

Ph.D. in Health Services
Community Health Specialization

Specialized Knowledge Area Module VI

Contemporary Issues and the Ethical Delivery of Community Health Services

Introduction

Community health practitioners and researchers are confronted by conflicting value systems arising from community, professional, and individual views of health and the meaning and purpose of a healthy lifestyle. How does the community health professional blend the scientific knowledge base with prevailing community beliefs? What is the role of the professional in suggesting or actively intervening in the life of a community to bring about health changes? How does the community health professional advocate for and allocate resources to serve all members of the community while assuring that basic services are available for the underserved? What is the obligation of the community health worker to support collaborative, cooperative, or other forms of interagency coalitions? Should community health professionals advocate for legislative mandates to control and/or change health risk behavior, or should behavior change be based on an individual decision? Ethical theory can assist the community health professional with the decision making process and expose the tension between social system, community, and individual values.

This KAM is designed to challenge and confront your personal and professional beliefs. The study of health care ethics will enable you to develop a conceptual and theoretical framework for addressing ethical issues involved in the delivery of community health education, and health promotion and disease prevention interventions to communities and selected populations. In this KAM you will present an interdisciplinary perspective using ethical theory, concepts, and research evidence combined with your knowledge of community health practice and theory to support building healthy communities. The content presented in this KAM corresponds to the health education competencies of coordinating the provision of health education services, acting as a resource person in health education, and communicating health and health education need, concerns, and resources.

Overall Learning Objectives

Upon completing this KAM, you will be able to demonstrate your understanding of the complexity and interdisciplinary nature of ethical theory concerning the use of health behavior change interventions, health advocacy, and the development of programs to promote health practices (breadth). You will apply ethical theory to demonstrate the use of theory in clarifying contemporary community health issues (depth). You will develop a project to illustrate the integration of ethical theory, a data based issue, and a social/behavioral change issue promoting a health practice in a selected community (application).

Breadth Component

Health Services Delivery and Ethical Implications: Community Health

Learning Outcomes

Upon completing the breadth component of this KAM, you will be able to discuss the relevance of ethical concepts to the practice of community health. You will also illustrate the hidden ethical issues underlying promoting certain health practices in a community. You will be able to explain the major concepts of selected ethical theories in terms of community health programs and services and demonstrate your breadth of knowledge by writing a theory based scholarly paper. The emphasis in the Breadth component is on theoretical-conceptual knowledge regarding ethical reasoning and decision making. Your challenge is to critically analyze various ethical stances through comparing and contrasting the concepts and propositions across theories. Your voice should speak to the theoretical positions most useful in your situation.

Learning Resources

In consultation with your faculty assessor, select five sources that relate to ethical theory and community health. The resources listed serve as examples of literature, which may compose your reading program to include classic, contemporary, and literature from related areas of inquiry.

Books

Beauchamp, T., & Childress, J. (1994). *Principles of biomedical ethics, 4th edition*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Chesworth, J. (1996). *The ecology of health: Issues and Alternatives*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Devettere, R. (1995). *Practical decision making in health care ethics: Cases and concepts*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Duhl, H. (1990). *The social entrepreneurship of change*. New York: Pace University Press.

Journals

O'Connell, J., & Price. (1983). Ethical theories for promoting health through behavior change. *Journal of School Health*, 53, 476-479.

Association for the Advancement of Health Education (1994). Code of ethics for health educators. *Journal of Health Education*, 25, 197-200.

Demonstration of Competence

Design and implement an individual project resulting in a scholarly paper that reflects the relationship of ethical theory to community health issues and concerns. The intent of the paper is to show the usefulness of ethical theory in informing the practice of community health practitioners. What guidance does ethical theory provide in terms of making decisions about the proper use of power and influence? How does the community health educator decide the “right” actions for a community to take? Whose interests are served by a health promotion intervention? How does ethical theory help us to identify the issues involved in any course of action? Which ethical theories speak to the community health professional? Your paper should contrast at least three different ethical theories and clearly demonstrate the relevance of ethics to the practice of community health specialists. The project should be designed in consultation with your assessor, be equivalent to a five credit doctoral seminar, and demonstrate your knowledge of contemporary health ethical theory and dilemmas. Different ethical theorists on comparing and contrasting the conceptual and theoretical issues raise the focus of your study. The main concern is the framework in which decisions are made rather than which decisions to make.

Depth Component

Health Services Delivery and Ethical Decision-Making: Community Health

Learning Outcomes

Upon completing the depth component of this KAM, you will be able to present a compelling and well reasoned argument for advocating a specific health intervention, advocate a particular health promoting disease preventing policy, provide community resources for an undeserved

population or assure greater access to basic health care services to low income, culturally disadvantaged, or culturally isolated clients. You will be able to select and justify your stance through use of an ethical theory and use ethical theory to guide your position.

