Abbreviated Realm-Individual Process-Situation (RIPS) Decision-Making Model for Physical Therapy

Developed by Laura Lee (Dolly) Swisher based on the ideas of Rushworth Kidder, *How Good People Make Tough Choices: Resolving the Dilemmas of Ethical Living* (HarperCollins, 1995), *Three Realms of Ethics: Individual Institutional Societal: Theoretical Model and Case Studies* (Rowman and Littlefield, 1994) by Jack Glaser, the Four-Component Model of James Rest, and Ruth Purtilo's description of ethical situations.

Steps	Notes
Step 1 — Recognize and define the ethical issues Are there conflicting ethical principles, values or virtues? If so, what are they (autonomy versus beneficence, for example)? The following questions may help you to determine the type of response that is required. • **R**: Does the problem seem to be one of the individual, organizational, or societal realm(s)? (Limit extensive consideration of the realm until later in your analysis to keep your focus on specific problems early on.) • **IP**: Does this appear to be more a problem of moral sensitivity, moral judgment, moral motivation, or moral courage? • **S**: Is this an ethical issue, dilemma, ethical distress, ethical temptation, or moral silence?	
Step 2 – Reflect Consider information from step one, facts and contextual information, stakeholders, consequences (intended and unintended), laws, duties, obligations, ethical principles, professional resources (code of ethics, guide for professional conduct, core values), and the five tests for right versus wrong.	
Step 3 – Make a decision Select an appropriate approach to resolve the problem: • Rule-based = uses timeless rules of conduct (Kantian deontological) or medical ethical principles (autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, confidentiality, fidelity, paternalism, or others) • Ends-based = based on projected consequences (for example, utilitarianism) or goals • Care-based) = golden rule or relationship based Why have you selected this approach?	
Step 4 – Implement, evaluate, re-assess What are the barriers to implementation? Evaluate the process, outcomes, and lessons of this ethical situation. Do organizational, structural, or policies require revision? Return to consideration of the realm in terms of implementation. Summarize the main elements of an appropriate plan of action.	