# Healthcare Ethics

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## Icebreakers

Video with discussion: [Gene Editing & CRISPR: How Far Should We Go?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wnlJ6dRfPFg&ab_channel=AboveTheNoise)

* What do you think -- when is gene editing OK? How far is too far when altering life itself?

Video with discussion: [How To Spot Bad Science Reporting](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZYSBlLRxfs&ab_channel=AboveTheNoise)

* How can you spot bad science reporting? Why is reporting bad science related to healthcare ethics? What can happen if a patient receives misinformation about treatment options or ways to stay healthy?

What are your personal values? What are the values of your culture? Identify one community that you are a part of: ex) church, sports team, school, neighborhood, workplace. What is one shared value of that community? How do you know this is a shared value?

## Example discussion prompts (in-class or online)

Informed Consent: “What are the ethical responsibilities of healthcare providers in ensuring that patients fully understand their treatment options and the potential risks involved? How can providers ensure that consent is truly informed?”

Patient Autonomy: “How should healthcare professionals balance respecting patient autonomy with their professional judgment and recommendations, especially in cases where a patient’s choices may lead to harm?”

Confidentiality and Privacy: “What are the ethical challenges in maintaining patient confidentiality, especially in the digital age where data can be easily shared and accessed?”

End-of-Life Care: “What ethical issues arise when making decisions about end-of-life care? How should healthcare professionals approach situations involving terminally ill patients and their families?

Ethical Dilemmas: “Share a hypothetical scenario involving an ethical dilemma in healthcare. How would you handle the situation, and what ethical principles would guide your decision?” [Examples ethical dilemmas.](https://www.amnhealthcare.com/blog/nursing/contract/4-common-nursing-ethics-dilemmas/)  [Designer babies.](https://www.futureforall.org/bioengineering/designer-babies.html)  [Granny cameras](https://www.mcknights.com/news/fresh-round-of-laws-target-in-room-nursing-home-cameras/).

## Videos and links

* There are even more video links in the PowerPoint
* Video (5mn): NCSBN-Social Media Guidelines for Nurses including stories and consequences: <https://youtu.be/i9FBEiZRnmo> ​
  + Example question prior to watching a video. Let’s say there was a medical error? Something small like overcharging for a procedure, or something big like operating on the wrong knee in surgery. How would you (as the future Healthcare Leader) go about correcting this mistake and apologizing to the client? Discuss- then watch the video. Is there anything from the video you would like to add to your responses?
* Video (4mn): American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) on social media and healthcare professionals: <https://youtu.be/3N8A5LMlego?si=TBR_lBORKjmHzWKp>
* The Institute of Healthcare Improvement (IHI) on honesty with patients​-Apologizing after a medical error (6mn): <https://youtu.be/kDfoJXq8BRA> ​
* The patient and the anesthesiologist: ​
  + Part 1 (6mn): <https://youtu.be/fAt1Dt1BhRg> ​
  + Part 2 (6mn): <https://youtu.be/4O37WpRFjHk> ​
  + Part 3 (5mn): <https://youtu.be/J1ylu1Qfp0s> ​
* Video (1mn) World Health Organization on medical ethics: <https://youtu.be/VJ_s51QGbg8>
* Some [interesting case studies here](https://www.scu.edu/ethics/focus-areas/bioethics/resources/cases-in-medical-ethics-student-led-discussions/), **however, please review to make sure they are appropriate for your population**. Feel free to use Chat GPT to change details to your audience and attribute the appropriate resource.

## **Living Into Your Values: Personal Ethics in Healthcare**

45–60 minutes, in person, online, individual, small group, or whole-class discussion

Competency 1

**Materials:**

* Brené Brown’s [Living Into Our Values worksheet](https://brenebrown.com/resources/living-into-our-values/)
* Writing tools or digital documents for responses
* Alternative: use values cards like this: <https://www.think2perform.com/values/> or print value cards using lists from either of these resources, or find a different one online.

**Activity Instructions**

**Step 1: Choose Top 2 Values**

Use the list on page 3 of the Brené Brown worksheet. Remind students they can create their own value if it is not listed on the page. If it’s helpful, have them narrow it down to 5 values, then to 3, then to 2. You can also print value cards and have them put into one of two piles- a keep values pile or a discard. [Example online version is this](https://www.think2perform.com/values/).

Ask students to select two values that are most important to them by asking:

* Does this help define who I am?
* Is this who I am at my best?

Do I use this value to make tough decisions?

**Step 2: Reflect on Each Value**

Using the prompts on pages 1–2 of the worksheet, students will:

* Describe behaviors that support each value
* Identify “slippery” behaviors that fall outside those values
* Give an example of a time they truly lived that value

**Optional modification for healthcare focus:**

Ask students to answer:

* How might this value guide your behavior in a healthcare setting (as a CNA, nurse, EMT, etc.)?
* What would it look like to violate this value while working with patients or coworkers?

**Step 3: Explore the Link to Ethics**

Explain or discuss: In healthcare, ethical decisions often come down to what you value. For example, someone who values honesty might speak up about a mistake. Someone who values efficiency might make a quick decision—but risk leaving out a patient’s perspective.

