

DEFINING DIGNITY



“A person is worthy because they exist as an end in themselves, and not simply as a means or tool to be used at will.” This famous definition of dignity offered by the philosopher Emmanuel Kant reminds us that each person has their own existence and their own history, and that they have the right to respect and protection simply by virtue of being human. Dignity does not depend on social status, physical or intellectual performance; in other words, it is not influenced by external factors. It simply results from being part of the human race.

Dignity is maintained through our interactions with other individuals. One cannot talk about dignity without talking about respect, as the two concepts go hand in hand. To achieve an authentic form of respect, we must see and understand the other in all their individuality. We must see and respect the humanity of each person. It is by recognizing this humanity and maintaining a sense of respect that we enable a person to feel worthy.



THE RIGHT TO DIGNITY

The first appearance of the notion of dignity in international law is found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which begins with the words: *“Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world...”* Article 1 clearly states that *“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”*.

The Quebec National Assembly has also recognized in the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms (1976) that *“Every person has a right to the safeguard of his dignity, honour and reputation”* (article 4).

DIGNITY AT VIGI SANTÉ

Because its residents are the reason for its services, Vigi Santé considers the respect of human dignity to be the golden rule behind its code of ethics.

We acknowledge that every action taken towards our residents must find its inspiration in the same rights and freedoms all citizens enjoy. Our code of ethics reflects our collective and individual commitment to ensuring behaviors and practices that foster and maintain a healthy and harmonious living environment.



DIGNITY IN HEALTH CARE:

The Quebec health system is based on values that we consider of great importance. The *Act Respecting Health Services and Social Services* offers important guidelines with regard to the management and provision of services to ensure that every resident is treated with *courtesy, fairness and understanding* in every intervention, *and with respect for his dignity, autonomy, needs and safety* (article 3).

DIGNITY WITHIN OUR CODE OF ETHICS (CROSSWORD PUZZLE)

DOWN

- 1** We support a living environment approach where each resident remains _____ of himself.
- 2** We address residents by their family names, preceded by Mrs., _____ or Miss.
- 3** Our mission: “Through everyone’s involvement and the excellence of our services, we will build a living environment open to the community, where each resident experiences true respect for their person in a unique environment frequented by _____, families, employees, and volunteers, and where the living environment and work environment become one”.
- 4** The _____ of human dignity is the golden rule of our code of ethics.
- 5** In every intervention, each resident must be treated with courtesy, equity and understanding, with respect for their _____.

ACROSS

- 6** The quality of the living environment is based on the principle of _____ respect, where everyone’s collaboration is essential.
- 7** We must treat each resident at all times as we would hope for _____ or a loved one to be treated.
- 8** We adopt a _____, comprehensive and non-restrictive approach which takes each resident’s basic needs and health needs into account.
- 9** Each resident has a right to the respect of their _____, pace, choices, tastes, autonomy, values, and beliefs.
- 10** All actions taken towards our residents must be inspired by respect and recognition of the same _____ and freedoms that any person has.

