

Improving the Teaching of Ethics

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Workshop on Military Medical Ethics: Issues
Regarding Dual Loyalties
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Goal

Take some of our experience in teaching palliative care and aging and consider how it might apply to ethics more generally

Palliative Care

An approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problem associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychosocial and spiritual.

- WHO

Why relevant to ethics?

Issues of...

Futility

Informed consent

Physician-assisted suicide

Autonomy and decision-making

Team behavior

What students complain about

Too abstract

Too soft (“touchy feely”)

Too boring

Some educational principles and techniques

1. Make it real
2. Make it engaging
3. Make it novel
4. Make it convenient
5. Make it relevant

Make it real

Real patients, real situations

Models:

Living with Life-Threatening Illness
(Harvard Medical School)

Patient Perspectives (Northwestern)

Palliative Care Rotation (Northwestern)

Make it real

Pre-clinical years

Students follow patients
longitudinally

Close supervision by faculty

Clear guidance around ethical
dilemmas

Make it real

Clinical years

Patients in different contexts
(palliative care unit, consult
service, home hospice)

New appreciation for families

Clear guidance around ethical
dilemmas

Make it novel:

Challenge assumptions

Assumption 1: The elderly have nothing to contribute

Model: *Vital Visionaries*

Medical humanities seminar for medical students and the elderly together to engage in artistic projects.

Primary goal: to increase students' appreciation of the lives of the elderly and the elderly's appreciation of the lives of students

Secondary goal: to increase student interest in geriatrics and aging



Buehler Center
on Aging, Health & Society



Make it novel: Challenge assumptions

Assumption 2: Doctors are the center of the world.

Model: *Schwartz Rounds*

Monthly interdisciplinary rounds for medical students, physicians, nurses, social workers

Make it novel: Challenge assumptions

What comes up?

Boundaries and self-disclosure

Self-care

Futility

How teams interact

Make it engaging

Innovative techniques: Video cases,
role play

Model: *Education in Palliative and End
of Life Care (EPEC) Project*

Make it engaging

Video cases: may be real or may be re-enacted using actors/standardized patients.

Re-enacted: gives control over scenario, allow specific topics and objectives to come up

Real: gives example of an actual patient

Each requires specific debriefing: not just “What did you think?”

Make it engaging

Role play: semi-structured re-enactment of a clinical interaction. Requires brief, prepared scenarios, careful facilitation and debriefing; and flexible roles.

Especially good for ethical issues that have communication and negotiation aspects:

- Futility
- Informed consent
- Physician assisted suicide

Frequently met with anxiety amongst students.

Make it engaging: example

Summary

Several models of techniques and contexts for ethics education

- real patients
- novel settings
- interdisciplinary teams
- new ways of looking at cases:
video, role play

Next Steps

1. Standardization of techniques across courses, sites
2. Research to determine how and whether these approaches change ethical behavior

Thank You

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