

Ethics in mental health and forensic nursing: What would cherry Ames do?

Dian Williams

West Chester University, USA

Ethics is a search for practical wisdom through understanding and guidance. Mental health and forensic practitioners face ethical issues when they confront questions that are value laden and complex and cannot be answered simply. Nurses and other health care providers generally make decisions using situational ethics where the focus is on the relationship between the client and the caregiver. Deviant conduct is considered by practitioners from the perspective of what is considered normal and desirable in society. However, by what moral authority are decisions about normal and deviant made? The presentation approaches the question through a discussion of Guido's (2001) eight principles of practice and their application to the ethics of involuntary confinement. Ethics of punishment are considered from the perspective of the Least Restrictive Doctrine. Finally, the presentation discusses the influence of the early philosophers on nursing practice.

Biography

Dian Williams is a tenured faculty member in the Criminal Justice Department at West Chester University. She wrote a chapter on treatment strategies for firesetters for a forensic textbook published in 2005. She wrote "Understanding the arsonist: From assessment to confession" in 2005. The second edition of the textbook, published in 2013, focuses on expanded research into firesetting as well as investigative interviewing strategies for arsonists and fire bombers. She is editor-in-chief of the *Forensic Digest* and writes articles for it and other scholarly publications on ethics in nursing as well as other topics. She is currently working on an ethics workbook for criminal justice and forensic professionals due to be published in 2014.