* How do your personal values align with professional ethics in healthcare (like respect, autonomy, beneficence, and justice)?
* What would you do if your personal values conflicted with a workplace rule or coworker behavior?
* Why is it important for healthcare workers to understand their values before facing ethical decisions?
* Invite students to share one of their values and how they think it will influence their future patient care. Keep it respectful and optional.

## Medical Ethics Collage Project

60–90 minutes (can be extended for deeper work or homework), in-person or Online Submission, Individual

Competencies: 3, 4, or 5 (depending on which option you choose)

**Materials:**

In person: Poster board, magazines, printed images, Mod Podge, scissors, glue, markers, etc. Mod Podge or clear adhesive for finishing

Online: AI image generator, Pinterest, PowerPoint, Publisher, or another place to add images

**Activity Instructions:**

You will create a collage that visually represents core ideas in medical ethics. Your collage will include symbolic imagery and thoughtful design to explore either ethical principles or a specific healthcare case.

Choose one of the following two options:

Option 1: Visualizing Ethical Principles

* Choose two ethical principles (e.g., autonomy, beneficence, justice, nonmaleficence).
* Use symbolism and imagery to show how these principles interact in healthcare.
* Show how the principles can support or conflict with each other.

Option 2: Case-Based or dilemma-based Collage

* Choose one ethical case or ethical dilemma
* Use imagery and symbolism to show:
* The core issues of the dilemma or case
* The stakeholders involved
* The ethical principles at play

Your goal is to create meaning—not just explain the case, but express its complexity through visuals.

Include:

* A minimum of 8–10 symbolic or meaningful images
* Creative layout using color, line, shape, or space
* Clear representation of ethical principles and/or stakeholders
* A finished product that reflects careful design and craftsmanship

Grading Rubric (Aim for Level 3!)

Content

Level 3: Clearly based on case or ethical principles, includes multiple perspectives and at least two principles + one theory.

Level 2: Ethical focus is present but may be missing theory or depth.

Level 1: Limited ethical connection, mostly factual or superficial.

Quality

Level 3: Fully glued down, no bubbling, clean edges, thoughtful composition.

Level 2: Adequately constructed, but lacks polish or design intention.

Level 1: Incomplete or messy layout; images poorly attached or sparse.

Creativity

Level 3: 8–10 symbolic images arranged to create new meaning; strong use of visual elements to convey emotion or depth.

Level 2: 4–8 mostly literal images; minimal layering or symbolic meaning.

Level 1: Fewer than 4 images; layout is literal, flat, or rushed.

## Philosophical Chairs: Exploring Ethical Dilemmas in Healthcare

45–60 minutes, in-person, or online, whole group

**Competencies:** 3,4, and 5

**Materials:**

Chart paper or whiteboard

Printed topic list (optional)

Tape or signs to mark “Agree,” “Disagree,” and “Unsure” zones in the classroom

If doing online- have people vote using the reaction buttons or emoticons

**Activity Instructions:**

Choose a Healthcare Ethics Debate Topic

Students will select a topic from the list below or propose a new ethical dilemma in healthcare. Ask students to share their thought process behind their decisions. What values does each side hold?

Examples of Debate Topics: Agree (Yes), Disagree (No)

* Should patients be allowed to refuse life-saving treatment?
* Is it ethical to accept gifts from patients? If so, where’s the line?
* Should minors be able to make their own healthcare decisions?
* Should CRISPR be used for gene editing in embryos?
* Is it ethical to use Ozempic for weight loss when it creates shortages for diabetic patients?
* Should caregivers install “Granny Cams” in nursing home rooms?
* Should athletes specialize in one sport from a young age despite health risks?
* Should healthcare providers be allowed to refuse tasks that go against their personal beliefs?
* What happens when patient values clash with provider values? Patients’ values always are honored first? (If someone refuses a life saving treatment for example because they don’t want a scar on their abdomen)
* When does confidentiality conflict with safety or legal responsibility?

Set Up the Room

Label one side of the room "Agree", the opposite side "Disagree", and the middle as "Unsure".

Explain the Format

Read or present one ethical statement or question aloud.

Students move to the area that best matches their opinion.

One at a time, students explain why they chose their position, using reasoning and (optionally) ethical principles like autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, or justice.

After hearing others, students may change their position—but they must explain why they moved.

Acknowledge, compliment, and encourage Respectful Dialogue and a

Remind students they do not need to agree—just listen with curiosity.

Model and encourage active listening, respect for differing views, and open-mindedness.

Ask about policies, procedures, laws, or practices in place that help (or would help) navigate this dilemma.

Are there any compromises that could be met?

Reinforce: "Healthcare professionals work with people from all backgrounds. You may disagree, but learning to engage respectfully is part of the job."

**Optional Extensions**

After the debate, have students write a short reflection:

“What did you learn from someone who saw the issue differently?”

“How could your personal beliefs influence your actions in a healthcare setting?”

Allow small groups to research one dilemma and prepare both sides for a future class debate.