



Ethics in Pharmacy Practice- Ethical Dilemma Cases & Assignments- Part 4A

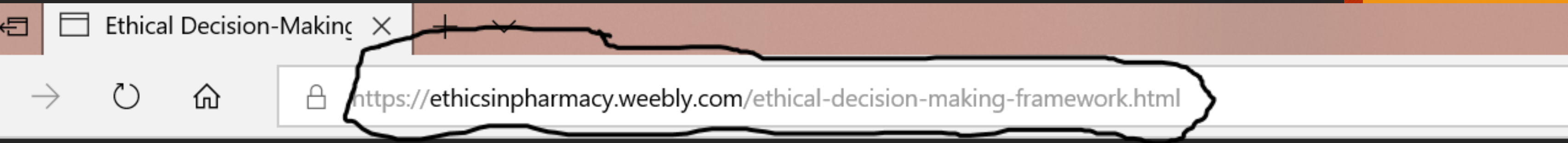
Prof. Saja Hamed

Ethical Decision Making

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- ▶ Gather relevant fact: what law applies and what codes are available
- ▶ Identify all the individual parties involved and attempting to balance their disparate interests
- ▶ Ask : what could I do in this situation
- ▶ What should I do in this situation
- ▶ When applying ethical principles, the principles involved should be identified, asking whether any of these are in competition and whether one principal should take priority over another
- ▶ No right and wrong answers to situations, but better and worse ways of dealing with them

<http://ethicsinpharmacy.weebly.com/documentation-tool.html>



Tackling Ethical Dilemmas in Pharmacy Practice

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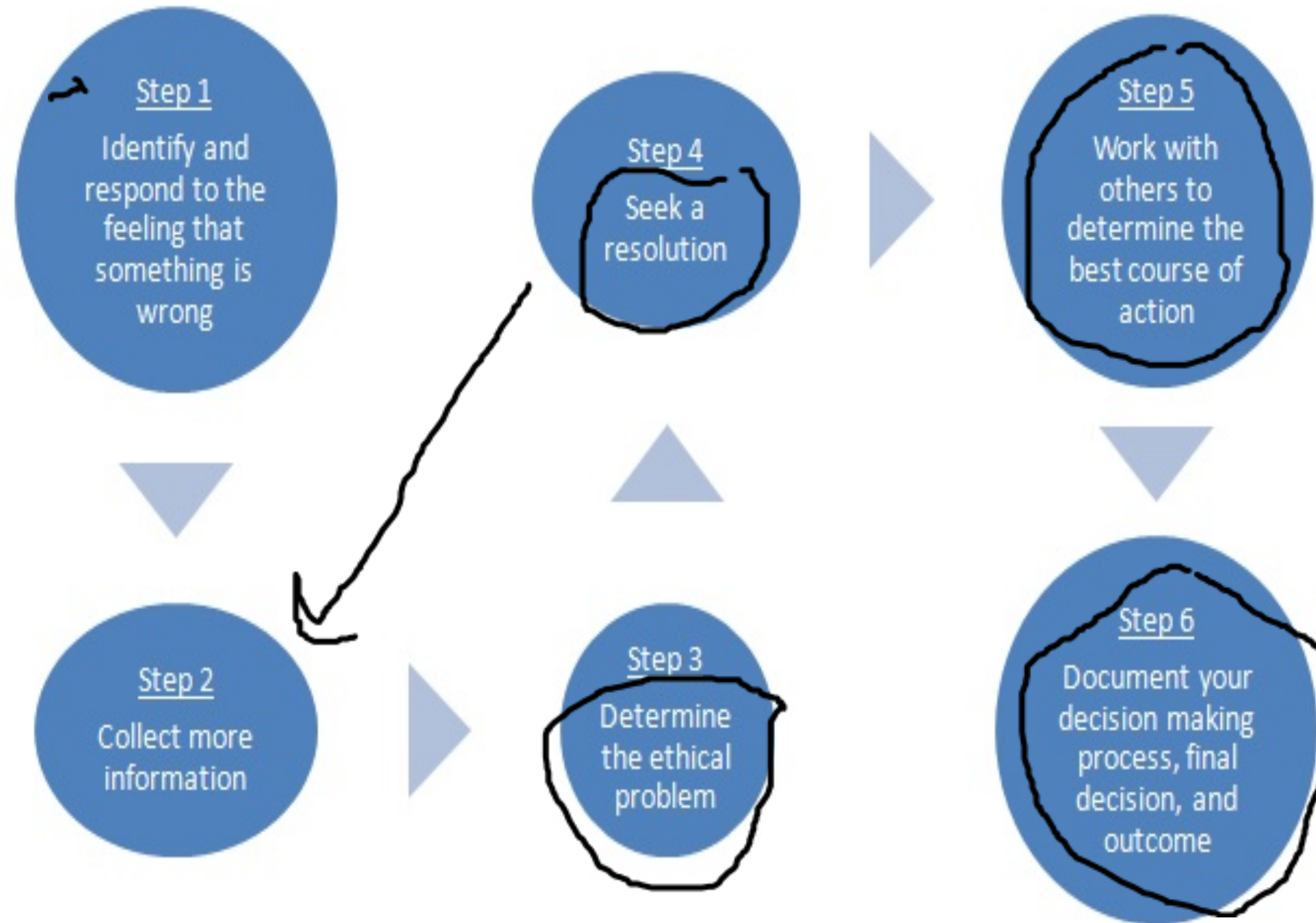
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Ethical Decision making



Step 1: Identify and respond to the feeling that something is wrong

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- For example, consider asking yourself some of these questions:
Is the patient's autonomy being breached? Am I considering the patient's individual wishes and values? (Principle of autonomy)
- Am I maximizing benefit while minimizing harm for the patient (Principles of beneficence and non-maleficence)
- If you find that some of the ethical principles discussed earlier are being breached, then you likely have an ethical dilemma on your hands.

