

# Keatings: Ethical and Legal Issues in Canadian Nursing, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition

## Chapter 2: Ethical Theoretical Perspectives

### Test Bank

#### MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. How may ethics best be described?
  - a. The philosophical study of morality
  - b. The study of right versus wrong
  - c. The beliefs and norms of a society
  - d. The application of ethical principles to moral issues

ANS: A

Correct A: Ethics, the philosophical study of morality, is the systematic exploration of what is morally right and wrong.

Incorrect B: Ethics is the systematic exploration of what is *morally* right and wrong.

Incorrect C: The beliefs and norms of a society are known as values.

Incorrect D: Applying ethical principles to moral issues helps provide frameworks for ethical decision making; this is not a description of ethics.

DIF: Cognitive level: Knowledge      REF: p. 18

2. Which of the following is the focus of normative ethics?
  - a. The analysis of morality without taking a moral position
  - b. The question of what is right or wrong
  - c. Explaining how moral attitudes and beliefs differ from person to person
  - d. Distinguishing between what is normal and what is not

ANS: B

Correct B: Normative ethics focuses on the reasons or arguments that guide decisions about what is right and wrong. Basic principles and virtues are identified to guide morality and provide coherent, systematic, and justifiable answers to moral questions.

Incorrect A: Normative ethics seeks to guide a decision; it is not concerned with taking moral positions.

Incorrect C: A person's differing moral attitudes and beliefs help to shape his or her personal values; this is not a focus of normative ethics.

Incorrect D: A person's ideas of normal and abnormal would be considered values, but the ability to make this distinction is not in itself a form of ethics.

DIF: Cognitive level: Comprehension      REF: p. 19

3. Which of the following fields of ethics applies ethical theories and principles to actual moral problems?
  - a. Philosophical ethics

- b. Biomedical ethics
- c. Nursing ethics
- d. Applied ethics

ANS: D

Correct D: Applied ethics is the field of ethics where theories and principles are applied to actual moral problems to assist in guiding decision making.

Incorrect A: Ethics in general is a philosophical study.

Incorrect B: Biomedical ethics explores moral issues and ethical questions associated with health care.

Incorrect C: Nursing ethics focuses on moral questions within all avenues of the nursing practice.

DIF: Cognitive level: Knowledge REF: p. 19

4. Which of the following exists when mutually exclusive alternatives can both be supported by strong moral reasons?
- a. Moral distress
  - b. An ethical dilemma
  - c. A value conflict
  - d. A moral conflict

ANS: B

Correct B: An ethical dilemma arises when the best course of action is unclear and there are strong moral reasons supporting each opposing position.

Incorrect A: Moral distress results when a person is faced with ethical issues or conflicting values and cannot deal effectively with them.

Incorrect C: A value conflict occurs when a nurse encounters another individual whose value system may be in conflict with the nurse's own.

Incorrect D: A moral conflict is more accurately described as moral distress.

DIF: Cognitive level: Comprehension REF: p. 19

5. What is the result when a nurse believes that a course of action is correct, but is prevented (through a law or policy, for example) from carrying out that action or influencing the decision, resulting in feelings of guilt?
- a. An ethical dilemma
  - b. Moral distress
  - c. Ethical reasoning
  - d. Moral irresponsibility

ANS: B

Correct B: Moral distress results when a person is faced with ethical issues or conflicting values and cannot deal effectively with them.

Incorrect A: An ethical dilemma arises when the best course of action is unclear and there are strong moral reasons supporting each opposing position.

Incorrect C: Ethical reasoning is the process of ethical decision making, not the result of a situation.

Incorrect D: Moral irresponsibility is not relevant to ethical theory.

DIF: Cognitive level: Comprehension REF: p. 19

6. What is the correct terminology to describe a framework of principles and guidelines that helps to identify ethical issues and reconcile conflicts?
- Ethical principles
  - Ethical theory
  - Ethical values
  - Descriptive ethics

ANS: B

Correct B: Ethical theory is the study of the nature and justification of general ethical principles that can be applied to moral problems.

Incorrect A: Ethical principles help to form ethical theory; they do not identify ethical issues or resolve conflicts.

Incorrect C: Ethical values are ideals and may vary across individuals, groups, or populations; they do not identify ethical issues or resolve conflicts.

Incorrect D: Descriptive ethics encompasses explanations and factual descriptions of moral behaviour and beliefs; it does not identify ethical issues or resolve conflicts.

DIF: Cognitive level: Knowledge REF: p. 18

7. Which of the following describes the concept of equality for all Canadians?
- A belief
  - A value
  - A principle
  - A moral dilemma

ANS: B

Correct B: Equality for all is a societal value; the majority of Canadians subscribe to this ideal. A value has significant meaning to an individual, group, or society.

Incorrect A: A belief is individual and is something felt to be true; the concept of equality is not simply an individual belief.

Incorrect C: Principles help to guide moral decisions; the concept of equality is not a principle.

Incorrect D: A moral dilemma occurs when values are in conflict.

DIF: Cognitive level: Application REF: p. 20

8. A nurse's support of client autonomy is an example of which of the following?
- A value system

- b. A personal value
- c. A professional value
- d. A bioethical value

ANS: C

Correct C: Professional values build and expand on personal values. The value of client autonomy is a professional (and possibly personal) value and is evident in codes of ethics and professional standards for nurses.

Incorrect A: A nurse's support of client autonomy is not an example of a value system.

Incorrect B: A nurse's support of client autonomy may be an example of a personal value, but not exclusively.

Incorrect D: A nurse's support of client autonomy is not an example of a bioethical value.

