

Would you refer a patient to a colleague who is a friend even though you know, the colleague does inferior work or is not the best or most qualified to treat the patient?

Example: A periodontal patient presents in my chair and there is a fellow hygienist in the office who has experience in treating periodontal patients but not necessarily qualified in that field. As hygienist we are not allowed to refer a patient to a periodontal office for treatment, So I would consult with the supervising dentist and ask for their opinion on referring this patient to a different office.

1. Identify the ethical dilemma

-The principle in conflict is I would want to refer a patient to my colleague, because they are my friend and I want to help them acquire patients. Although, I know that they do inferior work than

2. Collect information

-The conflict began because I had a periodontal patient in my chair and I felt that I could not give them the proper care that they needed. This patient knows my colleague who has some periodontal experience. I know that this patient would not get the appropriate treatment in our office, they would need to be referred to an office that specializes in periodontitis. I would need to get the dentist's opinion about this patient's periodontal status and have them refer the patient to another office.

3. State the options

-we keep the patient in the office and refer to colleague: The patient might not receive the proper care they need to treat the periodontitis. If this wasn't treated properly then it could progress.

-consult Dentist about sending to specialist: The consequence of this would be that my colleague would not acquire a new patient.

4. Apply the ethical principle to the options

-Keep the patient in the office and refer to colleague: Non-Maleficence and Societal trust.

-Consult dentist about sending to specialist: Beneficence, non-maleficence and societal trust

5. Make the decision:

Non-maleficence and societal trust: (CON) Keeping the patient in the office and referring them to a colleague would cause harm to the patient and I could possibly lose the trust of my patient if they didn't get the care that they need. (PRO) My colleague would gain a new patient and make more money.

Beneficence, non-maleficence and societal trust: (CON)--- my colleague would not gain a new patient or make more money. (PRO)—My patient would get the proper care that they need to stop the progression of the periodontitis and increase their oral hygiene at home. If my patient is referred to the appropriate specialist, they would trust me and continue coming back to see me because they would get the proper care for their oral health. Because I referred the patient properly, they would not be treated by someone who isn't adequately trained.

I would not refer this patient to the colleague in my office, this patient would be referred to a periodontal office where they would receive the proper care. Referred by the dentist.