

Chapter 2: Making Ethical Decisions

Chapter Learning Outcomes

LO 2.1 Describe and compare need and value development theories.

LO 2.2 Identify the major principles of contemporary consequence-oriented, duty-oriented, and virtue ethics reasoning.

LO 2.3 Define the basic principles of health care ethics.

Teaching/Talking Points for Each LO

This chapter covers how people make decisions. By reviewing various types of ethical decision-making theories, students should develop a better sense of how and why people make the decisions they do.

For LO 2.1, ask students to reread the “From the Perspective of...” section and discuss how Bill, Tom, and Anna might be making decisions in either the need or value development theory.

For LO 2.2, students often have difficulty distinguishing between the various theoretical models. Ask them to select one of the models (or assign them specific models) and have them draw a picture of how they think the model could be explained to someone who can't read. This is not meant to be an outline of the theory's principles, but rather, an illustration. For example, for duty-oriented theory, students might draw the American flag or a soldier.

For LO 2.3, divide the class into seven groups and assign one of the seven principles to each group. Each group should create a case study that demonstrates the principle. You may wish to tell the students that the case studies may re-appear on an exam with additional questions. Another step in this process might be to have the different groups solve each other's case study.

PowerPoints

Before using the PowerPoints for Chapter 2, review the notes found below each slide. These notes identify the appropriate learning outcome. Faculty may wish to do the following for the respective learning outcomes as they are covered on the slides:

LO 2.1: After slide 6, ask students to compare where different folks might be in the hierarchy. Here is a partial list:

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- A homeless person
- A member of the clergy
- A student who is away from home at college
- A person who has just lost their spouse or child
- A person caught in the aftermath of Katrina or flooding or hurricane

Faculty can add to this list.

LO 2.2: After slide 13, have the students share their drawings as discussed in the above Teaching/Talking Points.

LO 2.3: After slide 23, do the group exercise mentioned in the Teaching/Talking Points above.

From the Perspective of... Discussion Questions

What should Bill do? Even if patient safety were not an issue, is it his responsibility to report what he has observed? Should not Anna's supervisor also have noticed?

Answers will vary, and faculty can use this case study to apply the various ethical decision making models presented throughout the chapter.

This is also an opportunity to explain to students that depending on where you are in the organizational hierarchy, you may or may not see your supervisor on a routine basis (e.g., Anna's supervisor may see Anna infrequently).

As health care practitioners, we have the responsibility to report problems. But what if by reporting the problem, another person could lose his or her job? How do you decide what to do?

Answers will vary, and this is also a good opportunity for faculty to ask students to apply the various ethical decision making models presented throughout the chapter.

Check Your Progress Answers

1.

Level	In Favor of Stealing the Drug	Against Stealing the Drug
Pre-conventional—reward and punishment	Egocentric. It is important that the wife live.	It is illegal.

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Conventional—please others and maintain a good society	Harry is trying to save his wife’s life, so it is okay to steal.	If everyone steals, even for important reasons, there will be no social order.
Post-conventional—moral principles broader than any society	The right to life supersedes the right to making a profit.	The pharmacist must realize that some people will be unable to afford the drug and must be willing to take charity cases.

2. Answers will vary—students may say yes under consequence-oriented and no under duty-oriented.
3. Answers will vary depending on the circumstances.
4. Answers will vary—students may argue yes under duty-oriented and no under consequence-oriented.
5. No. Most health care organizations will allow practitioners to abstain from assisting in procedures about which the practitioner has a strong duty-oriented belief.
6. Yes. Duty oriented and consequence oriented ethics both would require a reporting of the error.
7. Answers will vary—under duty-oriented ethics, the pharmacist would need to determine an appropriate way to approach the physician about the prescription. The pharmacist needs to be careful in that approach that the physician does not see the pharmacist as questioning his/her judgment.
8. Autonomy violated
9. Justice violated
10. Veracity followed
11. Autonomy violated by the daughters
12. Beneficence violated
13. Role fidelity violated (as well as the law)
14. Confidentiality followed

Chapter 2 Review

Applying Knowledge

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1. c

2. b

3. c.

