



# Navigating Ethical Dilemmas in PA Interviews

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# Why Ethics Matter in PA Interviews

- **Autonomy:** Respecting a patient's right to make their own decisions, even if you disagree (e.g., a terminally ill patient choosing to stop treatment).
- **Beneficence:** Acting in the patient's best interest by choosing treatments that maximize benefits and well-being.
- **Non-Maleficence:** Avoiding harm, even with good intentions (e.g., weighing risks vs. benefits of a treatment).
- **Justice:** Ensuring fair and equal access to care for all patients, regardless of background.



# Common Ethical Questions in PA Interviews

- **Confidentiality:** "A patient asks you to keep something secret from the doctor. What do you do?"
- **Scope of Practice:** "You see a doctor making a mistake. How do you respond?"
- **Patient Autonomy vs. Beneficence:** "A patient refuses treatment that could save their life. What do you do?"
- **Team Conflict:** "A supervising physician pressures you to do something outside your scope. How do you handle it?"

# How to Tackle Ethical Questions In Your Interview



Understand the Principles

Use Real-Life Scenarios

Show Balance

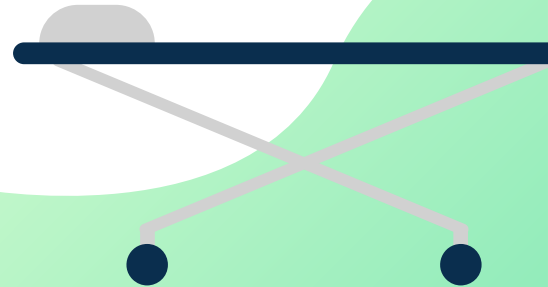
Be Honest and Reflective



You're in PA school, and one of your close friends has been struggling with stress and start seeing signs of drug use. One day, you catch them using. You worry about their well-being but also about their future patients' safety.

**How do you handle this situation?**

Take 1 minute to talk about what you would do with the person beside you!





### From Tracy, a current PA who got into PA school:

I'd make sure to talk to my friend in a safe and non judgmental environment and to ask them what's going on in their lives because there could be other things going on in their life that, aside from how hard PA school is, there could be personal issues or there could be a miscommunication and the friend might not be taking drugs at all! I would want to be a supportive friend. If they answer that they have difficulties in PA school and drugs are how they cope with it, then I would talk about my own difficulties and how I cope with it. I would work together with this friend to develop a better coping mechanism that don't involve drugs. If the friend now says that they might be addicted to drugs, I would empathize with my friend because I had a family member who was addicted to drugs and alcohol and I would advise my friend in this moment to speak with faculty of our program about ways that they can overcome this challenge. If they don't want to go in person to see a faculty member, I would totally understand since this is a very serious topic and people might not want to face that sort of in person confrontation so I would advise to send an email and go with the classmate to talk with a faculty member. If the classmate does not want any help, I would ask fellow classmates what they would do in this situation. If they continue using despite multiple warnings and it puts patient safety and their own safety at risk, I would have an ethical duty to report it to faculty.

**What do you notice about what she said in her answer? What are some of the strengths of this response?**



## From Tracy, a current PA who got into PA school:

I'd make sure to talk to my friend in a **safe and non judgmental** environment and to ask them what's going on in their lives because there could be other things going on in their life that, aside from how hard PA school is. There could be personal issues happening in their life or it could even be that when I caught them I mistakenly thought they were using drugs when they might not have been taking drugs at all! I would want to be **a supportive friend**. If they answer that they have difficulties in PA school and drugs are how they cope with it, then I would talk about **my own difficulties and how I cope with it**. I would work together with this friend to **develop a better coping mechanism** that don't involve drugs. If the friend now says that they might be addicted to drugs, **I would empathize with my friend** because I had a family member who was addicted to drugs and alcohol and **I would advise my friend in this moment to speak with faculty of our program** about ways that they can overcome this challenge. If they don't want to go in person to see a faculty member, **I would totally understand** since this is a very serious topic and people might not want to face that sort of in person confrontation so I would advise to send an email and **go with the classmate to talk with a faculty member**. If the classmate does not want any help, I would **ask fellow classmates what they would do** in this situation. If they continue using despite multiple warnings and it puts patient safety and their own safety at risk, **I would have an ethical duty to report it to faculty.**

# IDEA Framework

**I**dentify the ethical issue

**D**etermine the stakeholders  
(patient, physician, PA,  
hospital)

**E**valuate possible solutions  
(pros & cons)

**A**ct with professionalism






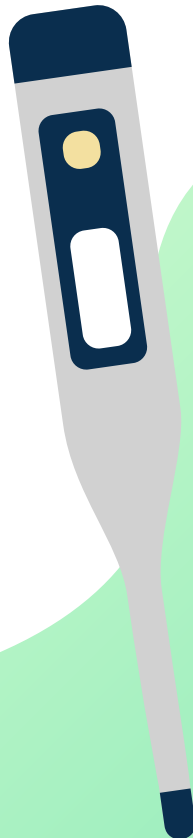
# References

- <https://prepaclinic.com/nailing-pa-school-interview-questions-about-medical-ethics/>
- <https://prepaclinic.com/top-5-mmi-ethical-scenario-based-questions-and-how-to-nail-them/>
- <https://www.tiktok.com/t/ZT2ymjQG7/>





Thank You!  
Any Questions?

The image features a light green background with large, soft-edged green shapes. In the center, the text "Thank You!" and "Any Questions?" is written in a green, cursive-style font. To the left of the text is a stylized stethoscope with a grey tube and dark blue accents. To the right is a stylized thermometer with a grey body, dark blue top and bottom, and a yellow dot indicating a reading.