Discussion Board 3

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[Institutional Affiliation(s)]

Author Note

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Privacy and confidentiality are intertwined concepts. Confidentiality refers to keeping private information, entrusted to the nurse by patients or their family members, a secret. Privacy rights allow patients or their family members to restrict the disclosure of information to a health care provider (Burkhardt & Nathaniel, 2014). Any information disclosed by a patient to the nurse must, in principal, stay confidential unless clear consent is received to do otherwise (ANA, 2015). However, it is possible that certain parts of the information have to be shared with other medical professionals or government agencies, in certain conditions.

In the case of 17-year old Lora, who visited the clinic to get birth control medication and shared her story of abuse with the nurse, there are various ethical principals involved (Blightman, Griffiths, & Danbury, 2014, p. 77). Confidentiality, beneficence, trustfulness and non-maleficence are all principals that nurses are required to uphold. However, when presented with an ethical dilemma, making the right choice can man choosing the lesser of the two evils. Lora is 17 years old and thus a minor. The vulnerability principal suggests that the duty of protect people from harm overrides other duties if a dependent party is known to be vulnerable in some way (Burkhardt & Nathaniel, 2014). In contrast, a nurse is also required to be honest and truthful, and maintain the patient’s confidentiality.

In this particular case, the nurse’s duty to protect and to report abuse overrides his or her duty to patient’s confidentiality, regardless of the fact that the patient requested secrecy. In many states, mandatory reporting abuse overrides the obligation to maintain confidentiality (Blightman, Griffiths, & Danbury, 2014). Moreover, since the patient is still underage, the nurse is legally compelled to report suspected abuse from her stepfather and father. Although, the decision may have been easier if Lora was 13 or 14 years old, since she would clearly not have been able to make decisions with regards to her safety and wellbeing; however, state laws that mandate nurses to report suspected abuse may hold her liable to punishment, if it was later determined that the matter was not reported.

# References

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