

LESSON 3:

Finding the Stakeholders

INTRODUCTION

Students read a case study about Dennis, a 14-year-old boy who has been diagnosed with leukemia. The doctors treat the leukemia with chemotherapy, which dramatically reduces the number of Dennis's blood cells. Dennis, however, refuses life-saving blood transfusions because they conflict with his faith. Students identify an ethical question to explore, and consider how the **Principles of Bioethics (Respect for Persons, Maximizing Benefits/Minimizing Harms, and Justice)** relate to the case. Students then identify the stakeholders—the people or institutions that are affected by the outcome—and work in small groups to clarify stakeholder values, interests, and concerns. Stakeholder groups then present their positions to the class as a group.

KEY CONCEPTS

- Personal values contribute to decision-making.
- A stakeholder is any person, institution, or entity that is interested in, invested in, or will be affected by the outcome of the ethical decision.
- Consideration of different stakeholder values and concerns entails viewing dilemmas from different perspectives—“stepping into someone else’s shoes.”
- An answer that satisfies one stakeholder group may conflict with the values of another group or individual; this conflict is often at the heart of an ethical dilemma.
- Not all of the Principles of Bioethics will be equally relevant to any one situation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Identify an ethical question embedded in a case study.
- Characterize stakeholders and their values.
- Apply biomedical ethical principles to a specific ethical question.

CLASS TIME

One class period of 55 minutes.

MATERIALS

Materials	Quantity
Student Handout 2.1— <i>Principles of Bioethics</i> (handed out in <i>Lesson Two</i>)	1 per student
Student Handout 3.1— <i>Dennis’s Decision</i>	1 per student
Student Handout 3.2— <i>Values Definition Table</i>	1 per student
Student Handout 3.3— <i>Facts, Values, and Stakeholders</i>	1 per student
Possible Answers for Student Handout 3.3— <i>Facts, Values, and Stakeholders</i>	1 per student

Student Handout 3.3—*Facts, Values, and Stakeholders* is a type of decision-making framework, or conceptual model. This can serve as a tool to help students think about, and make sense of, their own experience.

TEACHER PREPARATION

Make copies of *Student Handouts*, one per student.

NOTE TO THE TEACHER

In discussing the case, students may focus on Dennis’s religious position and either vilify or support the religion itself. Please be clear that the purpose of analyzing the case is not to evaluate the religion in any way. The underlying matter is one of **autonomy**, not religion. Does Dennis have the right to make independent choices regarding his own life, including which religion to practice?

FRAMING THE LESSON

In *Lesson One*, students learned to identify an ethical question and see how relevant facts can influence decision-making. In *Lesson Two*, students learned the Principles of Bioethics. Today, students will **practice** those skills by identifying an ethical question embedded in a case study, and considering how the Principles of Bioethics relate to the case study. Students are also **introduced** to stakeholder groups—the people or institutions that are affected by an outcome—and look more closely at the values within those groups.

PROCEDURE

Part I: Considering the Principles and Identifying the Ethical Question

Activity Time: 15 minutes

1. If students have not already read the case study for homework after Lesson Two, have students read Student Handout 3.1—*Dennis's Decision*.
2. As a class, refer to the *Principles Poster* (and Student Handout 2.1 from *Lesson Two*) to identify the Principles of Bioethics that are most prominent in the case. Student Handout 2.2—*Focus on the Principles*, which was assigned as homework in *Lesson Two*, will also be useful.
3. Briefly address the main ethical considerations for this case. This case highlights a conflict between **Respect for Persons**, specifically the issue of autonomy (whether Dennis has the right to make choices and take actions based on his personal values and beliefs) and **Maximizing Benefits/Minimizing Harms** (the doctors are in a position to “do good” by providing medical treatment).
4. Consider different ethical questions that could be asked regarding the case. Present (or arrive at through discussion) the following ethical question: “Should Dennis be allowed to reject life-saving medical treatments?”
5. Distribute copies of Student Handout 3.3—*Facts, Values, and Stakeholders*. Have students write down the ethical question on the handout.

Part II: Facts and Questions

Activity Time: 10 minutes

6. Divide the class into groups of 4. In these groups, have students write down the relevant facts from the case, and any questions that remain.

7. As a class, list the **facts** on the board. Have each group share their additions to the whole class list. Allow students to add to *Part II* of Student Handout 3.3—*Facts, Values, and Stakeholders*, if needed.
8. As a class, make a list on the board of the **questions** that remain. Have each group share (or add to) the whole class list. Allow students to add to *Part II* of Student Handout 3.3—*Facts, Values, and Stakeholders*, if needed.