4. a

5. a

6. b

7. b

8. d

9. b

10. c

11. d

12. a

13. c

14. Autonomy or self-determination—ability to make decisions based on one's own reasons and motives

Beneficence—first duty of a healthcare practitioner is to promote health or recovery of the patient

Nonmaleficence—benefit to the patient must always outweigh the harm

Confidentiality—healthcare practitioners must maintain the confidentiality of their patients' health

Justice—everyone is entitled to healthcare

Role Fidelity—practitioners must remain within their scope of practice

Veracity—tell the truth

Ethics Issues Discussion Questions

Ethics Issue 1

15. The Pain-Avoided/Pleasure-Gained List

Pain Avoided

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- a. Although smoking contributes to Mrs. Weathers's deteriorating health, she becomes nasty when she isn't smoking, subjecting her family to nastiness and irritability. The pain being avoided by the family by allowing her to smoke is the pain of her misbehavior.
- b. Avoiding the need to stop smoking, Mrs. Weathers is possibly avoiding the physical suffering she may have when she quits smoking.

(This is a good opportunity to ask students about how difficult it is to stop smoking.)

Pleasure Gained

- a. Family gets approval and appreciation from physician in helping Mrs. Weathers to stop smoking.
- b. Family gets satisfaction that they are, in the long run, helping Mrs. Weathers improve her health.
- c. Family also is no longer exposed to second hand smoke, a health risk for the family.

The decision is a difficult one and students will probably not all be in favor of forcing Mrs. Weathers to quit.

16. For those students who support the idea that Mrs. Weathers should stop smoking (and also for those who don't support it), assign research of the various ways families can help people to stop smoking. It is possible that several of the students will have experienced this problem, either because they are smokers or because they have family members who are smokers. Also, there may be discussion about the "right to smoke" which faculty will need to carefully balance between the rights of smokers and the rights of non-smokers to not be exposed to smoke.

Ethical Issue #2

17. This is a difficult ethical decision. The reality is that depending on the health of the eight year old, it may be necessary to use the cord cells at birth of the second child. They can be stored for a certain period of time. Although answers will vary, under consequence-oriented reasoning, one could argue that the results should be given the greatest consideration. The results of a successful transplant will mean that the eight year old has a second chance at life, which is a good thing.

Under duty-oriented decision making, one might be able to make an argument either way. Kant argues that you may never use people as a means to an end, so under strict duty-oriented reasoning, the parents should not have a child simply for the purpose of helping the older child. However, procreation is often considered a duty, so if the parents had planned on having a second child, it would be acceptable.

This particular question should elicit much debate in the classroom.

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Ethics Issue 3

18. Both Martha and Curtis are behaving ethically, but probably for different reasons in their own set of values. Another question to pose to students is what would you do? What if you had a job offer for slightly more pay, but didn't want to leave? Would you look then? Would that be okay? Answers will vary.

Case Studies

19. This could be argued either way. For many students, it will be a black and white issue to either get or not get the flu shot and have nothing to do with ethical decision making, just personal preference.

20. If students decide this is an ethical issue, it could be argued that under consequence-oriented reasoning that all healthcare workers should get the flu shot for the greater good. Students may have other ways to apply the various theories.

21. Answers will vary, but Ethan has a duty to remain in the dining room until help arrives.

22. Answers will vary, but the most likely one is that Ethan should call for immediate help. The students can use the five steps to outline the problem. However, if there are no students who have ever worked in a skilled nursing facility (or perhaps had a family member in one), it might be helpful to describe to the students the level of competency of the patients to better understand Ethan's situation.

23. Answers will vary.

Internet Activities

24. Answers will vary based on the profession chosen.

25. Answers will vary, depending on which resources the students select. If you have difficulty reaching the site with the URL listed in the textbook, go to <http://www.ethics.va.gov> and search for National Center for Ethics in Health Care. Then look for Professional in Patient Care.

26. The Santa Clara University site says that the following are not ethics: feelings, following the law, and following culturally accepted norms and not science. Students' answers will vary based on which three things they pick as to why or why not.