DIF: Cognitive level: Comprehension REF: p. 21

9. Which of the following theories may guide nurses to choose actions that will lead to the best consequences, outcomes, or results?
- a. Utilitarian
  - b. Deontological
  - c. Normative
  - d. Relative

ANS: A

Correct A: Utilitarianism is a teleological theory in which the ethical choice is the one with the best consequences, outcomes, or results.

Incorrect B: Deontological theories make explicit the duties and principles that should guide people's actions; they do not focus on the consequences of actions.

Incorrect C: Normative theories are intended to provide frameworks and rules to guide decisions about what is right or wrong, but they do not focus on the consequences of actions.

Incorrect D: Relativism states that there are no moral absolutes and that the concept of morality varies across cultures and among individuals; it does not provide a guide to choosing the best actions.

DIF: Cognitive level: Knowledge REF: p. 23

10. What is the main principle underlying a rule-based theory of utilitarianism?
- a. The theory is always deontological.
  - b. The theory considers individual acts.
  - c. The theory considers general patterns of behaviour.
  - d. The theory is the foundation of nursing ethics.

ANS: C

Correct C: Correct, general patterns of behaviour are the foundation of rule-based theory. Rule-based theories consider general patterns of behaviour, whereas act-based theories consider individual acts. Both rule- and act-based theories are utilitarian (in which the best choice is the one with the best outcomes).

Incorrect A: Deontological theory (which includes the belief that standards for moral behaviour exist independently of means or ends) includes both rule- and act-based theories but is not the main underlying principle.

Incorrect B: Rule-based theories consider general patterns of behaviour, whereas act-based theories consider individual acts.

Incorrect D: Ethical principles, not rule-based theory, are the foundation of nursing ethics.

DIF: Cognitive level: Comprehension REF: pp. 25–26

11. Which of the following is the basis for ethical decision-making frameworks?
- Ethical reasoning
  - Ethical values
  - Ethical dilemmas
  - Ethical principles

ANS: D

Correct D: Ethical principles are generally universal; they serve as rules to guide moral conduct and provide a framework for ethical decision making.

Incorrect A: Ethical reasoning is a *process* of ethical decision making using a framework.

Incorrect B: Ethical values are beliefs held by an individual or a group and may evolve over time; they are not the basis for ethical decision-making frameworks.

Incorrect C: Ethical dilemmas arise when the best choice of action is unclear and when strong moral reasons support each position; they are not the basis for ethical decision-making frameworks.

DIF: Cognitive level: Knowledge REF: p. 32

12. What is the main difference between deontological and teleological theories?
- Teleological theory focuses on choosing correct actions.
  - Deontological theory focuses on ends or outcomes and consequences of decisions.
  - Deontological theory suggests that standards for moral behaviour are independent of the ends or outcomes of actions.
  - Teleological theory is rule-based.

ANS: C

Correct C: Deontological theory suggests that standards for moral behavior are independent of the ends or outcomes of actions, whereas teleological theory focuses on the outcomes and consequences of actions.

Incorrect A: Teleological theory is focused on the end results or outcomes of actions, not on choosing the correct actions.

Incorrect B: Deontological theory is focused on acts and rules that support principles or duties, not on the ends or outcomes of decisions.

Incorrect D: Teleological theory is focused on the end results or outcomes of actions; it is not focused on rules.

DIF: Cognitive level: Comprehension REF: pp. 23, 27

13. Which of the following ethical principles is the foundation of informed consent?
- Beneficence
  - Justice
  - Nonmaleficence
  - Autonomy

ANS: D

Correct D: Autonomy, or self-determination (including the right to choose one's own path), is the foundation of informed consent.

Incorrect A: Beneficence holds that one must make a positive move to produce some good or benefit for another; it is not the foundation of informed consent.

Incorrect B: Justice is based on the notions of fairness and equity; it is not the foundation of informed consent.

Incorrect C: Nonmaleficence obliges people to act in such a way as to prevent or remove harm; it is not the foundation of informed consent.

DIF: Cognitive level: Analysis REF: p. 33

14. Which of the following influenced the shift in ethical thinking away from abstract rules that reinforce a deductive reasoning process?
- Patricia Benner
  - Maternalistic attitudes
  - Feminine ethics
  - The principle of nonmaleficence

ANS: C

Correct C: Feminine ethics argues for an inductive process in which the starting point is the individual's circumstances or personal story. It has influenced the shift in ethical thinking away from abstract rules that reinforce a deductive reasoning process.

Incorrect A: Patricia Benner observed the value of a nurse's intuition and proposed that emotions are central to perception and rationality; she did not influence this shift in ethical thinking.

Incorrect B: Maternalistic attitudes have not influenced shifts in ethical thinking.

Incorrect D: Nonmaleficence is an ethical principle meaning to do no harm. This long-standing principle was also present during periods in which abstract rules reinforced a deductive reasoning process.

DIF: Cognitive level: Knowledge REF: pp. 42-43

15. Which of the following considers the influence of the nurse–patient relationship on ethical decision making?
- Caring ethics
  - Autonomous ethics
  - Feminine ethics
  - Relational ethics

ANS: D

Correct D: Relational ethics considers the influence of the nurse–patient relationship on ethical decision making. If the entire focus is on ethical principles, and the relationship between the nurse and the patient is ignored, then relational ethics is not present and the nurse may become disengaged.

Incorrect A: Although caring is inherent in many ethical approaches, “caring ethics” is not a distinct or recognized form of ethics.

Incorrect B: Autonomy is an ethical principle; however, “autonomous ethics” is not a recognized form of ethics.

Incorrect C: Feminine ethics emphasizes relational ethics, but relational ethics is not exclusive to feminine ethics.

DIF: Cognitive level: Comprehension REF: p. 45