## Navigating Ethical Dilemmas: Ethical Issues in Contemporary Nursing



#### **Ethics & Issues In Contemporary Nursing - E-Book**

by Jennifer Easley

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Nursing is a noble profession that requires a strong commitment to ethical principles and values. Nurses play a vital role in providing patient care, and they must be able to make ethical decisions in a variety of situations. Ethical issues in nursing are complex and can be challenging to navigate. This article will provide an overview of some of the most common ethical issues that nurses face, as well as strategies for resolving them.

#### **Ethical Principles and Decision-Making Frameworks**

There are a number of different ethical principles that can be used to guide decision-making in nursing. These principles include:

 Autonomy: The principle of autonomy respects the patient's right to make decisions about their own care.

- Beneficence: The principle of beneficence requires nurses to act in the best interests of the patient.
- Non-maleficence: The principle of non-maleficence requires nurses to do no harm to the patient.
- Justice: The principle of justice requires nurses to treat all patients fairly.

There are also a number of different decision-making frameworks that can be used to help nurses resolve ethical dilemmas. These frameworks include:

- The principle-based approach: This approach uses the ethical principles listed above to guide decision-making.
- The utilitarianism approach: This approach focuses on maximizing the overall good for the greatest number of people.
- The deontology approach: This approach focuses on following rules and duties.
- The casuistry approach: This approach relies on past cases to help guide decision-making.

#### **Common Ethical Issues in Nursing**

Nurses face a variety of ethical issues in their practice. Some of the most common issues include:

 Confidentiality: Nurses have a duty to protect the privacy of their patients. This includes keeping patient information confidential and not disclosing it to anyone without the patient's consent.

- Informed consent: Nurses must obtain informed consent from patients before performing any procedures or treatments. This means that the patient must be given clear and concise information about the procedure or treatment, including the risks and benefits.
- End-of-life care: Nurses play a vital role in providing end-of-life care.
   This can involve making decisions about pain management,
   resuscitation, and other end-of-life issues.
- Cultural diversity: Nurses must be aware of the cultural diversity of their patients. This includes understanding different cultural beliefs about health and illness, and respecting the patient's cultural preferences.
- Resource allocation: Nurses must sometimes make decisions about how to allocate resources, such as ventilators or beds. These decisions can be difficult, especially when there are more patients than resources.

#### **Strategies for Resolving Ethical Dilemmas**

There are a number of strategies that nurses can use to resolve ethical dilemmas. These strategies include:

- Seek guidance from colleagues: Nurses should not hesitate to seek guidance from colleagues when they are faced with an ethical dilemma. Colleagues can provide support, advice, and help to identify resources.
- Consult with ethics committees: Many hospitals and other healthcare organizations have ethics committees. These committees can provide guidance on ethical issues and help to resolve ethical dilemmas.

- Educate oneself: Nurses can stay up-to-date on ethical issues by reading journals, attending conferences, and taking continuing education courses.
- Use ethical decision-making frameworks: The ethical decision-making frameworks described above can help nurses to resolve ethical dilemmas in a systematic and thoughtful way.
- Trust your instincts: Sometimes, the best way to resolve an ethical dilemma is to trust your instincts. If you feel that something is wrong, it probably is.

Ethical issues in nursing are complex and can be challenging to navigate. However, by understanding the ethical principles and decision-making frameworks that can be used to resolve ethical dilemmas, nurses can make the best possible decisions for their patients. It is also important for nurses to seek support from colleagues, ethics committees, and other resources when they are faced with ethical dilemmas.

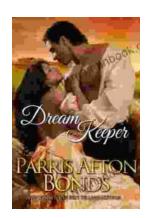
By upholding ethical principles and values, nurses can provide high-quality care to their patients and make a positive impact on the lives of others.



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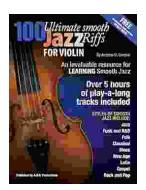
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