

Green's 3-2-1 Code It! 7th edition
Short Answer/Discussion Questions

Scenario 1

This is Joan's second coding class in her health information management program. Last semester she learned about ICD-10-CM and ICD-10-PCS (ICD-10-CM/PCS). This semester she is taking an advanced ICD-10-CM/PCS course. Her professor stressed the importance of coding from actual records. Joan remembered her brother had copies of his medical records at home and thought it would be good practice for the class. The next class, Joan brought her brother's medical records to the professor to use as an example for the coding students.

1. What should the professor tell Joan?
2. What should Joan do in the future if she wants to share medical records with her coding class?
3. Do you think there is a difference between coding actual medical records and coding from textbook case studies? Why or why not?

Scenario 2

Matthew is a new coder at Cengage General Hospital. His manager really likes his positive, can-do attitude and willingness to learn. Currently, Matthew is coding Emergency Department (ED) visits. He likes coding EDs as they offer a lot of diversity and he finds them interesting. One day, while coding the EDs, he recognized the name of his sister, Julia, who just got married 6 months ago. He read through Julia's visit with great interest. She was 3 months pregnant! He was going to be an uncle! As he started to code her visit, he realized she was having complications with the pregnancy. The ED physician's final diagnosis was threatened abortion. He was very sad when he read this. He quickly picked up his cell phone to call his mother, and then his sister.

1. Should Matthew tell his mother, and then call his sister? Would this be considered a HIPAA violation? Why or why not?
2. Is it a good idea for him to code his sister's record? What should he do in this situation?

Scenario 3

One day, Zoe was coding an inpatient record at City Hospital. The physician's documentation was not clear on a high acuity patient; therefore, Zoe needed to query the physician for clarification. Zoe knew the answer to her question and was tempted to bypass querying the provider and just code the patient's record based on what she knew. She was tired of all the querying!

1. Should Zoe query the provider?
2. Is it acceptable for Zoe to code the patient record since she knew the answer, and didn't want to bother with the query?
3. What repercussions might there be if she doesn't query and the medical record doesn't support her coding logic?

Scenario 4

Angela, a coder, was informed that an encounter she coded was denied by an insurance company because medical necessity was not met. The patient was admitted with right knee pain, for which the provider ordered a right knee x-ray. However, the patient started having chest pain while waiting for the results of the right knee x-ray. The provider quickly took vitals and ordered a chest x-ray with an EKG to rule out a heart attack. Both were negative. Angela coded the right knee pain, right knee x-ray, chest x-ray, and EKG, but the claim was submitted to the payer without the chest pain code.

1. Why was the claim denied?
2. What should Angela have done to ensure this claim would be paid?

Scenario 5

When Cat saw the advertisement for Coder I at the Medical Clinic, she quickly applied. While she didn't have her coding credentials, she did have her certificate of completion from a community college's coding program and was confident this would help her get her an interview. When she wasn't called for an interview, Cat called human resources to follow up with her resume and application. Human resources said she didn't meet the requirements for the position, as she needed to be a certified coder.

1. Should Cat try to meet with the coding manager even though she wasn't offered a job?
2. What else can Cat do to boost the probability of working in a coding department?

Scenario 6

A friend of yours is interested in a career in coding. He has some health care experience working as a medical office assistant at a local orthopedist clinic. He also has an associate's degree in computer sciences and needs to make a career change. He looks to you, a successful coding student, for advice.

1. What would you tell your friend about coding?
2. What information would you give him to help him decide if this profession is for him?
3. What would you tell him about finding a coding position once a student graduates from a coding certificate program?

Scenario 7

Ellie was very upset when she saw her grade on coding exam #4 on Friday afternoon. She read through it quickly to see what she missed and knew the teacher made a mistake regarding what was marked incorrect on the exam. Ellie hadn't liked the coding teacher from the beginning. He seemed disorganized, and the listed due dates for the homework were overwhelming. She tried to reach the teacher, but he was gone for the weekend. She immediately sent a text to her coding friends and complained about the teacher and how he graded her. She knew he had it in for her from the very beginning.

1. Do you think Ellie's behavior was rational? Why or why not?
2. How do you think Ellie should have handled the situation?

3. What should the teacher do when he finds out that Ellie was complaining to some of the coding students? Should the teacher let the situation go, or should the teacher contact Ellie regarding her complaints and behavior?

Scenario 8

Coding the hospital's Emergency Department (ED) visits was Melissa's favorite type of coding. She was the department expert whenever a fellow coder had ED coding questions for her. She felt very sure of her level of expertise and knowledge until Jamie started to work in her department.

