

In what ways do legal
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In what ways do legal responsibility and professional accountability differ Be sure to cite current literature in response

Legal Responsibility and Professional Accountability Introduction Nursing has undergone transitions, starting as a vocation until becoming a profession, as what we have today. Because it is now a profession, it is a formal structure with set standards to meet the competence required of professional nurses. These burdens include legal responsibility and professional accountability which are closely connected but are distinct. Responsibility and Accountability The link between accountability and responsibility is the former's inability to exist without accepting the latter, which is decided upon by the individual depending on his or her education and experience (Tilley & Watson, 2004, p. 134). Accountability is described by Daniels (2004) as the act of assuming responsibility for one's actions, which is an important method to demonstrate commitment to quality client care, thus being accountable for their judgments, decisions, and actions (p. 287). The accountability of a nurse goes beyond the client, and includes the family, colleagues, and the public. Because of the field's organization, a nurse's accountability depends upon the hierarchical structure he or she belongs to and the situation itself. Although nursing standards are not law, they possess important legal significance (Springhouse Corporation, 2004, p. 33), thus rendering nurses legal responsibilities. For instance, when a nurse fails to act according to set standards and thus harm the patient, the nurse can be involved in a lawsuit. Once proven that there is neglect or malpractice on the side of the nurse, then he or she is charged according to law. Conclusion The

nursing profession necessitates both accountability and responsibility, wherein being accountable equates being responsible for one's actions, and responsibility is congruent to the rightful practice of nursing standards. The two are interrelated and affect each other. A competent nurse is thus able to meet both in performing her duties. References Daniels, R. (2004). Nursing fundamentals: Caring & clinical decision making. Clifton Park, NY: Delmar Learning Springhouse Corporation. (2004). Nurse's legal handbook (5th ed.). Ambler, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins. Tilley, S., & Watson, R. (2004). Accountability in nursing and midwifery (2nd ed.). Oxford, UK: Blackwell Science.