

Discuss: Write your post as a short paper (equivalent to 2-3 pages) describing which ethical principles apply to each situation. Utilize both the names of specific ethical principles (pg 32-37) and the principles in the Code of Professional Practice. Consider the following questions:

- Are principles in conflict, and if so, which do you think is most important?
- What are your professional duties and obligations in this situation?
- How would you proceed in the situation? Explain your reasoning!

Ethical Code Discussion #1

Scenario #1

Scenario one focuses on a four-year-old who relies on a ventilator for everyday activities and daily living (Klein, 2000). During a recent family meeting with the medical team, the family discusses their wishes to have their child transition out of the hospital without a ventilator– to allow him to experience a “normal childhood,” accepting the fact that their child will die without the ventilator (Klein, 2000). The family reports that their child seems depressed when watching his siblings engage in playing, and they believe the ventilator is causing psychological distress to their child. The palliative care team strongly supports the family’s decision to take their child off the ventilator, despite the child life specialist feeling as if the decision is extreme and there are other avenues to explore, and suffering from the internal conflict from disagreeing with the family (Klein, 2000).

This scenario relates to Principle 1 of the Child Life Code of Ethics that states, “Certified child life specialists hold a primary commitment to the psychosocial care of the patient and family and uphold the mission, vision, and values and operating principles of the professional” (Child Life Certification, 2023). In this scenario, the child life specialist should consider the autonomy of the child– even if they are not old enough to make difficult decisions for themselves. By observing how the child plays and interacts with the world around them, the child life specialist should be able to objectively make a decision about whether or not they should advocate for the child staying on a ventilator, or if they should follow along with the family’s decision. They also need to respect the family’s autonomy, and the fact the palliative care team supports the families difficult decision speaks volumes.

I would proceed in this situation by closely monitoring my own feelings and attachment to the child, and if I feel I can not maintain my professionalism to the point it harms my relationship with the family, I should ask to be taken off the child’s medical team.

Scenario #3

Presents a scenario where physicians are conducting a study where they have not been 100% transparent about the risks the participants face. Additionally, they do not give families the option of participating, and state that the study is a part of their child's treatment plan.

The principle most useful in this scenario is Principle 9 which states, " Certified Child Life Specialists respect the conventions of scholarly inquiry and will recognize their responsibility for ethical practice in research" (Child Life Certification, 2023).

In this scenario, the child life specialist absolutely has the responsibility to uphold ethical practice, and should report the study to the appropriate party, because it is in the best interest of the patient and the profession of Child Life as a whole.

Scenario #4

This scenario is one of the most important ones for aspiring child life specialists to consider themselves in, because it is something that will inevitably come up at least once during their time in the profession.

It has to do with a child life specialist feeling the desire to follow a family's social media page updating their friends and family on their child's illness. This scenario relates to Principle 10 stating that, "Certified Child Life Specialists use integrity to assess and amend any personal relationships, social media exchanges, or situations that may interfere with their professional effectiveness or objectivity, or otherwise negatively impact the family they serve" (Child Life Certification, 2023).

The child life specialist should not follow this page because it can impact their emotional wellbeing, which can cloud their judgment when making decisions about the child's medical treatment.

References

Child Life Certification. (2023). *Child Life Code of Ethics*.
https://twu.instructure.com/courses/2966677/discussion_topics/17040032

Klein, D.L. (2000). *Making Ethical Decisions in Child Life Practice*. Child Life Council.