

Common Logic Problems

HASTY GENERALIZATIONS – Drawing conclusions from too little evidence

Example: Maurice Nachum Gal let a basically brain-dead baby die. While many people from different communities disagreed, he felt he did the right thing. On the other hand, doctors saved a woman, Mrs. Deem, when they knew she wanted to die. **Obviously, everyone has their own thoughts and opinions.**

CONTRADICTIONS – Contradicting a position in order to support a position

Example: A few states have already issued a right-to-die law. So far, I think that this is the best solution. **It would be a smart move on the government's part to make all states issue a right-to-die law. It should not have to be a governmental issue.** The decision should be left to the patient and then to the relatives and doctors.

POST HOC ERGO PROPTER HOC – “After it, therefore because of it.” Assumes that something is caused by that which precedes it chronologically.

Example: In all states, a “living will,” or request not to have one’s life mechanically prolonged, is now a legal document which exempts physicians from criminal prosecution. **This came about after a family in Arizona had to watch their mother and grandmother stay alive with the aid of medical technology when she had had previously written a living will requesting to die, and that her money go toward her grandchildren’s education.** This money eventually went toward the cost of her “treatment,” which she clearly did not desire.

ONE TO SUPPORT MANY – Using an example of one person, place, thing, or event to support an assertion about many

Example: Solutions regarding this matter run from radically extreme to expectedly practical. **Dr. William Scott proposed a national referendum that would permit patients to volunteer for death in order to free hospital beds for other patients.**

NON SEQUITURS – “It does not follow.” Drawing a conclusion that does not follow from the major premise of an argument. This is used for any argument that cannot be followed.

Example: We are all going to die anyway, **so we may as well pull the plug.**

TAUTOLOGICAL – Repeating an argument; using an argument to support itself

Example: **Right-to-die laws work because they protect the rights and interests of doctors, hospital staff, patients, and patients’ families. Because they protect these people, right-to-die laws are beneficial.**