Answer Guidance

# Chapter 19: Clinical decision-making

## Activity answer guidance

### Activity 19.1

Reflect on the decision-making skills you have engaged during your experience of patient care so far:

Can you identify an aspect of a decision-making skill gained in one setting that you have been able to apply in a different setting?

#### Answer guidance:

*Here are some examples of decisions you might have made in clinical practice:*

 *Intuition- recognising that a patient just does not seem “right” and is about to deteriorate.*

 *Reflection on previous experience–performing a certain task over and over and developing your knowledge, skills, and attitude towards that task.*

 *Patient and peer aided–perhaps undertaking a drug round and learning from your patients and practice supervisor about the drugs and their uses.*

 *System aided–for example undertaking a NEWS2 assessment, a Waterlow score, a MUST assessment, or measuring for anti-embolic stockings.*

 *Critical review of evidence- reading a policy or guidance, for example, a certain surgical procedure or a care pathway.*

## Case study answer guidance

### Case Study 19.1: Bianca

Bianca is a 14-year-old girl who has attended a sexual health clinic. She is accompanied by her friend Abby, who is of the same age. Bianca admits to having unprotected sexual intercourse (UPSI) two days ago and is requesting the emergency contraceptive pill. Her boyfriend is of similar age (15) and she admits that they were both under the influence of alcohol at the time of UPSI so condoms were not used.

Bianca is adamant that her parents are not informed as due to religious beliefs they do not agree with sex before marriage. This was her first sexual encounter and she says she bitterly regrets it. She says “I know I have let my parents down—I feel so bad…” She also says that since the episode of UPSI she has been getting a stinging sensation when she passes urine.

Sharon, the nurse, asks a series of open-ended questions that allow Bianca to explore her feelings so her emotional needs could be assessed. This also enables Sharon to appreciate the patient’s spiritual and cultural health beliefs, so these can be considered when making decisions about her care.

Bianca’s physical needs are assessed by asking relevant questions and taking specimens for clinical tests. These indicate that Bianca has a urinary tract infection and that, as her last menstrual bleed was two weeks ago, she is mid-cycle and so at high risk of pregnancy.

In assessing Bianca, Sharon decided that she is Fraser-competent. Bianca has stated that she did not feel coerced and that they both consented to sexual activity although she now regrets it.

Sharon encourages Bianca to consider talking to her parents or a responsible adult whom she feels safe confiding in.

The emergency contraceptive pill is prescribed for Bianca with follow-up advice on sexual health screening. Sharon is also aware of the high incidence of teenage pregnancies in the United Kingdom and their financial and emotional impact, and so she talks to Bianca about awareness of the use of long-term reversible contraception. Furthermore, she invites Bianca and her friend to attend the youth clinic that she runs with voluntary and public health organisations.

Can you identify the core aspects of the holistic care provided to Bianca?

#### Answer guidance:

 ***Psychological needs****—Through a facilitative approach, the nurse helps Bianca to explore her feelings. Through the use of open-ended questioning, Bianca expresses feelings of guilt and regret. The nurse is then able to offer support to Bianca and advise her to consider the possibility of confiding in her parents or a responsible adult.*

 ***Physical needs****—The nurse addresses this by taking a detailed medical history and performing the relevant tests. She is then able to treat Bianca for her urinary tract infection and prescribe her the emergency contraception.*

 ***Ethical decisions****—A non-judgemental approach to decision-making is essential. Consent, mental capacity, and informed choice will be ensured.*

 ***Social needs****—Lifestyle and support networks will be considered in the decision-making process. The nurse has offered Bianca and her friend the opportunity to attend a youth clinic where health promotion will be considered within a safe and comfortable environment. The nurse has also elicited the age of Bianca’s sexual partner thus ensuring safeguarding issues are explored.*

 ***Economic needs****—The nurse is aware of the high rates of teenage pregnancies and considers future planning to develop a preventative approach, for example, the use of long-acting reversible contraception and sexual health screening.*

 ***Spiritual and cultural needs****—Through active listening, the nurse facilitates Bianca in expressing her feelings and beliefs. This will help Bianca and the nurse to identify specific needs centred on spirituality that will help to promote preventative care in the future.*

## Case study 19.2: Tony

Tony is a 19-year-old male newly diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes who has been admitted to the ward due to the third episode of ketoacidosis. Initially, Tony was given intravenous fluids and put on a sliding scale insulin infusion pump so that his blood glucose and dehydration could be corrected.