Part III: Stakeholder Values and Principles

Activity Time: 25 minutes

9. Ask the students, “Which individuals and/or institutions have a stake in the outcome? Who has a vested interest and will be affected by the solution to the ethical question?” Tell students these are the **stakeholders** in the case.
10. In small groups, have students brainstorm a list of stakeholders. Tell students not to write on their handouts yet, since there is space for only four stakeholders and more than four exist. How many stakeholder groups can they think of?
11. As a class, list the stakeholders on the board.
12. Have each group share their additions to the whole class list. The list of stakeholders could include:
 - Dennis
 - His aunt
 - His parents
 - The doctors
 - Their religious community
 - Other relatives of Dennis
 - Social services (since Dennis is a minor)
 - The hospital in which this takes place
 - The ethics committee involved in the decision
13. Choose the 4 stakeholders that are most affected by the decision and have students list these on their handout. Those most affected by the decision are probably:
 - Dennis
 - His biological parents
 - His aunt
 - The doctors

14. Assign one stakeholder to each small group (more than one group can represent the same stakeholder, if needed).
15. Distribute copies of Student Handout 3.2—*Values Definition Table*, one per student. Have students consider the values that a stakeholder might bring to the case. What does that stakeholder value? What are his concerns? What does she care about? Encourage students to imagine that they are the stakeholder.
16. Ask students, “If your stakeholder group alone were to make the decision, what would you choose? Why?” and “Do any of the Principles of Bioethics support your position?” Students can refer to Student Handout 2.1—*Principles of Bioethics* to determine which principle(s) best support(s) their stakeholder group’s argument.
17. Have each group prepare a one-minute statement to make to the class from the perspective of their stakeholder.
18. Allow time for each stakeholder group to share their testimony. Other groups should take notes in *Part III* of Student Handout 3.3—*Facts, Values, and Stakeholders*.
19. After the stakeholder statements, asks students if they found it difficult to imagine being a stakeholder with a view different from their own. Acknowledge that it may be difficult to listen and try to understand what others are saying, especially if your personal views are at odds with the stakeholder views.
20. Tell students, “It takes courage to listen and try to understand what others are saying. You respect and honor both yourself and others when you do so.”

Part IV: Values and Principles—What’s the Difference?

Activity Time: 5 minutes

21. Tell students that individual values signify what is important and worthwhile to a person. Individuals have their own values based on many factors, including family, religion, peers, culture, race, social background, and gender.
22. Have students refer to the subjective/objective continuum they worked with in *Lesson Two*. Where would **values** go on the continuum?
23. Tell students that, though many values are highly respected across cultures, values are shaped by personal experience and individual background. This tips “values” toward the subjective end of the continuum.
24. Remind students that the Bioethical Principles are built upon values, but provide unified standards that have been collectively agreed-upon in a process that has been honed over thousands of years (see the *Historical Context* section of Student Handout 2.1—*Principles of Bioethics*.) The Bioethical Principles, when used in conjunction with the facts of a case and consideration of stakeholder viewpoints, help provide a systematic, rational way of working through an ethical question. This tips “bioethical principles” toward the objective end of the continuum, relative to “values.”
25. Ask students, “What if decisions on difficult ethical questions were **only** based on values?” A conflict in stakeholder values is often at the heart of an ethical dilemma. Should the resolution be left to personal preferences—or the person with the loudest voice?

CLOSURE

26. Note that identifying the stakeholders and their concerns and values is a powerful step in analyzing an ethical issue. An answer that satisfies one stakeholder group may conflict with the values of another group or individual; this conflict is often at the heart of an ethical dilemma.
27. Not only can students use the concept of stakeholders to “step outside themselves” and think about the perspectives of others, they can use this information to form solutions that consciously consider those perspectives.
28. Share with students that the Principles of Bioethics are also helpful in analyzing an issue because they help us think about different ethical concerns. Not all of the Principles of Bioethics will be equally relevant to any one situation.

HOMEWORK

Ask students to choose a combination of two values from the list below (or choose your own from Student Handout 3.2—*Values Definition Table*) and write a short (1-2 paragraph), imaginary scenario in which those values conflict and a decision must be made.

- o Honesty vs. Friendship
- o Compassion vs. Utility
- o Generosity vs. Financial Security
- o Sacrifice vs. Personal Happiness
- o Cooperation vs. Independence
- o Status vs. Justice

Example: Cooperation vs. Independence

Daniela liked to work alone; she was good at reading information, understanding things, and pacing herself. One of her teachers was giving extra credit for working on a project in pairs. Daniela's friend, Mary, wanted to work with her. Mary was fun to work with and put in a lot of effort but didn't get the same high grades as Daniela. Mary would benefit from Daniela's help, but Daniela might have to sacrifice some of her high standards. Should she pair up with Mary for the project?

