

IDEA: Ethical Decision-Making Framework



The Regional Ethics Program uses the IDEA: Ethical Decision-making Framework as a guide to help healthcare providers and administrators work through ethical issues from the point of care to the boardroom.

Additional Resources

For more information about Ethics, including a guide for using the *IDEA: Ethical Decision-Making Framework* and links to a number of additional ethics resources, patients & families can go to the link below and click on 'Patients & Visitors', then 'Ethics Program'.

www.haltonhealthcare.on.ca

Staff & Physicians can access more information by visiting the HHS Connections site and selecting Quality/Safety/Risk/Ethics under the 'Departments' tab below. The HHS Ethics Program is listed on the left sidebar.

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Overview of Regional Ethics Program

Who are we?
What do we do?
How do you get in touch with us?

What is ethics?

Ethics can be described as a way of critically looking at issues that includes:

- *Deciding what we should do (what decisions are right or acceptable)*
- *Explaining why we should do it (justifying our decision using ethical principles)*
- *Describing how we should do it (the method or manner of our response)*

Definition paraphrased from Dr. Barbara Secker, University of Toronto Joint Centre for Bioethics.

What is an ethical issue?

If you answer yes to one or more of the following questions you may be facing an ethical issue:

- Am I trying to determine the right course of action?
- Am I asking a “should” question?
- Are values and beliefs involved?
- Am I feeling uncomfortable?

Who is responsible for ethics in an organization?

Much like the accountability for quality or patient safety, everyone has a role to play in ensuring the ethical delivery of healthcare, from the point of care to the boardroom.

Ethical principles and values should be incorporated into the way that decisions are made and care is delivered every day.

The Regional Ethics Program is an ethics service provider with a “hub and spoke” model of delivery. Trillium Health Partners is the “hub” and administrator of the Regional Ethics Program. HHS is a “Spoke” organization in the region that purchases services from the hub. Services are provided by trained ethicists with the support of local ethics facilitators/champions at spoke organizations.

One of the primary roles of the Regional Ethics Program is to build local ethics capacity within the organizations it serves.

What is the role of the Ethicists?

The Ethicists with the Regional Ethics Program work collaboratively across the hub and spokes. Their overarching role is to facilitate and support ethical decision-making throughout each organization through the identification, analysis, and resolution of ethical issues.

This includes:

- Providing education on ethics-related topics (e.g., in-services, grand rounds, debriefings, tutorials);
- Reviewing, developing, implementing, and evaluating ethics-related policies;
- Participating on relevant committees and working groups;
- Reviewing research; and
- Conducting ethics consultations.

What is the role of Ethics Facilitators/Champions?

Ethics Facilitators/Champions are staff and physicians who have received additional ethics training and their role is to:

- Promote ethical awareness, imagination, and analysis in deliberation and decision-making around patient care in their area of practice;
- Act as first point of contact for ethics concerns in their area of practice;
- Continue to develop ethics knowledge and skills through participation in ongoing educational opportunities.

When should I contact the Regional Ethics Program?

Anyone within the organizations served by the Regional Ethics Program, including patients, may request an ethics consultation. It may be helpful to do so when:

- There is uncertainty about what decision should be made;
- There are differences of opinion about what decision should be made; or
- You would like to explore further the ethical and legal aspects of a decision.

You may also contact the Regional Ethics Program to request educational, policy, or committee education and support.