Common Ethical Challenges in End of Life Care

Ross Fewing
Director of Mission and Ethics, PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center - Spiritual/Pastoral Care

Bree Johnston, MD MPH
Director of Palliative Care
PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center

Clinical Professor of Medicine, University of Washington
Session Learning Objectives

* Discuss commonly held ethical principles
* Reflect upon your own ethical “world view”
* Become familiar with the “Four-box method” of ethical analysis and gain familiarity with applying the method to a real clinical case
* Reflect on “real world” ethical dilemmas and how they might be approached depending on a person’s ethical stance
Structure of this Session

* Ethics Overview – 10 minutes
* Break into small groups to discuss case using “Four Box Method” – 20 minutes
* Get back together in large group to discuss the case – 10 minutes
* Wrap up – 5 minutes
This is the only way we see our ethics.
Core Four Ethical Perspectives

- Principles
- Consequences
- Virtues / Character
- Moral Sentiment
Questions to Ponder

* Life sustaining therapy should be withdrawn in futile cases
  * Strongly agree
  * Agree
  * Neutral
  * Disagree
  * Strongly Disagree
Questions to Ponder

* It is morally wrong to withdraw life sustaining therapy, even in futile cases
  * Strongly agree
  * Agree
  * Neutral
  * Disagree
  * Strongly Disagree
Questions to Ponder

* Miracles do not happen, and waiting for one is naive
  * Strongly agree
  * Agree
  * Neutral
  * Disagree
  * Strongly Disagree
Questions to Ponder

* Miracles can happen, and it is reasonable to hold out for one
  * Strongly agree
  * Agree
  * Neutral
  * Disagree
  * Strongly Disagree
Faith-healing should never be an alternative to Western medicine

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
Questions to Ponder

* Faith-healing can heal and should be considered a viable alternative to Western medicine
  * Strongly agree
  * Agree
  * Neutral
  * Disagree
  * Strongly Disagree
## The Four Box Method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical Indication</th>
<th>Patient Preferences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Life</td>
<td>Contextual Features</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Third Annual Palliative Care Institute Conference
### The Four Box Method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical Indication</th>
<th>Patient Preferences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Benefit / Harm)</td>
<td>(Autonomy)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality of Life</th>
<th>Contextual Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Benefit, Harm, Autonomy)</td>
<td>(Justice)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Small Groups

* Your table is your small group
* Read the case aloud in your group and choose a scribe and a spokesperson
* Go through the 4 box method and record your discussion regarding each element
  * Decide what the ethical question is
  * Your table will be assigned one box to focus on
  * Come up with one – two options
* Be prepared to discuss in larger group