EXTENSION

Ask students to prioritize their 5 top values on Student Handout 3.2—*Values Definition Table*. Ask students what they learned from the activity. Was it difficult? What was challenging about it? Did they learn anything new about themselves and their own priorities?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FROM AN ETHICS PRIMER

The *Lesson Strategies* section has additional information on identifying stakeholders and their values. Specifically, see the section: *Values Prioritization: What is a Value?*

CREDIT

The following sources were used to develop the case study, *Dennis's Decision*.

"Judge Allowed 14-Year-Old Jehovah's Witness to Refuse Potentially Lifesaving Care." *ABC News*, November 29, 2007.

"Judge: Teen can reject treatment on religious grounds." Ostrom, Carol. *The Seattle Times*, November 28, 2007. http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/2004040925_webtransfusion28m.html.

"Boy dies of leukemia after refusing treatment for religious reasons." Black, Cherie. *The Seattle Post Intelligencer*, November 29, 2007. http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/local/341458_leukemia29.html.

Diekema, Doug. Professor of Pediatrics, University of Washington School of Medicine. NWABR Ethics reunion. Seattle, May 17, 2008.

STUDENT HANDOUT 3.1

Dennis's Decision

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Dennis Lindberg had already survived more than most young people by the time he reached the age of 14. Born to drug-addicted parents, Dennis tried to ignore the needles in the toilet and his mom's pale skin and strangely constricted pupils. He was too scared to ask her if she did drugs. Throughout his childhood, Dennis moved constantly and rarely attended school, often being left with neighbors while his parents were getting high.

He had the chance to make a fresh start, however, after his dad was jailed for drug possession. In an effort to save him from suffering while they got their lives back on track, Dennis's parents sent Dennis to live with his aunt and gave her guardianship of the boy. Over the next four years, Dennis flourished in his aunt's home. He began attending school regularly, made friends, and found comfort in regular meetings of the religious community to which his aunt belonged. Dennis soon expressed interest in joining the congregation and did so. He participated fully in the life of the congregation, and spent many Saturdays witnessing door-to-door about the evils of drugs—the effects of which had touched him personally.

Then, at the age of 14, Dennis received grim news. He had leukemia and would need immediate treatment to survive. Dennis was diagnosed with acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL), a type of cancer that affects blood or bone marrow. ALL is the most common type of leukemia in children under age 15, and doctors gave Dennis a 70% chance of full recovery if he underwent chemotherapy and repeated blood transfusions over the course of three years. In chemotherapy, patients are treated with drugs to kill the affected cells. Because bone marrow produces blood cells, chemotherapy causes a dramatic decrease in the number of blood cells the patient has. To make up for the lost blood cells, the patient is given blood transfusions. Without the transfusions, the patient will die. Dennis was prepared to begin chemotherapy immediately, but recognized that blood transfusions conflicted with his faith.

Dennis's religious faith teaches that blood is sacred in God's eyes, that the soul or life is in the blood. Because of this, members of Dennis's faith believe it is wrong to eat blood or to eat any animal that has not been properly bled. Likewise, they believe blood transfusions are wrong and that if they receive blood they are breaking God's laws. Although blood transfusions are prohibited, the faith is not anti-medicine.

Dennis was clear with his doctors when they began chemotherapy that he would refuse blood transfusions. He even threatened to pull out the IV if they attempted to give him blood, which meant that physical force would be required, not once, but repeatedly, as Dennis received ongoing treatment. His aunt agreed with his decision, as did members of his congregation. When his biological parents found out, however, they were stunned—not members of that religion themselves, they wanted doctors to do everything possible to save their son. Since giving up custody of Dennis, his parents had completed drug treatment and were now sober. They felt they should have a say in this life or death decision. As Dennis's blood count dipped dangerously low, his doctors struggled with what they should do, and an ethics board from the hospital was engaged.

Based on a factual story. Please see the Teacher Resource section for source information.

