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Unit 5: Activity 4: Listening Comprehension

"Good morning, colleagues and future nurses. Today, I want to talk about something that defines every single shift we work, even if we don't always realize it: **healthcare ethics and professional practice**.

In modern nursing, clinical knowledge and technical skills are only half of our job. The other half is knowing how to make sound, ethical decisions when faced with complex clinical dilemmas. Every day, we operate at the intersection of human dignity, legal standards, and clinical responsibility.

To guide us, our practice rests on four fundamental bioethical principles.

First and foremost is **autonomy**. We must always remember that patients have the ultimate right to self-determination. Respecting autonomy means ensuring that patients receive clear, honest information so they can give truly **informed consent**. It also means respecting a competent patient's legal right to refuse treatment, even when we personally or clinically disagree with their choice.

Second, we have **beneficence** and **non-maleficence**. Beneficence is our active duty to do good—to show empathy, advocate for pain relief, and comfort those in distress. Non-maleficence, on the other hand, is our pledge to 'do no harm.' In practice, this means preventing both intentional and unintentional injury. It is the reason why we perform double checks on high-risk medications, follow strict hygiene protocols, and strictly adhere to clinical safety standards.

The fourth principle is **justice**. Justice demands that we deliver fair, equal, and non-judgmental care to every single individual who walks through our doors, regardless of their background, beliefs, or socioeconomic status.

However, ethics does not exist in a vacuum; it goes hand in hand with **legal accountability**. As registered nurses, we must operate strictly within our **Scope of**

Practice. Crossing legal boundaries or failing to uphold standards of care can quickly lead to charges of **negligence** or **malpractice**. Furthermore, safeguarding patient **confidentiality** under regulations like HIPAA is not just a hospital rule—it is a sacred legal obligation.

To conclude, when you find yourself facing a difficult ethical scenario at the bedside, remember your core role: you are a patient advocate. By balancing clinical expertise with moral courage, respecting patient autonomy, and maintaining professional accountability, you protect not only your patients, but also the trust society places in the nursing profession. Thank you."