

Give specific example of ethical dilemma in nursing practice and how to handle the situation?

Best Answer - Chosen by Voters

An ethical dilemma might involve caring for an elderly, confused patient in hospital who needs all care.

As students it is drummed into us that we should gain consent from our patients before proceeding with any aspect of nursing care, ie. bed bath or dressing change.

However, if the patient is confused, not only are they unable to give consent, they may shout or curse you as you are trying to do your best for them. What do you do then?

Do you do as they say and leave them to lie in their own filth or do you carry on regardless of their wishes and complaints and make them as clean and comfortable as possible with the minimum of fuss by using gentle words and actions in order to try and calm them down?

Obviously you have to assess each and every situation on its own basis. What works for one patient may not work for another and it would be unwise to put yourself into a situation whereby you and your staff were at risk from physical violence if you were to proceed with your intended tasks.

Either way, fully document the care that you do or don't manage to give, along with the reasons so that if, at some point in the future, you are called upon to explain why you didn't attend to that patient's needs, you have written evidence of their mood and reactions at the time.

Nursing isn't easy - you have to think on your feet and treat everyone as an individual - what works for one may not work for another and you learn to be resourceful with experience.

Source(s):

Senior nurse