing professionals have an ethical obligation to practice with the utmost integrity, competency and accountability. A Code of Ethics and Conduct committee was created in 2011 to explore the current and evolving issues that might be encountered by the nurse life care planner.

- 1. The nurse life care planner (NLCP) does not discriminate against any person based on age, gender, ethnic background, religious beliefs or practices, social or economic status, life-style choices, functional status, or the nature of health or disability.**

NLCP Explanation:

- An individual's differences or beliefs are respected and do not negatively influence professional performance or decision-making.
- Each individual's inherent worth, dignity and human rights are respected by the nurse life care planner without prejudice, whether or not the nurse necessarily agrees with or condones certain individual choices. Personal attitudes do not influence or interfere with professional performance.
- The nurse life care planner performs in a nonjudgmental and nondiscriminatory manner.

NLCP Examples:

- The nurse life care planner respects the individual's decisions, wishes, autonomy, and rights.
- The nurse life care planner applies their standards of practice consistently to *all* individuals while acknowledging and being sensitive to disability, educational, cultural, racial, age and sexual differences.

2. The nurse life care planner maintains professional nursing competency as well as competency in the practice of nurse life care planning.

NLCP Explanation:

- The nurse life care planner maintains an active license in good standing as a registered nurse.
- The nurse life care planner recognizes and adheres to nursing standards of practice and the standards of practice for nurse life care planners.

NLCP Examples:

- The nurse life care planner assumes responsibility for continuous education through personal study, attendance at educational programs, national nursing conferences, seminars, professional meetings, reading the *AANLCP Journal*, as well as other relevant professional journal articles, and engages in continued professional learning.
- The nurse life care planner knows their state's Nurse Practice Act and practices within their scope of practice.

3. The nurse life care planner incorporates high standards of professional conduct through the continuum of the nurse life care planning services.

NLCP Explanation:

- The nurse life care planner demonstrates honesty, integrity, responsibility, accountability, timeliness and respect for human dignity.
- The nurse life care planner will not knowingly engage in unethical or unlawful activities nor will they knowingly misrepresent their background or credentials, or promote personal interests for personal gain.
- The nurse life care planner remains objective and does not impose individual values on others.

NLCP Examples:

- The nurse life care planner identifies areas for personal and professional development and assists others in their development.
- The nurse life care planner demonstrates a positive image of nursing in the community, the legal field, and the media.
- The nurse life care planner seeks consultation as necessary.
- The nurse life care planner remains respectful and open in the exchange of views between and among all individuals with relevant interests.

4. The nurse life care planner safeguards the right of privacy of all individuals by maintaining confidentiality of information.

NLCP Explanation:

- The nurse life care planner exercises responsibility, discretion and respect in the handling and use of all protected or sensitive information and materials.

NLCP Examples:

- The nurse life care planner adheres to the duty of confidentiality and shares relevant data only with those people who have a need to know, while considering that the rights, well-being, and safety of the individual should be the primary factors in arriving at any professional judgment concerning the disposition of confidential information.
- The nurse life care planner is aware of and complies with local, state and federal privacy and security regulations.
- However, the nurse life care planner recognizes that duties of confidentiality are not absolute and may need to be modified in order to protect the individual and other innocent parties, as well as in certain cases of mandatory disclosure.
- When using electronic communication, special effort by the nurse life care planner is made to maintain data security.

5. The nurse life care planner assumes responsibility and accountability for all actions, opinions, recommendations, and commitments.

NLCP Explanation:

- The nurse life care planner assumes accountability for his/her life care plan, as well as their actions, opinions and decisions.
- The nurse life care planner relies upon his/her specialized education, body of knowledge, level of competence and experience when accepting and completing an assignment.
- The nurse life care planner's professional services are delivered in a competent, concise and timely manner.

NCLP Examples:

- The nurse life care planner accepts responsibility for consultations with other health care providers when necessary.
- The nurse life care planner is ultimately accountable for identifying and developing a life care plan related to the individual's deficits and limitations, as well as the reasonable costs of any and all care recommended in each individual specific plan.
- The nurse life care planner evaluates and updates the nurse life care plan as needed during the development stage; and, when necessary, documents appropriate delegation for implementation and ongoing evaluation of the life care plan.
- The nurse life care planner questions any collaborative suggestions that appear to be incorrect or inappropriate.
- The nurse life care planner engages in continued professional learning.

6. The nurse life care planner provides professional services with objectivity.

NLCP Explanation:

- The nurse life care planner demonstrates critical thinking in decisions, recommendations and opinions.
- All functions of the nurse life care planner are void of personal opinion, prejudice and conflict of interest or any such other consideration that could interfere with or influence objectivity, performance or outcome.

NLCP Examples:

- The nurse life care planner applies the standards of nursing practice (the nursing process) consistently in all life care plans, thereby not confusing advocacy with bias.
- The nurse life care planner identifies and resolves any potential conflict of interest as soon as possible.

7. The nurse life care planner participates in the advancement of the profession through mentorship, collegiality, education, and ongoing knowledge development.

NLCP Explanation:

- The nurse life care planner maintains active involvement in their professional association's ongoing formulation and revisions of standards, policies, guidelines and other professional activities in nursing and nurse life care planning.
- The nurse life care planner interconnects with peers and colleagues.
- The nurse life care planner contributes to the dissemination of materials and information designed to advance the practice of nursing and of nurse life care planning.

NLCP Examples:

- The nurse life care planner stays informed with decisions being made in the context of the increased complexity and changing patterns in the delivery of healthcare and as the scope of practice changes, leading to the potential of new expanded roles.
- The nurse life care planner maintains an active membership in a national nursing organization and helps to encourage discourse that supports critical self-reflection and evaluation within their profession.
- The nurse life care planner maintains awareness of changing healthcare policy at the local, state and national levels.
- The nurse life care planner serves as a leader or mentor or on committees in their professional association.
- The nurse life care planner collaborates with members of other professional organizations at international, national, state and community levels.

Conclusion

Nurse life care planners must be cognizant of and anticipate ethical issues inherent to their practice. When practicing as consultants outside of the direct patient care setting, one should be familiar with the specific issues that may be involved and discuss them with knowledgeable peers and other likewise resources. Educational programs and journal articles focusing on potential ethical issues can be implemented. As nursing is an autonomous profession, nurses must be aware of their scope of practice and its limitations and that they have personal accountability. Being informed about and utilizing their standards, based in the nursing process and ethical guidelines, is a means to competent practice.