

Creative Commons Licence

This material was created by Antonio Manuel Brenes Castaño at the University of Cádiz (UCA) as part of the OpenCourseWare (OCW).

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Licence (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

You are free to share and adapt this material for non-commercial purposes, provided that appropriate credit is given, a link to the original resource and the licence is included, any modifications are indicated, and any adapted material is distributed under the same licence

Comprehensive Nursing & Healthcare Glossary

Bioethics & Legal Boundaries

- **Accountability** – The ethical and legal obligation of a nurse to take full responsibility for their clinical actions, professional judgments, and patient outcomes.
- **Advance Directive** – A legal document specifying a patient's preferences for medical treatment if they lose the capacity to make decisions.
- **Autonomy** – The bioethical principle respecting a competent patient's right to self-determination and independent healthcare decisions.
- **Beneficence** – The moral duty to act in the patient's best interest, promote well-being, and show compassion.
- **Confidentiality** – The obligation to keep all patient health records and personal information secure and private.
- **DNR (Do Not Resuscitate)** – A medical order instructing providers not to perform CPR if the patient experiences cardiac or respiratory arrest.
- **Fidelity** – The ethical principle of remaining faithful, loyal, and truthful to commitments made to patients.
- **Informed Consent** – Voluntary agreement given by a competent patient after understanding the risks, benefits, and alternatives of a procedure.
- **Justice** – The ethical principle requiring fair, equal, and non-discriminatory delivery of care to all patients.
- **Malpractice** – Professional negligence or misconduct that strays from accepted standards of care, causing patient injury or harm.

- Negligence – Failure to provide the standard of care that a reasonably prudent nurse would provide in a similar situation.
- Non-Maleficence – The foundational duty to "do no harm" and prevent intentional or unintentional injury.
- Patient Advocacy – The act of defending, supporting, and speaking up for patient rights, safety, and personal choices.
- Scope of Practice – The legal and professional boundaries defining the specific clinical duties a licensed nurse is authorized to perform.
- Veracity – The bioethical obligation to maintain complete honesty and truthfulness with patients.

Hospital Departments & Specialist Teams

- Cardiology – Department specializing in the diagnosis and treatment of heart disorders and circulatory conditions.
- Gastroenterology – Medical specialty focused on diseases of the digestive tract, liver, and pancreas.
- ICU (Intensive Care Unit) – Specialized department providing continuous monitoring and advanced life support for critically ill patients.
- Neurology – Specialty dealing with disorders of the brain, spinal cord, and nervous system.
- Obstetrics & Gynecology (OB/GYN) – Department covering female reproductive health, pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum care.
- Oncology – Branch of medicine dedicated to the diagnosis, treatment, and care of cancer patients.
- Orthopedics – Department focusing on conditions involving the musculoskeletal system, including bones, joints, and ligaments.
- Pediatrics – Medical branch providing clinical care for infants, children, and adolescents.
- Psychiatry – Department specializing in mental health disorders, behavioral therapies, and psychological wellbeing.
- Radiology – Department using medical imaging techniques (*X-rays*, *CT scans*, *MRIs*) to diagnose and treat diseases.

Hospital Spaces & Facilities

- Isolation Room – A specialized hospital room designed to prevent the spread of infectious diseases using controlled air pressure.

- Laboratory (Lab) – Facility where blood, tissue, and other clinical specimens are analyzed for diagnostic purposes.
- Maternity Ward – Hospital unit dedicated to supporting women during labor, delivery, and immediate postpartum recovery.
- NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) – High-tech unit providing specialized care for premature or ill newborn infants.
- Operating Theater (OR) – A sterile, highly regulated room designed specifically for surgical procedures.
- Outpatient Clinic – Medical facility providing care, diagnostic testing, and treatments that do not require an overnight hospital stay.
- PACU (Post-Anesthesia Care Unit) – Recovery area where surgical patients are closely monitored as anesthesia wears off.
- Pharmacy – Hospital department responsible for preparing, dispensing, and managing medications safely.
- Triage Area – Designated section in emergency care where patients are evaluated to prioritize treatment based on urgency.
- Waiting Area / Lounge – Dedicated space where family members wait while patients undergo care or surgery.

Medical & Clinical Equipment

- Defibrillator – Electronic device used to deliver an electrical shock to the heart to restore a normal rhythm during cardiac arrest.
- ECG / EKG (Electrocardiogram) – Machine used to record the electrical activity of the heart over a period of time.
- IV Drip (Intravenous Line) – Apparatus used to administer fluids, blood products, or medications directly into a patient's vein.
- Mechanical Ventilator – Machine that assists or replaces breathing for patients who cannot breathe adequately on their own.
- Nebulizer – Device that transforms liquid medication into a fine mist for inhalation into the lungs.
- Pulse Oximeter – Non-invasive sensor attached to a fingertip to monitor oxygen saturation levels in the blood.
- Sphygmomanometer – Instrument used to measure arterial blood pressure.
- Stethoscope – Acoustic medical instrument used to listen to internal bodily sounds, such as heartbeats and breath sounds.

- Suction Machine – Device used to remove saliva, blood, or foreign secretions from a patient's airway to keep it clear.
- Syringe & Needle – Instrument used to inject fluids into the body or withdraw blood samples for testing.

Common Diseases & Pathologies

- Alzheimer's Disease – Progressive neurodegenerative disorder leading to severe memory loss, cognitive decline, and loss of independence.
- Asthma – Chronic inflammatory condition of the airways causing wheezing, shortness of breath, and coughing.
- COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) – Group of progressive lung diseases causing airflow blockage and breathing difficulties.
- Diabetes Mellitus – Chronic metabolic disorder characterized by elevated blood glucose levels due to insulin production or resistance issues.
- Heart Failure – Condition where the heart muscle cannot pump enough blood to meet the body's needs for oxygen and nutrients.
- Hypertension – Persistently high blood pressure against arterial walls, increasing the risk of stroke and heart attack.
- Influenza (Flu) – Contagious viral respiratory infection causing fever, body aches, sore throat, and fatigue.
- Pneumonia – Infection that inflames the air sacs in one or both lungs, causing fluid accumulation and difficulty breathing.
- Stroke (Cerebrovascular Accident) – Medical emergency occurring when blood flow to a portion of the brain is interrupted or reduced.
- Tuberculosis (TB) – Infectious bacterial disease that primarily attacks the lungs and spreads through airborne droplets.