Step 2: Collect more information

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- Collect all the details surrounding the dilemma. Who is involved? When did this occur? How have others responded to the dilemma? Collect and organize all your facts.

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Step 3: Determine the ethical problem

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- 'What exactly is the dilemma?'. Identify what the source of the concern is.

Once you have defined exactly what the problem is, you are on the right track to begin tackling the dilemma!

Step 4: Seek a resolution

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- ▶ To resolve the dilemma, consider the following:-
 1. 4 principles of medical ethics (autonomy, justice, beneficence, non-maleficence)
 2. Code of Ethics
 3. Laws (acts and regulations which govern the profession of pharmacy)
 4. Financial concerns



Step 5: Work with others to determine the best course of action

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- Never make decisions regarding ethical dilemmas on your own. Similar to the collaborative approach of solving drug therapy problems, we should collaborate with other health care providers when encountered with ethical dilemmas.
- Involving others in your decision-making process helps you to filter out any personal biases you may have but do not recognize. Ultimately, consulting with others protects you from making any rash, uninformed, biased, or paternalistic decisions. Instead, your decisions will be thoughtful, well-informed, and sensitive to all members involved in the ethical dilemma.

Step 6: Document your decision-making process, final decision, and outcome

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- Documenting all the steps you have taken to reach a decision demonstrates a thorough and logical thought process. It also illustrates who you consulted with, and what factors you considered to reach a final decision. If possible, also document what the final outcome was of the ethical dilemma.



Case studies in pharma

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CASE 2-5 What Should Be Behind the Counter?

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Jose Emilio, Pharm.D., was a relief pharmacist for several independent pharmacies. On a Sunday afternoon when Dr. Emilio was the only pharmacist on duty, a patient asked him to help her find the Robitussin. Dr. Emilio took the patient to the allergy and cough-and-cold remedy section of the store. He wanted to make sure that she used the Robitussin with dextromethorphan; however, he could not find any products with dextromethorphan on the shelf. Dr. Emilio went back to the pharmacy office to call the owner, Allen Ryan, Pharm.D., to find out where the dextromethorphan products were located.

Dr. Ryan told Dr. Emilio, "I decided to place all products with dextromethorphan behind the counter because I do not feel that patients should be able to have easy access to such a potentially harmful medication without careful counseling. Make sure you tell that customer about the potential risks. Also make sure that she really needs the drug before you give it to her, and only sell her one bottle."

Dr. Emilio was confused and somewhat angry as he hung up the phone. Dextromethorphan had been approved for over-the-counter use. Dr. Emilio did not feel it was necessary to counsel a customer on a drug that had been judged safe for consumer usage. Also, he wasn't sure that Dr. Ryan had the legal right to control the use of an over-the-counter product merely because of personal concerns. Dr. Emilio handed the customer the bottle of Robitussin and stated, "I guess they just haven't had time to restock the shelves."

Ethical Dilemma Documentation Tool

1. Describe the ethical dilemma

2. What ethical principles are involved?

Autonomy (What are the patient's wishes and values?)

Justice (Is the patient being treated fairly and are his/her needs able to be satisfied)

Beneficence and Non-Maleficence (What can be done for the patient and what are the benefits and harms?)

3. With whom did you consult when making this decision (ie. colleagues, friends, family)?

4. What other factors have you considered (ie. legal issues, financial concerns)?

5. What is your final decision?



Eighteen months ago, John Wilson was in an automobile accident that resulted in head trauma. After an acute hospitalization, Mr. Wilson responded fairly well to an extensive rehabilitation program. The only residual damage from the injury was grand mal seizure activity, which was adequately, though not completely, controlled with phenytoin sodium and valproic acid. Mr. Wilson wanted to return to work with the private roofing contractor with whom he had been employed for 10 years. Mr. Wilson spoke with the owner of the roofing company, Mark Adamson, about returning to work.

"Are you up to it, John?" Mark asked.

"Sure, sure," Mr. Wilson replied, "I'm just like new."

Later that week, Mr. Wilson returned to his neighborhood pharmacy for a refill on his anticonvulsant medications. In the course of filling the prescriptions, Mr. Wilson told the pharmacist that he had returned to work at the roofing company. The pharmacist, Ralph Jenkins, Pharm.D., was more than surprised because he knew that Mr. Wilson was not completely seizure free on his present medication regimen. Dr. Jenkins asked Mr. Wilson if he had told his employer about the possibility of seizure activity. "No way," Mr. Wilson replied, "I know when I'm going to have a seizure because I get this funny taste in my mouth and then I get dizzy. If that happens, I'll go find a safe place to lie down."

Dr. Jenkins is troubled by Mr. Wilson's response. He knows that the APhA Code of Ethics states that "a pharmacist promotes the good of every patient in a caring, compassionate, and confidential manner." Dr. Jenkins feels it would be in Mr. Wilson's best interest to warn Mr. Wilson's employer about the potential for grand mal seizure activity, yet he doesn't want to hurt Mr. Wilson's reputation or ability to work. Dr. Jenkins shudders to think what might happen if Mr. Wilson had a convulsion while working on a roof. Further, Dr. Jenkins is certain that Mr. Wilson's employer would be held at least partially responsible should Mr. Wilson sustain an injury. The Code of Ethics seems unclear about the ethically correct course of action in this type of situation.

Ethical Dilemma Documentation Tool

Ethics in Pharmacy Practice (By Dr. Saja Hamed)

Names & Numbers:

[illegible]

- Thank you for listening and Good Luck in the Mid Exam

Dr. Saja Hamd