Contributed by Jodie Spitze, Kent-Meridian High School

STUDENT HANDOUT 3.2

Values Definition Table

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Value	Definition
Altruism	Caring for others without regard to yourself.
Assertiveness	Being confident and knowing you deserve respect.
Autonomy	Being free to guide and control yourself, and make your own choices.
Caring	Feeling and showing concern for others.
Compassion	Being deeply aware of and wanting to lessen the suffering of others.
Cooperation	Working willingly with others to accomplish something.
Courage	Ability to face danger, fear, and obstacles with confidence.
Diversity	Respecting and wanting difference and variety.
Equality	Believing that everyone deserves the same treatment.
Fairness	Strictly following what you believe is fair and just.
Financial Security	Having enough money to lead a secure and comfortable life.
Friendship	Having a relationship based on mutual respect and good will.
Generosity	Willingness and desire to give.
Helping others	“Doing good” by directly helping others and acting in their best interest.
Honesty	Acting in a straightforward and fair manner.
Humility	Feeling that you are no better than other people.
Independence	Being able to do things for yourself and be self-reliant.
Individual Potential	Ability to contribute or make an impact in the future.
Lawfulness	Following the rules of what is required in a given situation.
Love	Feeling a deep, tender affection or attachment.
Loyalty	Feeling devotion, attachment, and affection toward a person or idea.
Perseverance	Being continuously steady in effort or belief.
Personal Happiness	Feeling pleasure, satisfaction, or joy.
Personal Safety	Being free from danger, risk, or injury.
Power	Being capable of exerting force or authority to act effectively.
Practicality	Being efficient, level-headed, and useful.
Resourcefulness	Ability to act effectively and creatively, especially in tough situations.
Respect	Valuing individual worth and dignity.
Responsibility	Being accountable and answerable for something.
Sacrifice	Willingness to give up a thing for something else more important.
Self-Control	Being able to control your emotions, desire, or actions.
Stability	Being free from variation or change.
Status	Having high standing or prestige.
Tolerance	Recognizing and respecting the beliefs and practices of others.
Usefulness	Being of practical use and able to provide service.
Wisdom	Ability to make good decisions based on experience and learning.

List adapted from the Ethics Resource Center (ERC), <http://www.ethics.org/resource/definitions-values>.

STUDENT HANDOUT 3.3

Facts, Values, and Stakeholders

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Part I: Ethical Question		
Part II: Facts and Questions		
Relevant facts (known)	Questions that remain (unknown, need to know)	
Part III: Stakeholder Values		
Stakeholders (people/entities affected by the decision)	Values/concerns of each stakeholder	Bioethical Principle(s) given priority
_____	▶	▶
_____	▶	▶
_____	▶	▶
_____	▶	▶
_____	▶	▶
<p>If your stakeholder group alone were to make the decision, what would you choose? Why?</p> <div style="height: 100px;"></div>		

HANDOUT

Possible Answers for STUDENT HANDOUT 3.3

Facts, Values, and Stakeholders

Answers can vary widely. Possible answers are below.

Part I: Ethical Question		
<p><i>"Should Dennis be allowed to reject medical treatments that would save his life?"</i></p>		
Part II: Facts and Questions		
<p>Relevant facts (known)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dennis is 14 years old—still a minor.</i> • <i>His aunt has legal custody of him.</i> • <i>To treat leukemia, patients undergo chemotherapy. This kills the diseased cells, but also kills off "good" blood cells made in the bone marrow. Patients undergoing treatment for leukemia will die without transfusions of healthy blood cells.</i> • <i>Dennis would need transfusions for about three years.</i> • <i>Dennis's parents gave custody to his aunt because they were unable to care for him while in jail and/or addicted to drugs.</i> • <i>Dennis has a 70% chance of survival with treatment.</i> 	<p>Questions that remain (unknown, need to know)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Are there any other treatments for leukemia that don't require blood transfusions?</i> • <i>Why did the doctors begin chemotherapy if they knew Dennis would refuse blood transfusions?</i> • <i>What is the relationship like between Dennis and his aunt? Dennis and his biological parents?</i> • <i>Does the hospital have a policy on blood transfusions and minors?</i> 	
Part III: Stakeholder Values		
Stakeholders (people/entities affected by the decision)	Values/concerns of each stakeholder	Bioethical Principle(s) given priority
Dennis	<i>Dennis is being loyal to his beliefs, even if it means sacrificing his life for something he feels is greater than himself.</i>	<i>Respect for Persons (autonomy)</i>
The doctors	<i>They want to provide service to their patient (value of usefulness) and preserve Dennis's life. As doctors, they would also be concerned about the wishes of their patient.</i>	<i>Maximizing Benefits/ Minimizing Harms</i>
Dennis's biological parents	<i>They value the life of their son over his belief system. They care for and love their son.</i>	<i>Maximizing Benefits/ Minimizing Harms Some Justice issues (Is it fair if they have no voice?)</i>
Dennis's aunt	<i>Dennis's aunt is supporting Dennis's independence (autonomy) and remaining loyal, or obedient, to their beliefs. She undoubtedly cares for and loves him, too.</i>	<i>Respect for Persons (autonomy)</i>
<p>If your stakeholder group alone were to make the decision, what would you choose? Why?</p>		