

Applying Ethical Principles

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### Applying Ethical Principles

Health care professionals in some point of the career is faced with both ethical and moral dilemmas. When faced with this problem they must use their own set of ethical principles to help solve the problem at hand. There are four ethical principles that is used in the health care profession is nonmaleficence, autonomy, beneficence, and justice. These principles are put in place for health care professionals to use to help guide them in making the correct decision when they are face with a ethical dilemma.

### Overview of the Case Study

In the case study, “To Vaccinate, or To Not?” Jenna and Chris Smith are parents of a 5-day-old healthy baby girl by the name of Ana. Jenna and Christ have decided not to vaccinate their daughter. The Smith’s plan on raising their daughter as naturally as possible. They planned to do so by strictly breast feeding for the first six months of life, making their own baby food at home using organic foods, and lastly not allowing baby Ana to be vaccinated. The Smith’s made it known to Dr. Kerr that they have thoroughly researched the pros and cons of vaccination and how vaccines and autism have string correlation with each other. Dr. Kerr acknowledges Jenna and Chris’s opinions and concerns when it comes to vaccinations, but as health care professional she suggests to them that they should still get baby Ana vaccinated. “Vaccine hesitancy was fueled by the fear of vaccine side effects.” (Peretti-Watel et al., 2019) Dr. Kerr explains to them the positive effects of herd immunity on a community, the pros of vaccinations, and the general safety of vaccines. Dr. Kerr elaborates on how herd immunity offers protection to children who have weaken immune system and for children who are too young for certain vaccinations. She also informs the Smith’s on how most states have policies in place that mandates for children to be vaccinated to be enrolled into the public school system. Despites Dr. Kerr efforts to educate

Jenna and Chris on the need to vaccinate baby Ana, they are standing firm with their decision not to vaccinate. Dr. Kerr accepts the Smith's decision to not vaccinate, but she is troubled by it.

### **Analysis of Ethical Issues in the Case Study**

The ethical issue and dilemma that Dr. Kerr is faced with in this case study is that even after educating and explaining the benefits of vaccinations the Smith's still decided to stick with the decision and decline the offer to vaccinate baby Ana. Dr. Kerr is showing beneficence towards Ana "Vaccines are among the most effective tools for preventing infectious diseases and the complication sequelae" (Omer, Salmon, Orenstein, DeHart, and Halsey, 2009). Dr. Kerr was trying to do what she felt was best for her patient although her parents were against it. Although Dr. Kerr has used her medical and professional knowledge to make sure Jenna and Chris fully understand the dilemma at hand and still decline Dr. Kerr's offer to vaccinate baby Ana puts her in an awkward situation. "Dr. Kerr is perplexed as to what to do." (Capella, 2022).

### **Using the Ethical Decision-Making Model to Analyze the Case Study**

When faced with an ethical dilemma one should use the ethical decision-making model. The ethical decision-making model is made up of the components, which includes moral awareness, moral judgement, and ethical behavior. This is used to help one get to a resolution for the dilemma at hand. Moral awareness is knowing that there is an ethical dilemma in place. Moral judgement is when you choose between the right or the wrong side of the situation. Dr. Kerr's moral awareness is shown in the fact that with her medical expertise and knowledge she does not treat the Smith's any different with their choice to not vaccinate their child. The doctor's moral judgement is the fact that even though the Jenna and Chris voice their opinion on vaccinations, Dr. Kerr still educate them on the importance of vaccinations in children. Lastly,

Dr. Kerr's ethical behavior is shown when chooses to promote vaccinations and to offer the Smith's to still vaccinate Ana despite the research of vaccinations.

### ***Effectiveness of Communication Approaches in the Case Study***

Actively listening and proper communication is one of the most important factors in the health care profession. In the case study at hand Dr. Kerr show the Smith's that she is actively listening to them and their thoughts on vaccinations. Dr. Kerr achieves this by listening to Jenna and Chris and acknowledging their concerns and the hesitancy that they have when it comes to vaccinations. This allows Dr. Kerr to gain trust from the Smith's, because she is not just ignoring their concerns and their choice against vaccinating baby Ana. After all of Dr. Kerr's effort to inform and educate the Smith's on the importance of vaccinations, "Jenna and Chris Smith confirm the understanding of what Dr. Kerr has explained, restate that they do not want Ana vaccinated at this time." (Capella, 2022)

### ***Resolving the Ethical Dilemma by Applying Ethical Principles***

The four ethical principles that were stated earlier is what should be used to aid and solving the ethical issues and dilemma at hand. The four principles are as follows autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice. Autonomy is when one accepts the patient's choice that they make when it comes to their care. Beneficence is when what is best for the patient is done, non-maleficence is when no harm is done to the patient, and justice is when the patient is treated fairly, and no bias is used in the care of the patient. Dr. Kerr used all four of these ethical principles to properly care for the Smith's and Ana, by giving them all the educational and evidence-based information that was needed to make a sound decision on rather to vaccinate Ana or to not. Jenna and Chris demonstrate autonomy by still choosing to not vaccinate Ana after all the information Dr. Kerr provided them regarding the importance of vaccines. Although the

Smith still chose to not vaccinate Ana, Dr. Kerr respected their decision although she didn't agree.

## References

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