

Care

Summary

The focus of this perspective is on RELATIONSHIPS, POWER, and on understanding the STRUCTURES underlying situations. Ethicists using this perspective might examine these aspects of an issue:

1. Vulnerable Populations

- Who makes up the most vulnerable populations?
- Ethical analysis should focus on these populations, because how they are treated in a society reflects the morals of that society.

2. Importance of Experience

- What are the personal and collective experiences of the individuals considered?
- Knowledge that comes from experience is valuable

3. Underlying Structure

- What is the underlying structure of the situation? (Looking at the structure gets us away from labeling 'good' or 'bad' people.)
- How does the structure drive certain aspects of the situation? Is the structure itself oppressive?
- What is being ignored? Is my attention being distracted? Should I be suspicious?
- Who benefits? At whose expense? What is being left out?

4. Relationships

- What are the qualities of the relationships?
- 'Right-relationships' honor the dignity of human beings and are based on mutual benefit instead of domination.

Contributions

- Provides a balance to principle-based approaches
- Provides context

Challenges

- Power structures are not always evident
- Lacks rules or principles that are easy to apply

Modified with permission from Dr. Kelly Fryer-Edwards, University of Washington Department of Medical History and Ethics, 2003. Based on notes from Suzanne Holland, Ph.D., University of Puget Sound.