Jamie was a new graduate with her RHIT credential. Melissa was excited to have Jamie join the team, but after two weeks of working with Jamie, Melissa's excitement quickly waned. In fact, Melissa felt defensive whenever Jamie asked her questions about basic coding rules. She never had this problem with other staff before. Melissa decided to talk with her manager, Maria, to see what could be done.

1. What is the best way for Melissa to address her concerns?
2. How might you solve this apparent conflict?
3. How might such conflicts be avoided with new staff?

Scenario 9

The Health Information Management department of Ocean General consists of 28 staff: 16 coders and 12 clerks/release of information. The department manager, Keisha, sent an email announcement with proposed changes for the department. This included the restructuring of department roles and reduction of one full-time equivalent (FTE). Furthermore, all coders were expected to participate in training for use of the new electronic health record system being implemented in August. The coders were overwhelmed! A few threatened to quit. One coder stated she wasn't hired to deal with this sort of frustration. No matter what Keisha said to try and improve morale, the negativity was strong.

1. What would you do if you were Keisha? What might your immediate response be to the negativity?
2. What might you do to raise employee morale?
3. Was this the best way to introduce the concept of change in the workplace? If not, what might be a better way to go about rolling out big departmental changes?

Scenario 10

A career adviser meets with a student regarding exploring career paths in the health information management (HIM) field. The student loves coding, but doesn't think she could sit for extended periods of time due to an old back injury. She also likes to have a variety of tasks and responsibilities in her job duties that would allow her to interact with patients and other medical staff. Her career adviser explains there are many career choices within the profession, and it is possible for her to incorporate her love of coding into other HIM settings.

1. If you were the student, what specific HIM, coding career and certification organizations would you check to learn more about your ideal career path?
2. What is your ideal career path in the HIM field?

3. List three possible job titles that might include coding with a variety of other work tasks.

Scenario 11

After a year of working in the health information management department as a file clerk, Andy started to get lazy completing his job duties, in particular, filing paper-based patient records. One day, Andy was alone in the office as everyone was out sick with the flu, or in meetings. The Emergency Department (ED) called and they needed a patient record stat. He took the information about the medical record number and patient's name. They said this was for a trauma that just arrived and they needed to know if the patient was allergic to any medications as the patient was unconscious and couldn't answer questions. Andy went into panic mode. "Oh boy I hope I can find the record," he said as he went into the file room and looked for the medical record number. After a few minutes of looking he came up empty handed. He couldn't find the record. The phone rang again. It was the ED. "Where is the record? The patient is crashing and we don't know if he is allergic to the medications we're giving him!" Andy went back and looked everywhere in the file room. Finally, he found the record misfiled! He must have transposed the numbers! He took the record to the ED. The nurse grabbed the record. "You're too late. The patient coded. He was allergic to one of the medications we gave him. His wife came in and told us after we gave him this medication." Andy was stunned. He didn't know what to say.

1. How could Andy have avoided this situation?
2. What is the cause and effect of his actions?

Scenario 12

Natalie was the coding manager for integrated, high volume neuromuscular and orthopedic clinics in Jamestown. She managed 20 coders in three locations across a large, metropolitan city. Natalie is an exempt employee who should work 40 hours a week, but consistently ends up working 60 hours a week and reaching job burnout. Her husband suggested she talk to her director about how she feels, and ask for an assistant to help her. Natalie thought that was a good idea so she set up a meeting with her director to discuss her concerns. Her director was surprised she worked so many hours, and immediately asked why she did. Instead of being empathetic to her working long days, her director asked her to "work smarter, not harder." Natalie was aware of this concept – but how could it be done when she had five or six required back-to-back meetings each day on top of her management duties? She asked her director for help in the form of an assistant or supervisor. She was told there was no money in the budget. Natalie left the meeting completely shattered by the unexpected response and lack of empathy from her director.

1. Taking both the manager and director's views into account, is there a solution to this problem?
2. What did the director mean by "work smarter, not harder?"

Scenario 13

Angela was in her final term of coding and health information technology classes. She couldn't wait to graduate from one of the highest regarded HIT programs in her state. She planned to take her Registered Health Information Technology (RHIT) exam shortly after graduation. Angela heard how challenging it was to find a job after graduation with no experience. Her best friend, Alison, was already working in the field. Alison gave her the name of a contact at the state health information management (HIM) association to see if they needed help at the annual convention next month. Angela called the

number, and much to her delight, they could use her help! In return for her volunteering, she was allowed free admission to the convention. During the convention, Angela met a lot of industry professionals, but had difficulty connecting with them due to her being so nervous! To make matters worse, most of the people she met were wearing nice business attire and she was not.

