

# Ethical steps in decision making

[Health & Medicine](#), [Nursing](#)



Task Ethical Steps in Decision Making In a psychiatric nursing career, one never knows when a predicament will come their way. Nurses are able to handle any problems that come their way by utilizing the ethical decision making process-which is a method that enables a nurse to make a decision using a specified process. The goal of the ethical decision making process is to enable the nurse make a choice between various options and ensure that they uphold ethical standards where there are no clearly set guidelines on how to act, with regards to the situation confronting the nurse at the given moment (Aiken 104).

As a psychiatric nurse, I work in the therapy section and yesterday while on duty, I was faced with a dilemma. I received young male patient, who had on several occasions attempted suicide. On checking his report, there was a record of symptoms pointing to severe depression. I thus consulted with the mental health nurse, who affirmed that indeed the patient had shown signs of depression during examination, moreover that the psychotherapist in charge was aware of the mild symptoms, but had advised against any further follow-up on the patient, who, he considered was experiencing a post-traumatic stress disorder. Confronted with a dilemma, I utilized the five steps involved in the ethical decision making process, so as to come up with a solution.

The first step I took, as set forth by Aiken (104) was to analyze the data I had, in order to come up with relevant information concerning the situation. Thus, after an interpretation of the data I had, I noticed that the patient had displayed several suicidal attempts in the past single month. I therefore concluded that, the physician had let the symptom pass.

I thus went on to take the second step, which involves spelling out the dilemma at hand, as suggested by Aiken (104). I was torn between administering therapeutic treatment meant for depressed patients in order to prevent possible harm after discharge, or discharge the patient after slight recovery, as ordered by the doctor, since the mild symptoms had been treated. I was thus left with the option of moving on to the third step.

This involved the identification of all the causes of action that can be taken, without emphasizing on the possible results (Aiken 104). I thus followed my judgment, in line with the best interest of the patient. Considering that the psychotherapist had chosen not to order a therapy meant for depressive patients, I went to the chief physician and made known my findings.

Thereafter, I examined the merits and demerits that would accompany each of the options I had, and which is the fourth step in the process (Aiken 104). I chose to be guided by the ANA code of ethics for nurses, which, according to Aiken (104), holds the principle of justice to patients, in high regard (107).

Finally, I made a decision, and as Aiken clearly puts it, I had to live with the consequence of my choice (104). I knew that my decision would create mistrust between me and the psychotherapist, but I knew that my action would be to the best interest of the patient, the family and me as a psychiatric nurse. Hence, the patient underwent medication as per my suggestion, after which, the chief physician affirmed that the patient was in a severe depressive state. He prescribed correspondence with the patient should the symptoms show up after the treatment.

Evidently, it would have been easy to follow the doctor's instruction without question, but I chose what was for the patient's best interest. These steps

are useful to nurses in making decisions, since they provide the best way to deal with an impending situation.

Work Cited

Aiken, T. D. Legal, Ethical, And Political Issues in Nursing (2nd Ed).

Philadelphia, PA: F. A. Davis Company, 2004. Print.