

Mapping Your Moral Distress

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Objectives

- Discuss the definition(s) of moral distress
- Using case examples, demonstrate how to map one's moral distress.
- Discuss the need for careful ethical analysis of situations that lead to moral distress.



Framing the challenge



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Code of Ethics for Nurses

1. Practice with compassion and respect.
2. Primary commitment is to patient.
3. **Advocate for individuals.**
4. Accountable for individual nursing practice
5. The nurse owes the same duty to self
6. Establish and improves health care environments.
7. Advance the profession through development.
8. Collaborate with others to meet health needs.
9. Articulate values and maintain integrity of nursing



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Moral Agent

An individual who makes a moral judgment based on a commonly held notion of right and wrong, acts on the judgment and is accountable to others for the actions taken.

Angus 2003



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Moral Distress

- The condition of knowing the morally right thing to do, but institutional, procedural, or social constraints make doing the right thing nearly impossible.

Code of Ethics for Nurses, ANA 2015

- The response to constraints experienced by nurses specific to their moral identities, responsibilities and relationships.

Peter and Liaschenko, 2013



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Mapping Moral Distress

- Emotion
- Source of the distress
- Conflicting obligations and responsibilities
- Internal/external forces inhibiting action
- Actions to alleviate distress
- Actions to address patient need

Dudzinski, 2016,



The Role of Ethics



Careful Ethics Analysis

1. Identify the ethical problem
 - Is there something wrong here or is there more than one way to think about the situation?
2. Analyze the problem
 - Are there rules, values, principles that dictate what you "should" do?
3. Explore alternatives
 - Imagine the possibilities

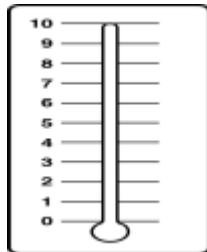


Patient refusing nursing care

Amy had open heart surgery and is recovering slowly. She has made little progress and has started refusing nursing care, including central line dressing changes and turning. Your unit has been "tagged" because there were two CLABSI's and one pressure injury last week.



What's your level of Moral Distress?



- A. Severe (8-10)
- B. Moderate (4-7)
- C. Mild (1-3)
- D. None (0)

Wocial and Weaver, 2013



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Dudzinski, 2016,



What's your emotion?

- A. Frustration
- B. Sadness
- C. Anxiety
- D. Irritation
- E. Other...



What is the source of distress?

- A. I don't have time for this!!!
- B. What if she gets a CLABSI???
- C. Don't patients know how important nursing care is?
- D. Other....



What obligations are in conflict?

1. Respect patient autonomy
2. Minimize patient harm
3. Treat patients with dignity and respect
4. Promote well-being



What are the barriers to action?

Internal

- A. Lack of confidence
- B. Conflict avoidance
- C. Fear of retribution

External

- A. Hospital policy
- B. Laws
- C. Lack of support



Becoming a moral agent

What should you do?

1. Get an order for sedation.
2. Get four people to help you turn Amy.
3. Try to "convince" Amy to cooperate.
4. Document the refusal and move on.
5. Other???



Dealing with Moral Distress

- Focus on changes in the work environment that preserve moral integrity.
- Conduct root cause analyses to identify what about a unit/institution's culture contributes to systematic tolerance of repeated episodes of moral distress.
- Be prepared for three levels of intervention:
 - patient
 - unit/team culture
 - organization



Data?

- Virtually no intervention studies
- Research is at a descriptive level
- IU Health UBEC
 - Wocial, Hancock, Bledsoe, Chamness, Helft, 2010
- Ethics education positively influences
 - confidence in ability to make decisions
 - moral action
 - use of ethics resources

Grady, Danis, O'Donnell, Taylor, Ulrich, 2008



Tying it together



Emotion and Reason

- For the Nurse
 - Stress Management Interventions
- For the Patient
 - Careful ethical analysis



QUESTIONS?

COMMENTS?



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