Ethics for Health Professionals

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Foreword

This world, for many, presents a hungry quest to “get ahead,” and ethics is not always the first consideration in any given scenario. Lines once starkly black have faded to gray. Why do you suppose that is? Confronted with ethical uncertainty, it has become more important than ever to embrace a set of values and attitudes. Knowing yourself includes knowing these values. In what do you believe? Where do you draw lines when it comes to controversial matters? Throughout this text, you should reflect on your own set of beliefs and values.

The healthcare professional will daily be faced with decision-making tasks, both on the job and off. Today’s healthcare industry is overshadowed, for some, by the threat of being sued. Consequently, tasks are sometimes met with reserve and what-ifs. Throughout this text, you will read about ethical situations. Combining your own personal values system and new information in this text, you should consider all angles and come to conclusions through reasoning skills.

As you begin this text, think about what you currently know about ethics. Keep an open mind about new information to which you will be introduced so that you can use all available information to arrive at a conclusion. When you come to the end of the text, gauge your growth in this field by comparing your new knowledge of ethics to your earlier knowledge base, and explore your opinions and feelings about healthcare ethics.

Good luck as you begin this learning journey, and best wishes to you in your upcoming career in health care!
Acknowledgments

In a world of “me, me, me,” it is with warmth that I remember the people who accept me as I am and to whom I owe my own ethical standards: my husband Allen; my three sons Will, Hunter, and Ryne; my daughters-in-law Mary Frances and Lauren; and my precious granddaughter Anna Lyn. You are the heart of all that I am, and I love you all very much. My faith is the foundation for my ethical beliefs, steeped heavily in childhood lessons by my parents.

Thanks to all who have shown support throughout this writing process and who offered encouragement and help, including those who reviewed and provided quotes and resource materials. A textbook, I have found firsthand, is the writing of one or more (two in this case), but the collaboration of many. My hope is that students who read it will be enriched by ethical information that will last a lifetime. Students are dear to my heart, and I admire anyone for bettering themselves through higher education. Knowledge truly is power.

Finally, I want to acknowledge my colleague and coauthor, Valerie Connor, who is not only kind, patient, and reliable, but also knowledgeable in the field of ethics within the healthcare industry. I can think of no one with whom I would have rather taken this journey. Thanks, Val!

—Carla Caldwell Stanford

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There have been many people in my life who have provided me with opportunities as a speech therapist and an educator. The writing process has enriched my knowledge of the field of healthcare ethics, and I hope this textbook will inspire students to keep learning.
Finally, a big thank you to Carla Stanford, who convinced me that I could coauthor a textbook, provided countless hours of guidance and encouraging e-mails, and never doubted our success. You are the best!

—Valerie J. Connor
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**Carla Caldwell Stanford** holds two master's degrees and a PhD. She has taught a medical law and bioethics course at the undergraduate college level for five years. The motivating factor for writing a textbook was to simplify ethics and laws concerning the healthcare professional in ways that would be both appealing and easily understood by the student.

**Valerie J. Connor** has a master's degree in speech pathology. She has practiced in school and long-term care settings. Currently, she teaches at both the undergraduate and graduate level with a focus on the legal and ethical aspects of health care. She hopes that students will have a better understanding of the laws and ethical issues surrounding health care after reading this text.