



Maintaining True North: Navigating Change as Faith- filled Caregivers

Session I: Why Values Matter

Rev. Tracy J. Trothen, BA, MDiv, ThD, RP

Professor of Ethics

Certified Supervisor-Educator, Clinical Spiritual Health (Canadian Association of Spiritual Care)

Registered Psychotherapist (CRPO)

Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario ©

trothent@queensu.ca

Ethics Theories

- Deontological, Teleological, Virtue
- Christian Virtue Ethics:
 - “Am I doing what is best for my neighbour?”
 - “Am I contributing to society and people’s well-being in a way that I want?”
 - “Am I behaving in a way that is consistent with the person I want to be?”
 - Am I imitating Jesus as well as I can in my imperfect humanity? Faith, hope, love

Virtue Ethics

Asks “What sort of person should I be?”

Emphasis on character not actions

- How can I check my behaviour?
 - search for underlying emotions
 - check values – how do they connect with my choices?
 - publicity test
 - which action best fits with who I am/want to be?



Conscience Exercise

- Sources of Authority
- Chair: Perspective & Community

Values

- Values are sets of beliefs about subjective traits and ideals while principles are more universal (but difficult to interpret)
- “Values pertains to beliefs and attitudes that provide direction to everyday living, whereas ethics pertains to the beliefs we hold about what constitutes right conduct.”

-- Corey, Corey and Callahan: 14



Values

- “Top 5 Values” Exercise – 5 minutes on own

Values Exercise

- Questions 1 & 2: Conversation
- For Question 2: Think of an example that challenges your ability to work in a way that is consistent with your values and an example of when your work place or social setting has fostered your ability to live out those values.

Values Exercise

- Plenary Conversation:
 - What did you learn?
 - Did anything surprise you?
 - Affirm you?
 - Challenge you?



Values and Professional Identity

- We all have times when we feel torn between what we think are the expectations of the workplace—or family or social setting—and our personal values. What do you need to help you with these conflicts?
- Your values affect all aspects of your life including your work and family. Ask yourself: Are my values open to modification? What do I do when I am confronted by someone from a different culture, religious view, or worldview than mine?

Case

James is a 78 year old oncology patient. He has been diagnosed with early stage colon cancer and advised that standard treatment is surgery and additional interventions including chemotherapy.

He is committed to living as generously as possible in this life, being as faithful as possible to the model of Jesus. James believes that he is meant to die shortly; his prayer discernment has confirmed this for him. He is refusing treatment.

You are very frustrated as you know that members of the clinical team see his prognosis as quite good if he agrees to the treatment plan.



It's Not Easy Being Human...

- You are a person.
- You have your own struggles in life.
- You are fallible; we all make mistakes.
- You have your life roles.
- You have your needs.
- You bring a particular history and particular values.
- “You will have difficulty helping [another person] in an area that you are reluctant or fearful to deal with in your own life.” (Corey et al., 47)