Learning Resources

Select five books in consultation with your assessor. The works should focus on community health and ethical decision making.

Books

Johnson, K., Grossman, W. & Cassidy, A. (1996), *Collaborating to improve community health: Workbook and guide to best practices in creating healthier communities and populations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass publishers.

Institute of Medicine. (1990). *The future of public health*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

Leviton, L., Needleman, C., & Shapiro, M. (1998). *Confronting public health risks: A decision maker's guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

O'Connor, B. (1995). *Healing Traditions*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Journals

Beauchamp, T., (1978). The regulation of hazards and hazardous behaviors. *Health Education Monographs*, 6, 243-257.

Faden, R. (1987). Ethical Issues in government sponsored public health campaigns. *Health Education Quarterly*, 14, 27-37.

Patterson, S. & Vitello, E. (1993). Ethics in health education: The need to include a model course in professional preparation programs. *Journal of Health Education*, 24, 239-244.

Polivka, B. (1995). A conceptual model for community interagency collaboration. *Image: Journal of nursing scholarship*, 2, 110-115.

Winkler, D. (1978). Coercive measures in health promotion: Can they be justified? *Health Education Monographs*, 6, 223-241.

Demonstration of Competence

Complete both assignments:

1. Compile an annotated bibliography of sources related to ethics and a community health issues should be selected from the following: tobacco reduction, drugs and alcohol, sexual behavior, nutrition, exercise and fitness, stress, unintentional injuries or other issues related to well being and a healthy lifestyle. The bibliography must include a summary and critical analysis for a minimum of fifteen sources and should be drawn primarily from current (past three years) research based articles in scholarly journals.
2. Write a scholarly paper requiring an in-depth examination of the relationship of ethical theory and ethical decision making to a selected community health issues. Issues might center on any of the following: Right to personal choice, truth in advising the public, inviting participation from citizens, professional responsibility, use of controversial interventions to bring about behavior change, role of government in promoting health. For ideas you may wish to consult, refer to Appendix A.

Use the literature sources read for this KAM, including relevant articles from the annotated bibliography, as reference material for this learning project. Papers are expected to address the topic within 25-30 double spaced pages. The depth component assignment is equivalent to a five-quarter credit hours graduate level assignment class in a traditional university setting.

Application Component

Theories Applied in Health Services: Community Health

Learning Objectives

Upon completing the application component of this KAM, you will apply various ethical paradigms to a current issue. You will be able to describe the conflicting values and belief of various community members and community organizations. You will be able to suggest an ethical stance, which may integrate the segments of a community.

Learning Resources

In consultation with your faculty assessor, select at least five readings to use in your application project. Relate readings to the health issue that you will be discussing.

Websites that have research materials useful for the application component:

Midwest bioethics center: www.midbio.com

American health decisions: www.ahd.org

Demonstration of Competence

Complete one of the following assignments:

1. Submit a major work that you have previously completed demonstrating your mastery in applying ethical perspectives to community health issues, which may include an article submitted for publication, a teaching plan, a project report, a grant application. The primary component of your submission is a 7-10 page critical analysis of your previous work based on the knowledge acquired through reading, critical analysis, and reflection while completing this KAM.
2. With guidance from your assessor, design and implement a community health project demonstrating your ability to apply ethical theory to practice based community health situations. Your project should demonstrate familiarity with the literature and critical thinking. This project is equivalent in scope to a four-quarter credit hour doctoral seminar.

Examples of possible projects are outlined in Appendix B. The projects are only suggestions and you may develop an idea not included in the guide. You may present your project in various mediated forms. However, a portion of your project must include a written narrative. Be sure that the project is designed in consultation with your assessor.

