

CASE 20R

You coordinate and supervise the activities of volunteer workers at a church-operated nursing home. Mrs. Adams is a volunteer of many years' service who has given substantial gifts of furnishings and equipment to the home. She is a cheerful, breezy sort of person and good with patients. She and several of her friends often organize outings for patients, driving them in their cars to picnics or outdoor concerts. Some of the things the volunteers arrange are not strictly covered by the insurance the home carries. One of the questionable items is patients' travel in a private car. When you mentioned this, Mrs. Adams said, "Oh, now, let's not get tied up in regulations—it's important for these dear people to have a good time. Don't worry—we'll take good care of them." She gave you a broad grin and went ahead with her outing.

This morning you discover that Mrs. Adams has told an elderly patient that she is planning an overnight trip to the patient's hometown and has invited the patient to go with her. The patient is excitedly anticipating the trip. The nursing home administrator has heard about their plans and tells you that not only are trips by private car questionable, but overnight trips are expressly excluded from insurance coverage. "However," the administrator says, "Mrs. Adams is a great asset to us, and I don't want to lose her any more than you do. I'll go along with whatever you decide."

5 = VERY LIKELY 4 = LIKELY 3 = POSSIBLY 2 = UNLIKELY 1 = VERY UNLIKELY

What, if anything, would you tell Mrs. Adams about the proposed trip?

418. Allow the patient to go but ask Mrs. Adams to check future plans with me before announcing them.
419. Inform Mrs. Adams about the policy on overnight trips, and, as tactfully as possible, tell her that the patient cannot go.
420. Meet with Mrs. Adams and the patient to tell them about the policy and involve them in coming to a solution.
421. Allow the patient to go but resolve to talk to Mrs. Adams about the problem when there is opportunity later.
422. In Mrs. Adams' absence try to persuade the elderly patient not to go by outlining the kind of trouble Mrs. Adams could get into if she takes the elderly patient with her.
423. Insist that the administrator handle the problem.
424. Express appreciation for Mrs. Adams' dedication, interest, and enthusiasm but say the home must be protected from the possible long-range effects of any trouble occurring on the trip.
425. Nothing—arrange to be away from the home when she comes to pick up the patient.

On the basis of what principle, theory, or belief would you be operating?

426. It is a mistake to take on more responsibility than is rightfully assigned with a particular task.
427. Mrs. Adams is an obvious asset to the home, and great care should be taken not to offend her.
428. The institution's long-term future must be protected, even at the cost of offending a particular person.
429. People are people, whether institutionalized or not; their feelings are paramount where there is conflict.
430. People tend to be more willing to change when they understand your position as well as their own.
431. It's best to be away at strategic times so that over-rigid rules can be bent.
432. Plans already made by one under supervision should not be altered by a superior except in extreme cases.
433. People should be involved in decisions that affect them.
434. People will often give up what they want if they think doing so will help someone they especially care about.
435. The nursing home has a responsibility to protect its patients.
436. My love and concern for Mrs. Adams and the patient and my commitment to the nursing home should guide my actions.