

"What Ethical Issues Must a Christian Nurse Face?"

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WHAT IS A NURSE?

The participants will define nursing

- A. List 5 characteristics or values you believe a nurse needs to possess.
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
- B. List 3 roles or responsibilities you value in a nurse.
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

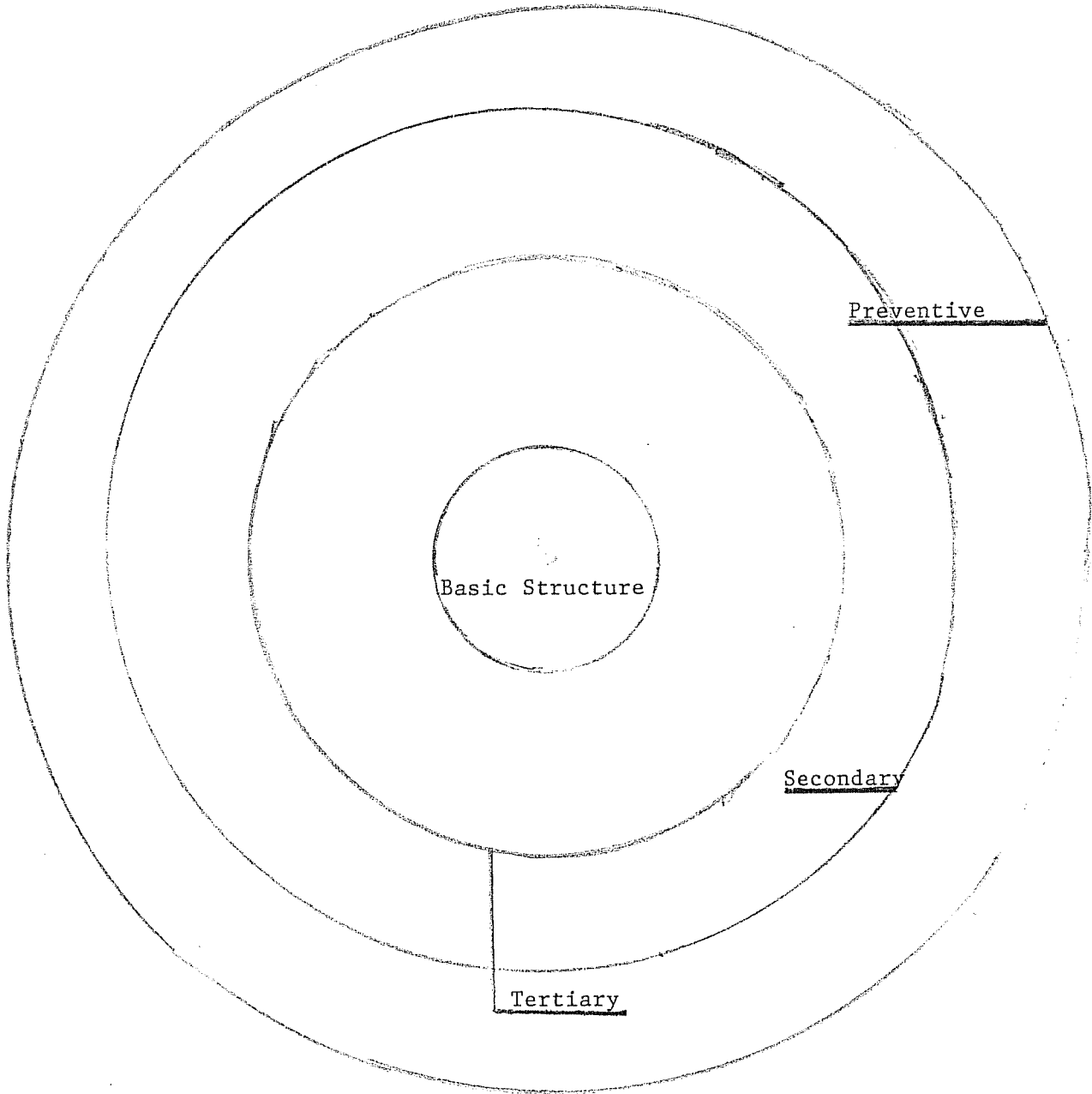
WHAT ARE ETHICS?

