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# HEALTHCARE CORE CURRICULUM

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# Instructor Resource

# Module Title: Healthcare Ethics

# Credit/Hours: .5 Credit/8 Hours

## Module Description:

This module emphasizes the use of sound ethical practices in healthcare. Included are ethical practices and standards as they relate to the care of clients/individuals and interactions with peers, colleagues, and team members and family members. Ethical frameworks are provided for discussion on understanding the types of ethical challenges in healthcare and the difficult decisions that need to be made.

## Evaluation Method:

This module will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis. Assignments/Exams must be passed at 75 percent or greater. Retests on exams are determined by college and program policy.

## Competencies:

1. Explore dimensions of values as they impact healthcare.
2. Investigate and demonstrate basic principles of professional relationships.
3. Evaluate aspects of ethical decision making in healthcare.
4. Explain how an individual’s diversity, socioeconomic or religious beliefs could lead to potential ethical differences with that of other healthcare employees.
5. Using an ethical decision-making model applied to healthcare situations, describe how ethics influence the care of clients.

# HEALTHCARE ETHICS

**VOCABULARY LIST**

**Autonomy:** Sense of independence; a desire not to be controlled by others. Freedom, having control over one’s own life and destiny.

**Beneficence:** The quality of being kind, helpful or generous.

**Bioethics:** The study of what is right and wrong relating to new discoveries and techniques in biology and medicine, such as genetic engineering and the transplantation of organs.

**Boundaries:** Limits based on your values, goals, and priorities.

**Caring:** The quality of showing care for another, often putting one’s own needs aside.

**Code of Ethics:** A formal set of guidelines that defines ethical values and behavior for a profession.

**Compassion:** Awareness of the suffering of another accompanied by the desire to relieve it.

**Confidentiality:** To keep information private and secret.

**Ethical Dilemma:** Situations where there are no clearly correct answers; the choice between two equally unfavorable alternatives.

**Ethics:** A system of principles governing morality and acceptable conduct.

**Euthanasia:** The practice of ending the life of a patient to limit the patient's suffering, especially someone suffering from an incurable illness.

**Fidelity:** Keeping professional promises such as high-quality care.

**Honesty:** A trait that means telling the truth and doing what is right. It’s more than just not lying, cheating, or stealing. It also means being trustworthy, loyal, fair, and sincere.

**Integrity:** Core value that involves honesty, professionalism, and ethical behavior.

**Inclusion:** The practice of welcoming, accepting, and treating people from different backgrounds equally, while also valuing their diverse perspectives and ideas.

**Justice:** Treating all patients fairly and giving everyone the same quality of care, regardless of their background or circumstances.

**Morals:** Personal standards of right and wrong.

**Nonmaleficence:** The duty to do no harm.

**Teamwork:** Working together cooperatively and effectively to achieve optimal patient outcomes while valuing each team member's contributions.

**Values:** Standards that provide the foundation for making decisions and guiding behavior; ideas of life, customs, and ways of behaving that society regards as desirable.