Once ketoacidosis was corrected, it was hoped that Tony would be willing to take control of his health and actively take part in the decision-making process for his care.

However, Tony seemed withdrawn and distant. He did not make eye contact when the nurse delivered his care and refused to take part in checking his blood glucose or self-injecting his insulin. Tony says he “doesn’t see the point in any of it as having diabetes has stunted his dream and ambitions.”

The nurse decided that Tony would benefit from seeing a counsellor explore his feelings and come to terms with his diagnosis. A referral was made to the counsellor with Tony’s consent.

 What decision types have the nurse used in caring for Tony? (Use Table 20.1 for reference.)

 What factors do you think influenced the nurse’s decision to refer Tony to a counsellor?

#### Answer guidance:

*There are a number of decision types the nurse has implemented in the case with Tony.*

 ***Prevention****—The nurse wants Tony to take control of his condition so that future complications of diabetes can be avoided.*

 ***Timing****—This was crucial as the nurse knew that Tony’s condition needed to be stabilised before he could consider counselling and taking ownership of his health.*

 ***Referral****—The nurse was able to identify the appropriate healthcare professional (counsellor) that Tony needed to see in order to have the correct expertise in helping him to come to terms with his condition.*

 ***Communication****– Active listening and a facilitative communicative approach was applied in the decision-making process.*

*The nurse was able to empathetically respond to the verbal and non-verbal cues that Tony demonstrated and recognised that Tony was grieving and worried about having diabetes. Responding to Tony’s emotions and awareness of the anxiety and worry patients face with having a new diagnosis of a long-term condition influenced the nurse’s decision in referring Tony to a counsellor.*

### Case study 19.3: Steven

Steven is a 19-year-old man recently diagnosed with schizophrenia. His condition was diagnosed during his first year of university, which Steven’s parents found devastating. Ruomei, the mental health nurse in charge of his care, spent a lot of time with Steven and his parents, offering them timely information and support that helped them to understand the condition and provided them with continuous reassurance. Ruomei worked collaboratively with Steven and his family, the university, and the mental health team in organising and coordinating his care, following informed consent.

Nine months later, with a good support network, Steven was able to resume his studies. Ruomei continues to have regular reviews with Steven, and his parents now feel confident that he will be able to lead a full and happy life. Steven and his parents agree that because Ruomei had specialist knowledge about schizophrenia and continuously involved them in Steven’s care, they felt reassured at a time when they felt most vulnerable.

Reflect on a situation in which you actively involved a patient’s family in the patient’s care.

Did this alter the way you made decisions when planning the patient’s care?

#### Answer guidance:

*This is a really positive example of a nurse working collaboratively with a patient and their family to ensure their needs are met and they are able to move forwards with their lives. You* *may also have collaborated with patients to make decisions about their care to ensure a positive outcome. Examples may include:*

 *Motivational interviewing with a family to enable a patient to make healthy life choices*

 *Collaborative decision making around the end of care*

 *Making decisions collaboratively when the patient does not have capacity*

 *Planning for discharge*

 *A rehabilitation plan*

 *Working with a family to encourage increased diet and fluid*

*Working collaboratively with a family may have changed the way you make decisions. You might have:*

 *Explained things in more detail and took your time*

 *Explained things more simply and found leaflets or videos to help explain*

 *Taken a more person-centred approach, considering their wishes and values- even when they can't communicate those*

 *A more holistic approach*

 *Less likely to stick to rigid pathways and routines*