

Fifty Shades of Gray: Development of Moral Imagination as the Genesis of Compassion and Ethical Reasoning

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Moral imagination is the genesis of both compassion and ethical reasoning. It has a distinct role in the understanding of self and community and in the exploration of complex and paradoxical human scenarios. Because the skill is unique to each person, moral imagination is an ability which is more kindled than taught. This abstract summarizes the use of contrasting visual images and individual and group struggles about everyday moral dilemmas to inspire moral imagination. Before and after, unrefined measures of scope, empathy, creativity and qualitative student assessments were used to refine the “teaching” of moral imagination. Prior student work on development of self-reflection skills was integral to the staging and evaluation of moral imagination. Both steps—self-reflection and moral imagination—are aimed at the maturation of professional nurse practitioners who are able to exercise compassion in the discernment of everyday ethical situations.

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