

# Faculty of Health and Social Care Introduction to Ethics & Ethical Principles

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# Why Study Ethics?

- Ethics are involved in everything.
- To understand why some choices have been made against others.
- Helps us to choice right from wrong (but who decides what's right and what's wrong?)



# Ethics Helps Decision Making

- Everyday we are faced with making decisions. Sometimes these decisions are clear cut and there is only one choice to be made. At other times we are faced with a range of options, many of which may seem equally valid or equally unsatisfactory (Stonehouse, 2012).
- Therefore by applying ethical thinking will assist us in making a better choice.





# Learning Outcomes

## The Student will be able to

- Discuss what ethics are and why they are important.
- Examine the main ethical theories and principles.
- Start to apply ethical decision making to their own practice.
- Start to think about how to apply these to the exam scenario.



# What Do We Mean By The term Ethics?

- Ethics is a process of reflection (Berghlund, 2007).
- It's aim is to challenge our thoughts and actions (Hugman, 2005).
- Ethics looks at how we “behave and function within society” (Thompson et al, 2006:36).



# Ethics are very personal.

- It is about how you live your life in relation to others.
- It's about the choices you make and why.



# Who Influences Ethics In Our Lives

- Family
- Friends
- Community/Society
- Education
- Religion/Spirituality
- Role Models
- Work Place
- Professional Bodies/Codes of Conduct
- Politics/Laws
- Ourselves





# Law & Ethics/Ethics & Law

- Law is the law!!!
- The ethics of a society should influence the laws that that society makes.
- Ethics over time should change laws.
- However the law is always the law no matter what your ethical beliefs are and must be followed.





Beauchamp and Childress (2009)  
developed four Ethical Principles.

- Respect for Autonomy
- Beneficence
- Non-maleficence
- Justice



# Respect for Autonomy

- Autonomy can be defined as “self-rule with no control, undue influence or interference from other” (Griffith and Tengnah, 2010:29).
- It is about respecting other peoples wishes and supporting them in their decisions (Beauchamp and Childress, 2009).



# Beneficence

- This can be defined as “the principle of doing good and providing care to others” (Berglund, 2007:12).
- Promotion of well-being (Edwards, 2009).
- As employees are we properly trained and competent to carry out the tasks we are providing to our children/families/clients/customers? Do we always follow policies and procedures.





# Non-maleficence

- “obligation not to inflict harm on others” (Beauchamp and Childress, 2009:149).
- Goes hand in hand with beneficence.
- However, do we sometimes cause short term harm for long term good?



# Justice

- Simply defined as “equal treatment of equal cases” (Hendrick. 2004:7).
- Treating everyone the same.
- However, some people need to be treated differently if they require special care over and above what other people may need.
- Justice is about meeting everyone's individual needs fairly.



# Rowson (2006) Ethical Framework F.A.I.R.

1. Fairness
2. Respect for Autonomy
3. Integrity
4. Seeking the most beneficial and least harmful consequences, or Results





# 1. Fairness

- Linked to the idea of justice.
- Providing benefits
  - Social welfare, education, healthcare, protection, opportunities
- Distributing burdens
  - Exclusions of benefits, allocation of responsibilities.



## 2. Respect For Autonomy

Professional should

- Not prevent people from carrying out decisions they make for themselves about:
  - What they ought to do
  - What they will do
  - What should be done to them
  - What should be done with information about them
- Enable others to make autonomous decisions.



### 3. Integrity

Acting with professional integrity means  
That one's actions are the same as your  
professional values.

For example maintaining confidentiality,  
working in some ones best interests.

Simply put, it is when what you do  
matches what you believe.





## 4. Seeking the most beneficial and least harmful consequences, or **Results**

Two Aims.

1. Producing as many benefits as possible
2. Avoiding causing, or preventing, as much harm as possible.



Two more concepts which are not linked to either ethical framework but which are important are the ideas of

- Veracity &
- Fidelity



# Veracity

- It is concerned with being open, honest and truthful with people (Berglund, 2007).
- It is also the accurate transfer of information in a way that is suitable for the individual to understand (Edwards, 2009).
- “This is not always an easy principle to maintain when you are asked difficult questions or your answer may be distressing” (Stonehouse, 2012:250).





# Fidelity

Is the relationship that exists between individuals.  
Fidelity is about

- Being Faithful
- Keeping promises
- Always doing what is right
- Being trust worthy
- Confidential
- Showing respect and dignity
- Respecting autonomy
- Acting in their best interest

(Stonehouse, 2012)



Aside from these two sets of ethical principles there are two main ethical theories.

- Deontology
- Consequentialism



# Deontology

- The rightness or wrongness of any act depends on whether the person has followed their duty regardless of the consequences.
- More concerned with motive than results. Actions are good or bad in advance of their performance.





# Consequentialism

- The rightness or wrongness of any act is judged in relation to its consequences.
- Only concerned with results.
- The same act may be good or bad in different circumstances.
- The aim is to produce the greatest good for the greatest number.



For the ethical part of your  
Exam!!!

Choose **EITHER**

Beauchamp and Childress (2009)  
four ethical Principles

**OR**

Rowson (2006) F.A.I.R. Ethical  
Framework.

**DO NOT ATTEMPT TO DO BOTH**



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