**Unit 4 Assignment Introduction**

As an advanced practice nurse, you will face many dilemmas. It is important to have a clear set of principles to deal with these issues. Knowing the difference among legal, ethical, and moral precepts is a starting point to determine what the right thing to do is.

Ethical models help to delineate and sort through ethical issues. Understanding moral principles such as patients’ right to autonomy, beneficence, nonmalfeasance, veracity, freedom, fidelity, justice, and confidentiality provide guidelines to make decisions.

Many times, families want to make decisions for patients. Knowing when a health care proxy or directive is in effect is important. Advance care directives have legal, health, and financial implications. Many confuse the power of attorney as a health care directive. It is not; it is a legal document that directs the finances of a client or patient. It does not give the power of attorney the right to make end of life decisions.

Heath care directives usually come into effect when the person is incompetent and cannot make decisions on their own. Many families try to make decisions for their loved ones before they are rendered incompetent. As nurses, it important to respect the autonomy of our patients and respect their dignity and ability to make their own decisions.