

Ethical Decision-Making Models

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1. Introduction

- Ethical decision-making models are structured frameworks for resolving moral problems systematically.
- They reduce bias and promote consistent, defensible choices in healthcare.

2. Major Ethical Theories

- **Deontology:** judges actions by duties and rules regardless of outcome.
- **Consequentialism:** evaluates actions by their results, such as utilitarianism's greatest good.
- **Virtue ethics:** focuses on the character and intentions of the decision-maker.

3. Common Model Steps

- Identify the ethical problem and gather relevant facts.
- Recognize stakeholders and the values at stake.
- Generate options, weigh them, then act and evaluate.

4. Useful Frameworks

- The four-principles approach: autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice.
- **DECIDE model:** define, ethical review, consider options, investigate, decide, evaluate.
- Ethics committees provide structured consultation for difficult cases.

5. Application in Practice

- Models guide rather than replace professional judgment.
- Documentation of the process supports accountability.
- Regular reflection strengthens ethical reasoning over time.