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Nursing and ethics: The importance of your internal compass

Shannon Faythe Brown

Universal Nursing Services, LLC, USA

Experts recognize nursing as the most trusted profession throughout the world. Evolving from camp followers in war time, religious/spiritual traditions, and shared home remedies, today's nurses are highly skilled, trusted, and educated practitioners within large and small organizations. Our origins as caregivers largely shape the narrative of our profession; working long hours, performing tasks that few will voluntarily perform under less than ideal conditions. Nurses must develop an awareness of internal values and beliefs, which influence care provided (or not provided), information shared (or not shared), and verbiage (language/words) used while providing care. In an increasingly politicized and polarized global economy, the issues of ethnicity, gender identity, and religious beliefs must be recognized and addressed at the bedside, in research, and within communities. Our call to action remains developing and teaching the understanding of ethics, which guide us personally, organizationally, and nationally to create policies and legislation benefiting the health care industry.

faythems@gmail.com