**Veracity:** Adherence to the truth; truthfulness.

# Modules Competencies and Instructor Notes

| **MODULE**  **COMPETENCY** | **UNIT**  **COMPETENCY** | **RECOMMENDED**  **MODULE CONTENT** | **INSTRUCTOR NOTES** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Explore dimensions of values as they impact healthcare. | 1A. Define values | **1A. Definition of values**: standards that provide the foundation for making decisions and guiding behavior   1. Beliefs are chosen freely 2. All human interactions are value-based | **Possible Classroom Discussion**: Have students identify personal values:  Video to help ID values:  <https://youtu.be/Kz__qGJmTMY?si=evkqpzhGV1uDzOZC>  Worksheet to ID values (username & password: HCCC)  [HCE Competency 1](https://www.healthforceminnesota.org/hccc/files/HCE-Competency-1-Personal-Core-Values2.docx): Personal Core Values |
|  | 1B. Discuss the importance of values | 1B. Values:   1. Guide actions 2. Determine right from wrong |
|  | 1C. Explain how values are developed | 1C. Discuss how family and culture influences values, beliefs, and attitudes about:   1. Lifestyle 2. Language 3. Rules 4. Culture 5. Religion 6. Education 7. Socioeconomic status 8. Passed on from generation to generation 9. Starts developing in early life 10. Evolves throughout stages of life |
|  | 1D. Identify personal values. | 1D. Personal Values   1. Need for identification 2. Role of values in personal behavior |
|  | 1E. Identify key values in health care. | 1E. Key Healthcare Values:   1. Honesty 2. Integrity 3. Respect 4. Responsibility 5. Accountability 6. Compassion 7. Teamwork 8. Inclusion |  |
|  | 1F. Discuss how professional values impact on performance and behavior | 1F. Professional values   1. Confidentiality 2. Professional boundaries 3. Values in relation to clients 4. Values in relation to other workers 5. Others: religious; cultural |  |
| 2. Investigate and demonstrate basic principles of professional relationships. | 2A. Define professional boundaries | 2A. Definition: space between the caregiver’s power and the client’s vulnerability |  |
| 2B. Identify elements of professional relationships | 2B. Professional Boundaries   1. Nature of professional 2. Relationships Boundaries: are the limits that allow for a safe relationship with the client based on the client’s needs 3. Safe space |
| 2C. Explain why boundary violations may occur | 2C. Characteristics of boundary violations/warning signs   1. Role reversal 2. Secrecy 3. Double bind 4. Professional privilege |  |
| 2D. Discuss how to prevent violations of professional boundaries  2E. Discuss boundary violations related to social media | 2D. Violation of boundaries  The challenge   1. Be aware 2. Be aware of feelings and behavior 3. Be observant of the behavior of other workers 4. Always act in the best interest of the client   2E. Define social media   * 1. “A group of online applications that allow for the creation and exchange of content generated by users.” (Rukavina et al., 2021)   Social media classifications   1. Collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia) 2. Blogs (e.g., Twitter/X) 3. Content communities (e.g., YouTube) 4. Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook) 5. Virtual gaming or social worlds   Social media terms that refer to healthcare professionals using social media responsibly   1. E-Professionalism 2. Online Professionalism 3. Digital Professionalism   Benefits and dangers of social media use for healthcare workers.   1. Benefits  * Networking and collaborating (not care related) among healthcare professionals and students * Platforms can be used for professional training and education * Providing education and health promotion among patient populations  1. Dangers  * Managing e-reputation: * Employers check social media profiles before hiring. * Patients may review social media presence of healthcare workers. Unprofessional posts erode trust. * Inappropriate & unprofessional posts can ruin your reputation * Risk of compromising patient confidentiality & blurring professional boundaries   + - How to separate professional presence from personal presence     - Friending or accepting friend requests from clients: Know facility policies, professional association code of conduct, develop personal policies and strategies  1. Legal consequences    * + Patient privacy violations or boundary violations could result in:        - Disciplinary action from healthcare licensing/credentialing boards (suspension or loss of license)        - Disciplinary action from employer or loss of job        - Legal action against the healthcare professional | Discussion: [boundary crossing warning signs](https://www.ncsbn.org/public-files/ProfessionalBoundaries_Complete.pdf)  Other professional boundaries resources: <https://www.ncsbn.org/boundaries>  2E based on Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (88 studies, 40 countries):    Rukavina, T. V., Viskić, J., Poplašen, L. M., Relić, D., Marelić, M., Jokic, D., & Sedak, K. (2021). Dangers and Benefits of Social Media on E-Professionalism of Health Care Professionals: Scoping Review. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, *23*(11), e25770. <https://doi.org/10.2196/25770>  Video (4mn): Social Media Professionalism in the Medical Community: <https://youtu.be/3N8A5LMlego?si=2KBQ0Gq8J6GEEFTc>  Video (5mn): Social media guidelines for nurses including stories and consequences: <https://youtu.be/i9FBEiZRnmo> |
