

Principles of Ethics

Objectives

- 1-define principles
- 2- Introduction
- 3- The five common ethical principles
- 4-Conclusion

Principles of Ethics

Definition

Principles

- A fundamental source or basis of something
- Fundamentals
 - Essentials
 - ground rule

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Introduction

- Ethical principles provide a generalized framework within which particular ethical dilemmas (**difficult situation or problem**) may be analysed.
- As we will see later in this module, these principles can provide guidance (**directions**) in resolving ethical issues that codes of ethics may not necessarily provide.

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The Five Ethical Principles

The five ethical principles that have been applied within a number of professions (Beauchamp & Childress, 1979) are:

1. Respecting autonomy (**self rule**)
2. Nonmaleficence (Doing no harm)
3. Beneficence (benefiting others)
4. Justice (being just)
5. Fidelity (being faithful)

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The Five Ethical Principles

Basic principles of Ethics



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The Five Ethical Principles

Respecting autonomy

- The individual has the right to act as a free agent.
- That is, human beings are free to decide how they live their lives as long as their decisions do not negatively impact the lives of others.
- Human beings also have the right to exercise freedom of thought or choice.

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Doing no harm (Nonmaleficence)

- Our interactions with people (within the helping professions or otherwise) should not harm others.
- We should not engage (**be involved**) in any activities that run the risk of harming others.

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Beneficence (benefiting others)

- Our actions should actively promote (help, assist, advance) the health and well-being of others.

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Justice (being just)

- In the broadest sense of the word, this means being fair.
 - This is especially the case when the rights of one individual or group are balanced against another.
 - Being just, however, assumes three standards.
 - They are impartiality (equal treatment), equality, and reciprocity (action that has positive effect and returned with positive effect)
- (based on the golden rule: treat others as you wish to be treated).

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Fidelity (being faithful)

- Being faithful involves loyalty, truthfulness, promise keeping, and respect.
- This principle is related to the treatment of autonomous people.
- Failure to remain faithful (**loyal**) in dealing with others denies (**refuses**) individuals the full opportunity to exercise free choice in a relationship, therefore limiting their autonomy.

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Conclusion

- Ethical principles provide generalized frameworks that may be employed in the resolution of ethical dilemmas in our daily lives.
- These principles may be applied to our interpersonal relationships as well as to our professional lives.

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Conclusion

However, as members of a profession, there are more specific codes of ethics that are designed to govern our professional behaviour and to offer some guidance for the resolution of commonly faced ethical issues that occur in the practice of our chosen professions