

# Tricia's Story:

## I'm Not Earth Anymore

Tricia Carson, a mother of three with breast cancer, questions difficult moral and spiritual issues as she faces a terminal illness.

### Questions to facilitate a foundational ethics process:

1. What appears to be the main issue that Tricia is voicing?
2. Name all the stakeholders in this story. Be brave and prioritize them.
3. If it's recommended, Tricia has to decide if she would have further chemotherapy. Discuss with your group her decisional capacity, and the impact depression might have on decision making. Using the ethical principle of beneficence, how would a doctor or nurse formulate an argument for continuing treatment?
4. How do you relate to a patient's unease when her friends are praying for her "healing?"

### Questions to facilitate an advanced ethical process:

1. How would you justify different options with ethical principles when the principles appear to be in conflict? For example: Tricia's autonomy and beneficence for her children, or non-maleficence for Tricia and justice for her family?
2. Give an argument for or against aggressive or comfort care if you were Tricia. Using the principle of proportionate/disproportionate means (ordinary/extraordinary care), how would you justify Tricia's argument that "enough is enough?"
3. What do you believe your professional duties are when patients are having spiritual or religious conflicts that directly relate to their health and healthcare choices?
4. This woman is an attorney. Who has the responsibility to delve into the topic of advance directives with her and get the job done? Give examples of four different people along the continuum of someone's care who have some responsibility to broach the issue of advance care directives.

# Sheila's Story:

## A Song Outta Tune

Sheila is HIV positive and lacks insurance. She discusses her outlooks on life and death and her relationship with the healthcare system.

### Questions to facilitate a foundational ethics process:

1. Point out instances when Sheila uses ethical principles such as autonomy, beneficence, justice, truth-telling, and promise-keeping in her monologue.
2. What aspects of Sheila's life and illness make it difficult to care for her, and what biases or prejudices do you have regarding stories like Sheila's? What attitudes need you change about yourself to be a good healthcare provider?
3. Name specific ways that Sheila's view of end-of-life care is the same as what professionals call comfort care.
4. Reflect on Sheila's past experiences with death and how they impact her own values regarding death. Do the same with your own experiences of death, and how they influence your values on this subject.

### Questions to facilitate an advanced ethical process:

1. Discuss other theories and apply them to this drama: narrative ethics, the ethics of care, virtue ethics, and utilitarianism.
2. Discuss broader justice issues such as resource allocation and issues relating to non-compliance raised in this drama.
3. Sheila portrays someone who makes choices that may not be viewed by healthcare providers as being in her best interest. Think of other situations in which patients make bad decisions, and discuss the ethical implications.

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www.ethicsthruddrama.com*

*Ethical Education through Presentation and Dramatics*

# Claire's Story:

## Ethical Issues at the End of Life

Claire is a Registered Nurse who is dying from ovarian cancer. She shares what it is like to be the one in the bed.

### Questions to facilitate a foundational ethics process:

1. Claire's story represents more of what might be called "everyday ethics." As you listen to her talk, what values do you hear her express? How could healthcare providers respond to those values? Justify your responses with various ethical principles.
2. What are the major responsibilities for healthcare providers when caring for patients like Claire? Explore areas such as communication, privacy, insensitivity, treatment goals, fear of being alone, and social issues.
3. What professional obligations do nurses and physicians have when managing pain in situations such as this one? Discuss a pain protocol that might have been appropriate. Discuss the education of most physicians and nurses, and what can be done to improve it.
4. Recount everyday-type occurrences in your daily work where a more ethical provision of care could be offered.

### Questions to facilitate an advanced ethical process:

1. Familiarize your group with the theory of the ethic of care and apply the theory to the relationships Claire refers to in her monologue.
2. Discuss the dilemmas that healthcare staff experience when a physician may or may not be fully honest with the patient. What does the term "recommended protocol" mean to you?
3. Describe in detail the ways that palliative care benefits patients such as Claire, and how the transition from aggressive care to comfort care can be more seamless. What, if any, do you think the financial implications are for patients like Claire when considering palliative care?
4. What ethical language do you use when approaching the issue of futility?

# Ethics Thru Drama

## A Three-Part Video Series

Julie Russell, RN, and Helen Emmott, RN, combine their talents to make ethics and other healthcare-related topics easily explored and understood. Julie's dramatic monologues provide an aperture for learning through the experiences of others.

Julie and Helen believe, with their late friend and colleague, William G. Bartholome, pediatrician and bioethicist, that:



*"We teach and learn what it means to be healthcare professionals through cases, the sharing of clinical narratives or stories. Although we have discovered the effectiveness of literature as a vehicle for sharing these stories, the most powerful way of teaching and learning illness narratives is through drama, through actual performances of patients' stories."*

### This Study Guide includes both foundational and advanced tracks.

For presentations, performances, or additional information about Julie and Helen's work, contact them at [info@ethicsthudrama.com](mailto:info@ethicsthudrama.com) or visit their website: [www.ethicsthudrama.com](http://www.ethicsthudrama.com)

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# Ethics Thru Drama

The **Ethics Thru Drama** series was produced by **TAKE TEN**, Inc. and directed by Linda Haskins

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## A Three-Part Video Series

Every day in the lives of terminally-ill patients presents a host of decisions for patients, families, and members of the healthcare team. As science and technology continue to evolve, ethical evaluations and discussions become necessary steps in approaching these complex decisions. Learning to facilitate and participate in these processes is essential to the healthcare provider. In these engaging videos, Julie Russell, a nurse dramatist, presents dilemmas not unlike those faced by patients, families, and healthcare providers across the continuum of care on any given day.

Utilize these dramatic monologues for learning experiences that are case-based and interactive. The programs were developed with both professionals and healthcare students in mind.



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