Questions to facilitate a foundational ethics process:
1. What appears to be the main issue that Tricia is voicing?
2. Name all the stakeholders in this story. Be brave and prioritize them.
3. If it’s recommended, Tricia has to decide if she would have further chemotherapy. Discuss with your group her decisional capacity, and the impact depression might have on decision making. Using the ethical principle of beneficence, how would a doctor or nurse formulate an argument for continuing treatment?
4. How do you relate to a patient’s unease when her friends are praying for her “healing”?

Questions to facilitate an advanced ethical process:
1. How would you justify different options with ethical principles when the principles appear to be in conflict? For example: Tricia’s autonomy and beneficence for her children, or non-maleficence for Tricia and justice for her family?
2. Give an argument for or against aggressive or comfort care if you were Tricia. Using the principle of proportionate/disproportionate means (ordinary/extraordinary care), how would you justify Tricia’s argument that “enough is enough?”
3. What do you believe your professional duties are when patients are having spiritual or religious conflicts that directly relate to their health and healthcare choices?
4. This woman is an attorney. Who has the responsibility to delve into the topic of advance directives with her and get the job done? Give examples of four different people along the continuum of someone’s care who have some responsibility to broach the issue of advance care directives.

Questions to facilitate a foundational ethics process:
1. Point out instances when Sheila uses ethical principles such as autonomy, beneficence, justice, truth-telling, and promise-keeping in her monologue.
2. What aspects of Sheila’s life and illness make it difficult to care for her, and what biases or prejudices do you have regarding stories like Sheila’s? What attitudes need you change about yourself to be a good healthcare provider?
3. Name specific ways that Sheila’s view of end-of-life care is the same as what professionals call comfort care.
4. Reflect on Sheila’s past experiences with death and how they impact her own values regarding death. Do the same with your own experiences of death, and how they influence your values on this subject.

Questions to facilitate an advanced ethical process:
1. How would you justify different options with ethical principles when the principles appear to be in conflict? For example: Sheila’s autonomy and beneficence for her children, or non-maleficence for Sheila and justice for her family?
2. Give an argument for or against aggressive or comfort care if you were Sheila. Using the principle of proportionate/disproportionate means (ordinary/extraordinary care), how would you justify Sheila’s argument that “enough is enough?”
3. What professional obligations do nurses and physicians have when managing pain in situations such as this one? Discuss a pain protocol that might have been appropriate. Discuss the education of most physicians and nurses, and what can be done to improve it.
4. Recount everyday-type occurrences in your daily work where a more ethical provision of care could be offered.

Questions to facilitate a foundational ethics process:
1. Claire’s story represents more of what might be called “everyday ethics.” As you listen to her talk, what values do you hear her express? How could healthcare providers respond to those values? Justify your responses with various ethical principles.
2. What are the major responsibilities for healthcare providers when caring for patients like Claire? Explore areas such as communication, privacy, insensitivity, treatment goals, fear of being alone, and social issues.
3. What professional obligations do nurses and physicians have when managing pain in situations such as this one? Discuss a pain protocol that might have been appropriate. Discuss the education of most physicians and nurses, and what can be done to improve it.
4. What ethical language do you use when approaching the issue of futility?
Every day in the lives of terminally-ill patients presents
decisions for patients, families, and members of the healthcare team. As science and technology continue to evolve, ethical evaluations and discussions become necessary steps in approaching these complex decisions. Julie Russell, RN, and Helen Emmott, RN, combine their talents to make ethics and other healthcare-related topics easily explored and understood. Julie’s dramatic monologues provide an aperture for learning through the experiences of others.

Julie and Helen believe, with their late friend and colleague, William G. Bartholome, pediatrician and bioethicist, that:

“We teach and learn what it means to be healthcare professionals through cases, the sharing of clinical narratives or stories. Although we have discovered the effectiveness of literature as a vehicle for sharing these stories, the most powerful way of teaching and learning illness narratives is through drama, through actual performances of patients’ stories.”

This Study Guide includes both foundational and advanced tracks.

For presentations, performances, or additional information about Julie and Helen’s work, contact them at info@ethicsthrudrama.com or visit their website: www.ethicsthrudrama.com

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