

POLICY TITLE: STUDENT PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND Demeanor POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to understand and convey to the nursing students that they are representatives of the University and School of Nursing, and should realize that their conduct and demeanor may affect the judgments of others about the School of Nursing in a positive or negative manner.

SON students are expected to be thoughtful and professional when interacting with faculty, patient and their families, nurses, attending physicians, nursing preceptors, affiliated institutional staff, other students, the public and other members of the health care team. This professional behavior is to be maintained in any and all situations where the student is identified as a SON student, including situations off-campus, as well as in "virtual" sites, such as online social networking sites.

Professional conduct and demeanor is required of students in cyberspace and social media in the same manner it is required in all others settings. Students must keep in mind that behaviors that are illegal or in violation of University policy on campus will be illegal or violate University policy if it occurs and/or appears on-line. If a student identifies as a SON student in an online forum, the SON will hold them to the highest standards of professional conduct. While it is not the policy of SON faculty to routinely monitor students' web sites, if inappropriate postings are brought to their attention, faculty will investigate the report.

PROCEDURE

The procedure for Professional Conduct and Demeanor in any setting: cyberspace, social media, use of photos, regular interactions and all forms of communication is embedded in the following *Principles* relegated by the American Nurses' Association:

The SON upholds the *American Nurses' Association's Standards of Professional and Ethical Behavior*. The SON also upholds the *American Nurses' Association's Principles for Social Networking*.

1. Nurses must not transmit or place online individually identifiable patient information.
2. Nurses must observe ethically prescribed professional patient-nurse boundaries.
3. Nurses should understand that patient, colleagues, institutions, and employers may view postings.
4. Nurses should take advantage of privacy settings and seek to separate personal and professional information online.
5. Nurses should bring content that could harm a patient's privacy, rights, or welfare to the attention of appropriate authorities.
6. Nurses should participate in developing institutional policies governing online conduct.

To avoid problems:

1. Remember that standards of professionalism are the same in any environment or circumstance including online.
2. Do not share or post information or photos gained through the nurse-patient relationship.
3. Maintain professional boundaries in the use of electronic media. Online contact with patients blurs this boundary.
4. Do not make disparaging remarks about patients, peers, staff, faculty, employers or co-workers, even if they are not identified.
5. Do not take photos or videos of patient on personal devices, including cell phones.
6. Promptly report a breach of confidentiality or privacy.

CONSEQUENCES

Inappropriate behaviors include, but are not limited to, the use of offensive language, gestures, or remarks, coercion and or character assassination of peers, faculty, or other providers. Illegal conduct that violates HIPAA includes, but is not limited to, disclosure of patient information, including discussions with other persons and/or posting online photographs of patients. Attempting, directly or indirectly, to obtain or retain a patient or discourage the use of a second opinion or consultation by way of intimidation, coercion or deception, is also inappropriate and unprofessional conduct.

Violations of Professional Conduct and Demeanor may result in sanctions up to and including dismissal from the nursing program, notification to the board of nursing, as well as, federal prosecution, fines, and imprisonment.

Dismissal

The School of Nursing reserves the right to require the withdrawal from the School of Nursing any student whose behavior is deemed to threaten the welfare of any individual or whose behavior is deemed unsafe in any manner.

References

- American Nurses Association. (2011, September). Principles for social networking and the nurse. Silver Spring, MD: Author.
- National Council of State Boards of Nursing. (2011, August). White Paper: A nurse's guide to the use of social media. Chicago, IL: Author.
- Clark, C. (2008). The dance of civility in nursing education as described by nursing faculty and students. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 32(4), E37-E54.
- Clark, C. & Springer, P. (2007). Thoughts on incivility: Student and faculty perceptions of uncivil behavior in nursing education. *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 28(2), 93-98.

Approved by SON Faculty Council, 9/5/2014

Approved by Dean Kathryn Tart Kathryn Tart Date: 9-15-2014