

Ethics: introduction to subject

NU 360 week 4

Philosophy

- Philosophy is an intense systematic examination of the beliefs, assumptions, thoughts and actions of humanity. It attempts to give shape to what otherwise would feel like chaos of random thoughts, beliefs, assumptions, values and superstitions

Definition

- Ethics is the philosophical science related to moral actions and one's value system.

Ethics

- Are internal to oneself; it is based upon values, beliefs and individual interpretation
- It is concerned with why the person acted as they did
- Serves the interest of the individual within a society
- Enforced by professional organizations; ethics committees

Law

- External to oneself; rule and regulations for society is the source
- It is concerned with actions- what did the person do?
- Its concern is for society as a whole...
- It is enforced by courts, statutes, nursing boards, professional practice boards

3 Approaches to Ethics

- Deontological
- Teleological
- Principalism

Deontological

- This comes from the Greek word meaning “duty. This approach is founded in the belief that human beings have duties and obligations to one another by the fact that they make commitments and obligations.
- With this approach ethicist look not to the consequences but the intention of the action
- This approach emphasizes the dignity of human beings

Teleological

- This word comes from the Greek word meaning “end”. Approach: Right consists of actions that have good outcomes and Wrong consists of actions that have bad outcomes. Ethicist who prescribe to this approach disagree about how to determine what is a good outcome versus what is a bad outcome
- This approach is usually referred to as Utilitarian in that what makes an action good or bad is how much good it brings. Usefulness of an action is determined by the amount of happiness that it brings.
- Rule utilitarianism seek the greatest good for all and it appeals to public agreement as a basis for the greatest good.
- Action Utilitarianism tries to determine the action that will bring about the greatest good doing the least harm to a single individual

Principlism

- This is an emerging theory and attempts to resolve conflict with ethical issues by applying one or more ethical principles in concert .

Ethical Principles

- Autonomy
- Beneficence
- Non-maleficent
- Veracity
- Justice
- Paternalism
- Fidelity
- Respect for others

In varying texts you will see principles listed differently. However, the concepts once explained are congruent. Paternalism is one that you may not see everywhere but it is one that we are concerned with although it may be addressed as the patient's dignity.

Autonomy

- Autonomy is personal freedom and the right to choose what will happen to one's own self.
- Example: Informed consent, although this is a law as well

Beneficence

- This principle states that the actions that one takes should promote good.
- Example: Promoting procedures to patients that might cause pain if the procedure will increase both the quality and quantity of life.

Non-Maleficence

- One should do not harm
- Example: The patient is discharged to home needing care but none has been attained. Do not discharge the patient

Veracity

- Concerns truth telling and incorporates the concept that people should always tell the truth. The principle also compels that the truth be told completely.
- Informed consent implies that the patient has been given all of the facts of the situation.

Justice

- Concerns the issue that all people will be treated fairly and equally. This principle really comes into play when there is competition for resources or benefits; or something is in short supply.
- Example: Weekend staffing coverage

Paternalism

- This principle allows one person to make a decision for another. Paternalism allows others to assist people to make decisions when they do not have enough information or expertise to make a decision.
- Often this is seen as negative this can happen when it feels that the entire decision making process has been removed from the patient

Fidelity

- Keeping one's promises and commitments

Respect for Others

- This seems to incorporate all of the principles and is the most well regarded.
- Respect acknowledges the right of individuals to make decisions for themselves and live by those decisions.
- Respect transcends cultural difference, gender issues, and racial concerns.

MORAL Model for Ethical Decision Making

- **M**assage the dilemma. Define the issues. Consider the opinions of all the stakeholders and their value systems
- **O**utline the options. Examine all of the options good and bad.
- **R**esolve the dilemma. Review the issues and options, apply the basic ethical principles to each option. Decide the best option based upon the views of all stakeholders.
- **A**ct by applying the chosen option. This step is usually the most difficulty because it requires actually implementation while the previous steps have been about discussion and dialogue.
- **L**ook back and evaluate the entire process including the implementation. No process is complete without a thorough evaluation. Ensure that those involved are able to follow thru on the final option if not you may need to redo the process.

Ethics Committees

- Ethics Committees aid in assisting nurses to implement solutions to everyday clinical practice.