| 3. Describe aspects of ethical decision making in healthcare | 3A. Define Ethics: | 3A. Definition of ethics:  The system of rules and principles that guide decision making relating to what is right or wrong | Compare sample codes of ethics from various health professions. Have students find the EMT code of ethics.  Have students discuss the business code of ethics from their place of employment |
|  | 3B. Define Code of Ethics | 3B. Ethics are dynamic  Code of Ethics: formal guidelines and standards for professional actions |
|  | 3C. Explain the purpose of a Code of Ethics | 3C. Purpose of Ethics’ Code:   1. Promote the welfare of the client 2. Ensure high quality of care |
|  | 3D. Identify 8 guiding principles in ethics | 3D. Guiding principles for healthcare workers   1. Preserve life  * Quality of life * Euthanasia  1. Do good (beneficence) 2. Respect autonomy 3. Uphold justice 4. Be honest (veracity) 5. Be discreet (confidentially) 6. Keep promises (fidelity) 7. Do no harm (nonmaleficence) | Click here to [Review Oregon’s Euthanasia law](https://public.health.oregon.gov/ProviderPartnerResources/EvaluationResearch/DeathwithDignityAct/Pages/faqs.aspx)  In Minnesota: <https://www.house.mn.gov/sessiondaily/Story/18046>  Video WCCO 2:26 min <https://youtu.be/vGAGWCsbR5w?si=cqGkb_hZGsJpun28>  Video WCCO Talking points 34min <https://youtu.be/Evk0wzqpAYY?si=caz4nsxDiKI8bxEI> |
|  | 3E. Identify steps/ framework for ethical decision making | 3E. Ethical Decision-making Approaches   1. Rational and systematic 2. Based on ethical principles and codes, not emotions 3. May involve an Ethics Committee  * Laws cannot keep pace with ethical dilemmas​ * Differences state to state​ * Ethics committees:​   + Develop policies regarding ethical issues​   + Provide education​   + Provide consultation and review ethical situations​ |  |
|  | 3F. Discuss the difference between legal “guidelines” and ethical decision-making. | 3F. Laws vs. Ethics   1. Laws cannot keep pace with ethical dilemmas 2. Differences state to   state   1. Biomedical Ethics 2. Committee Resources |  |
| 4. Explain how an individual’s diversity, socioeconomic or religious beliefs could lead to potential ethical differences with that of other healthcare employees. | 4A. Identify possible factors that may contribute to ethical differences between employees | 4A. Factors that may contribute to ethical differences among healthcare employees  Personal differences:   1. Differences in personal values or beliefs 2. Difference in knowledge 3. Previous experiences can influence views and opinions 4. Ability to voice opinions: people may or may not feel comfortable sharing their views 5. Fear of being misunderstood or not fitting in   Diversity: Differences among individuals related to   1. Ethnic background 2. Gender 3. Political beliefs 4. Religious beliefs 5. Age/generation   Socioeconomic differences:   1. Social background 2. Financial status 3. Occupation 4. Education | Possible discussion: Role play of 1:1 (caregiver to caregiver) to represent personal, diversity, and socioeconomic differences, then discuss with class. |
| 5. Using an ethical decision-making model applied to health care situations, describe how ethics influence the care of clients. | 5A. Define ethical dilemma | 5A. Ethical dilemma:   1. Ethical dilemmas occur when different values conflict.   Example: A client’s right to refuse treatment conflicts with the health care worker’s obligation to carry out orders. |  |
|  | 5B. Identify current ethical dilemmas. | 5B. Ethics Dilemmas in the News  a. End-of-life issues  i. Patient self-determination  ii. Assisted suicide/ euthanasia  iii. DNR orders  iv. Discontinuation of feedings.  v. Legal guardianship   * 1. Abortion   2. Genetic testing/ screening   3. Allocations of organs for transplants   4. Access to health care * Health Equity * Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)   1. Managed care   2. Insurance costs   3. Resuscitation   4. Stem cell research   5. CRISPR gene editing technology   6. Physician assisted suicide | Have students research controversial bioethical and moral dilemmas for discussion.  Discussion/research on Health Equity. <https://www.cdc.gov/health-equity/what-is/index.html>  Discussion/research SDOH  <https://www.cdc.gov/public-health-gateway/php/about/social-determinants-of-health.html> |
|  | 5C. Discuss the problem-solving process as applied to ethical issues in health care utilizing a team approach. | 5C. Problem Solving Process   1. Identify the problem 2. Gather information: 3. Identify ethical issues  * Is there more than one problem * Are there competing ethical claims on the nurse? * (Conflict of duty)  1. Any conflict of personal values? 2. Any conflict of professional values? 3. Create alternative solutions 4. Select and act/implement a solution 5. Evaluate and revise as needed- Assess the outcome | Discuss the dimensions of the ethical dilemma by identifying the values involved and then apply the ethical decision-making model (problem-solving) to determine an approach that can be used to deal with the dilemma. |