Nursing views ethics as:

1. Dealing with choices between two unequal alternatives.
2. That which helps us make decisions, helps us use organized and critical thinking in a logical manner. It is an intellectual process and approach.
3. The what and the how: therefore the nurse takes a stand (position) and knows why.
4. The branch of philosophy that is concerned with human conduct.

ETHICAL SITUATIONS

Incorporating the Neuman Systems Model



Overall, the real dilemma for the nurse is th know why the diseased state has occurred, AND to visualize the needs of the individual.

I. Prevention Sphere

A. Problem: Sexually active 14 year old female (mom) without birth control precautions relates numerable contacts, practices cocaine

B. Nursing ethical issue

1. Teaching and rehabilitative efforts are unlikely to have overnight impact
2. Issues to contend with include socialization, finances, culture, minor

C. Obstacles

1. Time (priority setting)
2. Minor, possible legality issues
3. Money
4. Nurse's Christian value system may be in conflict

D. Choices

1. No action with possible results of
 - a. mom obtaining a sexually transmitted disease and effects of cocaine use
 - b. pregnancy, with
 - aa. premature baby
 - bb. cocaine syndrome
 - cc. disease, such as AIDS
2. Likely "solution" is to
 - a. offer contraceptive
 - b. incorporate mom into health/spiritual education

II. Secondary Sphere

This area deals with treatment after the signs and symptoms of disease have evidenced.

A. Problem

1. Patient admits to "gay practice," enters hospital zone at the end stage of his disease process. The nurse finds him in his hospital bed - alone - with his bed in blood . . . secondary to a profuse nose bleed. The young man is too weak to apply pressure to his nose to stop the bleeding.
2. A scenario from the Mwembezi Lutheran Dispensary in Zambia
Within moments the following life-threatening cases seek help (in addition to the normal clinic routine). All cases are children.
 - a. two cerebral malaria
 - b. two malnourished - severely
 - c. one gasping for air -- and dies

B. Nursing ethical issue

1. Who sets the priorities of which patients receive what care, and the amount of care
2. Essentially, who should live?

C. Obstacles

1. Priority setting
2. In each case, death is a likely expected outcome: with inaccurate priority setting, the nurse could be liable (although this is a major concern of the professional nurse, it is unlikely to occur in the non-American setting and when death has become the accepted outcome of noncurable disease process.)

D. Choices are made with the acceptance that God is in control

1. Hold the nose of the bleeder: the nurse knows why he is ill and also sees the needs of the individual
2. Jesus did not walk away

III. Tertiary Sphere

Deals with maintaining health at the individual's optimum, after a chronic disease has been diagnosed. Examples include arthritis, cancer, and stroke. Although the individual will never be what he/she was like prior to the disease process, an optimal wellness after treatment or rehabilitation may be strived for.

A. Problem

1. Mrs. A. was diagnosed with cancer several years ago. She is admitted to the oncology unit and is the responsibility of Nurse Kate. Kate assumes this assignment in addition to her previously assigned patient load. Mrs. A. says "I have come here to die. I am afraid to be alone. Will you stay with me? Will you pray with me?"
2. An 8 year old child is a victim of an automobile accident. Immediately after the accident he is placed on life support systems. In the days and weeks that follow, he remains in a comatose state.

B. Nursing ethical issues

1. Cancer patient
 - a. Nurse is too busy to spend one-on-one time and prayer time; neither is highly recognized in the areas of
 - aa. peer support
 - bb. hospital staffing needs
 - b. Further pervasive tests, procedures, medications and treatment
2. Child
 - a. How long will the child maintain life on the support systems
 - b. The nurse may be designated to "pull the plug"

C. Obstacles

1. Time
2. Money
3. Nurse's personal evaluation and salary increment
4. Priorities of other patients
5. Responsibilities to peers and other health care professionals
6. Nurse's ability to identify and accept her valued Christian and professional value systems

D. Choices

1. Can advocate the patient's wish to die
2. Can advocate modern technology and research

IV. Summary