1. How should Angela use this opportunity to network? What should she do before the conference to be better prepared?
2. If you were an experienced HIM manager, how might you approach Angela, or would you?
3. How could Angela improve her chances of getting noticed at the convention?

Scenario 14

The AAPC (previously called the American Academy of Professional Coders) and the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) both offer coding certifications. Coding students sometimes have a difficult time deciding which organization they should join, and consequently, which coding exam they should take. Most students cannot afford membership in both organizations, and they want to join now, before their exam, in order to take advantage of any membership discounts.

1. What information would be needed in order for the student to make an informed decision?
2. What is the difference between the AAPC and the AHIMA association's coding certifications?
3. What steps would you take in order to help you determine which exam you should take?

Scenario 15

David has had a difficult time keeping up with the amount of coursework in Ms. M's coding class and consequently missed a few assignments. When he turns in his homework, he usually earns an A or B+ on the assignment. His coding teacher, Ms. M, noticed his average went from an A to a C within a month of starting class. Ms. M was concerned and knew he could do better if only he was more consistent with turning in assignments. David enjoys his coding class, but he is a full-time student working 40 plus hours each week. He had to take this class so he could graduate from the health information technology program this year. David is incredibly stressed, and he is considering dropping all of his classes, including the coding class.

1. If you were Ms. M, what would you say to David?
2. If you were David, what would you do? Would you drop out of school? Why or why not?

Scenario 16

This is Melody's first day working as medical office manager in the Radiology Clinic at Cengage Hospital. After a quick introduction to her staff, Melody wanted to observe the department processes that included checking in patients, retrieving old records, and coding. The staff seemed to work well together, with the exception of the coder. The coder kept to herself. One of the receptionists pulled Melody aside and told her no one liked the coder and they wished she would leave. Melody was shocked upon hearing this comment.

1. What is the first thing you would do if in Melody's shoes? How would you try to solve this problem?

2. What would be some of the reasons the staff didn't like the quiet coder?

3. What would be some of the reasons the coder kept to herself?

Scenario 17

It was yet another busy day at the outpatient lab. Sara, a new patient care advocate, worked quickly to keep up with the volume of patients. In attempts to keep moving patients through the lab, Sara didn't realize that a couple of patients slipped through with expired outpatient lab requisition orders. She knows all lab work must be done with current orders – this is part of the policies and procedures of the practice. Mandy, the coder, picked up the results of the lab paperwork, including the orders, to code. When Mandy saw the two patients with expired lab requisition orders she became concerned.

1. What should Mandy do?

2. Do you think it is acceptable to code from these expired lab orders? Why or why not?

3. How could this error be avoided in the future?

4. If you were the manager of the lab, what process(es) might you change to prevent errors like this one from occurring again?

Scenario 18

Nicole had been coding inpatient accounts for many years. She was not certified but was the “go-to” coder for any questions from her colleagues. She was encouraged many times to take her certification exam, but she knew how she felt about exams – she had a great disdain for anything timed! One day, her manager, Vickie, told her she needed to take her exam within the next three months as the hospital was now requiring certification of all coders working for them. Nicole signed up to sit for her Certified Coding Specialist (CCS) exam. She studied a little. She was sure she knew the answers to the questions. The more she studied, the more anxious she became. On the day of the exam, she worked hard at keeping her anxieties and fears under control. When she started to take the exam she was overwhelmed. She finished the exam to the best of her knowledge. When Nicole walked out of the testing center, she had her results – she failed.

1. If you were Nicole's manager, what would you suggest she do prior to taking the exam?

2. What resources should she use for studying?

3. If you were Nicole's close friend and fellow coder, and she told you she failed the exam, what would you tell her? What would you suggest?

Scenario 19

Samantha's daily coding productivity was consistently above industry standards. One day her coworker asked her how she's able to code so quickly. Samantha shrugged her shoulders and said, "I just do what I can do. I don't care if it's wrong - I don't want it on my list at the end of the day." Her coworker was flabbergasted at this comment. Samantha saw the surprise and said: "Well, isn't that what everybody does?"

1. Is Samantha's method of coding good or bad? Why or why not?
2. What should the coworker do with this information?
3. Should the coding manager be advised of this comment?
4. What would you do if you were in the co-worker's place?