FOUNDA TIONAL ETHICAL CONCEPT OF VERACITY

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successfully completing the presentation, the learner will be able to:

1. Define the principle of veracity.
2. Identify ethical problems of truth telling.
3. Describe patient care situations where not telling the truth may seem ethical.
4. Describe potential consequences of not telling the truth to a patient or to their family.
Ethical Principles

- 1. Autonomy
- 2. Beneficence
- 3. Non-maleficence
- 4. Justice
- 5. Veracity
- 6. Confidentiality
Ethical Decision Making

1. ANA Code of Ethics

2. An understanding of ethical principles

3. The ethics of caring
A Model for Ethical Decision Making

- Based on the 3-step ACT model by Graham-Eason (1996) and the Savage Model for Facilitating Ethical Decision Making (Savage & Michalak, 1999)
  - 1. Gather the facts & engage all stakeholders
  - 2. Identify the ethical principles that are the source of the conflict
  - 3. Discuss options with key stakeholders
VERACITY

- Requires nurses to be truthful.

- Veracity is fundamental in building a trusting relationship.
The principle of *Veracity* often creates ethical dilemmas

When is it permissible to lie?

Examine the following case studies as the principle of veracity is applied.
CASE STUDY #1
MRS. SMITH
Subtitle
Mrs. Smith has just been told that her father has metastatic lung cancer. With this diagnosis, she is informed that her father’s prognosis is not good. The nurse practitioner wants to come into the home to discuss treatment. Mrs. Smith refuses, saying that under no circumstances tell her father the diagnosis. She explains that her father’s brother died with cancer and he watched him battle with all of the treatments. She informs the practitioner that her father stated then that he would just kill himself if he was ever diagnosed with the disease because of what he witnessed with his brother. The nurse practitioner replies that there are treatment options available that might help her father.
However, it is available only through a research study being conducted at a nearby university. To participate in the research, the patient must be informed of the purpose of the study, the treatments (medications) to be given and its side effects, and follow-up procedures. Mrs. Smith continues to refuse to allow her father to be told his diagnosis because she is certain he will commit suicide.
CASE STUDY #2
MR. JONES
Subtitle
Mr. Jones is a 30 year old male with major depression is hospitalized because of suicidal ideations. Five days after admission, the psychiatrist documents that the patient is still depressed; however, is no longer suicidal. The insurance reviewer notifies the psychiatrist that the patient will need to be discharged for outpatient treatment.

The patient has no support outside the hospital setting, and the psychiatrist does not feel that the patient is stable enough for discharge. The patient is also struggling financially and cannot afford to pay out of pocket for continued hospitalization.
Which of the following would you consider the most ethical course of action?

- 1. Discharge the patient as requested by the insurance reviewer and arrange for outpatient follow-up?
- 2. Continue the hospitalization even though the patient may have to pay the bill?
- 3. To gain insurance coverage for more hospital days, document in the medical record that the patient is again suicidal?
- 4. Suggest that the patient call the insurance company and say that he may hurt himself if he does not have coverage for more hospital days?
- 5. Phone the insurance reviewer to explain the need for continued hospitalization without implying that the patient is suicidal?
CONCLUSION

- Respecting patient autonomy and being fully honest and placing the patient’s interest above your own are essential elements of providing patient care in nursing.

- Research ways to decrease moral distress
REFERENCES