Appendix A

Ideas for Depth Demonstration

1. Present and analyze a critical community health issue from a policy and or regulatory stance using current thinking from the literature you are presenting. What are the ethical implications of a community health agency advocating for a particular legislative or legal remedy to a health issue (i.e., regulating smoking behavior through legal mandates)?
2. Describe the ethical debate concerning participation by lay persons in designing and evaluating health promotion programs. With an increasingly knowledgeable public how does the community health professional balance professional knowledge with the needs and concerns of those involved in any social/behavioral change? What role does the community have in establishing the standards for health?
3. Public health departments have to provide essential services to protect the public from disease and disability. With shortages of funds and human resources, where should a local public health department allocate its resources to accomplish the mission? What are essential public health services?
4. Most states have required a health education component as a requirement of high school graduation. Discuss the issue of mandating health education for a community.
5. Worksite health promotion is a strategy to reduce costs and improve employee productivity. Discuss the ethical implications of using health as a means rather than as an end.
6. Discuss the ethical implications of using the media to influence health attitudes and actions. What is the distinction between *providing* versus *manipulating* health information?
7. What is the meaning of informed consent in a health education intervention?
8. Discuss the ethical implications of charging for participation in community health programs. How should a community health organization address the need for income with the need to provide services to the community? What is the role of community public health organizations (i.e., lung, heart, Red Cross, public health departments) in comparison to hospitals and managed care organizations?
9. Discuss the issue of teenage pregnancy from an ethical perspective. Teenage pregnancy is not yet illegal. Would you advocate jail or legal remedies for those who become pregnant as teenagers or who father a child with a teenage female?
10. Community health educators will promote practices based on scientific evidence, which will improve health status. The five a day program was designed to encourage the eating of fresh

fruits and vegetables among low income families. What is the ethical dilemma when the evidence contradicts cultural norms and values?

Appendix B

Ideas for Application Demonstration

1. Submit a major work previously completed that demonstrates mastery of ethical theory and contemporary community health issues. Critique your work based on the acquisition of new knowledge in a 7-10 page paper.
2. Develop a module for community health undergraduate students that discusses professional ethics and the application of ethics to practice situations.
3. Write a case study of ethics in action based on your experiences in a community health organization. Suggest possible solutions to your case.
4. Prepare a white paper for your community health agency advocating from an ethical stance a needed community intervention.
5. Attend a professional conference and comment on how ethics was incorporated or neglected in the presentations. Imagine a dialogue with the presenter: what advice would you provide to encourage the importance of viewing contemporary health issues with an ethical eye?
6. Identify ethical issues related to a community's approach to teenage drug abuse or use of alcohol.
7. Critique a health education program offered in your community from an ethical theory. Who really benefits from the program? Who decides what is best?
8. Lead a professional group in a discussion of critical ethical issues related to your agency. Submit a written summary of the proceedings. Have the participants complete a reaction form showing the value of the activity to their practice.
9. Examine your professional association's code of ethics. Analyze the statements from different ethical perspectives. Where and what is the theory behind the statements?
10. Examine your own practices. Critically reflect on your use of ethics in every day community health situations. Provide examples of your use, the decisions made, and the consequences of your actions.

Appendix C

Criteria for Assessment

Assessment of your competence in this particular knowledge area will encompass three different modes—breadth, depth, and application—based upon demonstrated competence in a specific area in community health. You will be evaluated on the quality of your demonstration of the critical issues (breadth), your presentation of the research supporting the critical issues (depth), and the usefulness of this knowledge to your profession (application). Individual wants and needs, and the expectations of your faculty assessor, will determine the specific nature of your readings and assignments. While we have suggested general assignments for each section of the KAM, we encourage developing a unique approach. In all cases, the project chosen must be the equivalent of a final project in a five-credit doctoral seminar (four credits for the application component).

In addition, written work should be structured in a format acceptable to refereed journals. Although not required, consider developing your application project with a publication or presentation in mind. As your project will reflect a sufficiently high degree of originality, rigor, and quality anyway, a publication or presentation will greatly enhance your professional stature and credibility.

Walden requires documentation of your competence. Think about how you might provide this documentation. In all cases, you will support your work with adequate citations from the scholarly literature. If some of your work needs to be kept confidential, please be sure to clearly communicate this to your assessor. Assessors may require some form of independent evaluation of your work. In many instances, persons who provide an audience for your presentations may supply this evaluation, by colleagues, or clients.

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Appendix D

Selected Journals in Community Health

American Journal of Health Promotion
American Journal of Public Health
Applied Preventive Psychology
Current Issues in Public Health
Family and Community Health
Health Affairs
Health and Hygiene
Health Education
Health Education Quarterly
Health Education and Behavior
Health Education Research
Health Psychology
Hispanic Journal of Behavior Sciences
Hastings Center Report
International Journal of Health Education
Journal of Aging and Health
Journal of Behavioral Medicine
Journal of Community Health Nursing
Journal of the American Medical Association
Journal of Cancer Education
Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved
Journal of Prevention and Intervention in the Community
Journal of Research on Adolescence
Journal of School Health
Journal of School Nursing
Journal of Studies in Alcohol
Journal of Youth and Adolescence
Milbank Quarterly
Medical Care
Medical Care Research and Review
New England Journal of Medicine
Public Health Reports
Qualitative Health Research