In addition to the functions and responsibilities of the Advanced Practice Nurse, Supervisory, as outlined in the Department of Nursing Job Description (UIHC Job #PH3158), the central role of the Clinical Ethics Nurse is to promote ethical nursing practice within the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics by providing ethical practice guidance, support, and ethics resources for nurses at all levels throughout the organization. The Clinical Ethics Resource Nurse brings expertise in clinical ethics practice, clinical nursing practice, and carries an earned doctorate degree.

A key component of the role of “Advanced Practice Nurse” is to act as a change agent. In the capacity of a Clinical Ethics Nurse, this is enacted by:

1. Helping nurses to recognize and understand complex ethical situations, particularly as these relate to the practice of nursing.
2. Building relationships among various stakeholders to alter patterns of thinking and behavior in order to improve standards of behavior.
   a. Seek and build intra-disciplinary alliances to help create and foster an ethical climate that supports the ethical practice of nursing.
   b. Demonstrating an ability to participate in difficult and sensitive conversations through good communication skills.
   c. Drawing upon past and current clinical expertise to participate in quality improvement strategies in order to help change cultural practices.

I. In the clinical environment, the Clinical Ethics Nurse:

1. Acts as a resource agent for nurses who provide direct patient care and for nursing leaders throughout the organization whose responsibilities include the creation and maintenance of a vision for safe and ethical Nursing practice.
2. Assists UIHC in the Magnet pursuit of and maintenance for Quality Nursing Care by providing and supporting ethics education and clinical nursing ethics decision-making.
3. Provides informal ethics consultations and follow-up to nurses who are wrestling with specific ethical dilemmas or challenging situations that cause significant moral distress. The informal consultation is provided to nurses as a ‘willing ear’ to listen to nurses, help them process moral distress, and facilitate expert inter-clinician communication/dynamics when nurses feel uncomfortable or uncertain, and/or in the situation when a formal ethics consultation is needed. The informal consultation service is not intended to replace a formal ethics consultation but to facilitate access to currently available structures within UIHC to address ethical dilemmas.
(4) Regularly writes an ethics column to be published in Dr. Williamson’s UIHC blog. The topics of the blog will include references to the ANA Code of Ethics, hospital policies that have an ethics component, ethical issues identified by Nurse leaders in UIHC, and will also provide an opportunity for nurses to “ask the Ethics Nurse” questions.

(5) Develop unit-based ethics conversations across UIHC based on challenging situations or concerns raised by clinical staff nurses, or other health care providers. The unit-based conversations can include other professionals with clinical ethics expertise, including physicians and chaplains.

II. Hospital Administration activities:

(1) Is appointed to the UIHC Ethics Sub-committee within UIHC.

(2) Is positioned within Nursing Administration (Nurse Manager Council, Nurse Retention Committee, and CNQPDRI) to be a visible resource to nurse leaders throughout the Hospital system in order to participate in and support key initiatives that have a major ethics component, such as Magnet, healthy work environment.

III. Research

(1) Assess, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the ethical experience and perceptions of the ethical climate of the hospital among clinical nurses on hospital units using published research tools. The assessments will evaluate the degree of moral distress among clinical nurses, the power-authority dynamics of the nurse-physician professional relationships, abilities of the nurses to access ethical resources in UIHC to process ethical dilemmas. The results of this research will inform the development of ongoing ethics education for clinical nurses and nurse leaders.

(2) Participate in other research projects as pertains to ethics in nursing practice and education.

IV. Education

(1) Participate in teaching the ethics components of the Nurse Residency program.

(2) Participate in the UIHC orientation of new RNs and non-licensed staff in the Department of Nursing through presentations related to the ANA Code of Ethics, ethics resources at UIHC, and the ethical climate of UIHC.

(3) Didactic ethics teaching sessions as requested by individual Nursing units or departments.

References:
