

What is an Ethics Consultation?

Ethics consultation provides a facilitated forum for thoughtful exploration of how to act in the best interest of the patient and make morally good choices based on beliefs and values about life, health, suffering and death.



All consultations are confidential and are bound by the same policies and procedures as other patient and organizational records.

The ethics consultation is advisory only. The final decision about health related matters lies with the patient or their substitute decision maker and the doctor involved.

What Does the Ethics Consultation Consider?

The ethics consultation considers the following ethical principles when assisting others to make the best possible decision about patient care:

- Respect for patient autonomy and self-determination
- Beneficence (doing good)
- Non-maleficence (not doing harm)
- Justice and fairness

How to Contact Us

If a staff member, patient, resident, substitute decision-maker or family member identifies an ethical dilemma they can discuss with the nurse, nurse in charge, team leader, physician, Director of clinical services or Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

If the ethical dilemma is clinical in nature, a Multidisciplinary Care Conference can be planned to address the concern. If the issue is not resolved at the conference, the concern can be referred to the Ethics Sub-Committee which is initiated at the call of the chair. A referral can also be made to the Consulting Ethicist who is available by Ontario Telehealth Network (OTN). Non-urgent ethics issues can be directed to ethics@sschs.ca.

Services de Santé de
Chapleau Health Services
P.O. Box 757
6 chemin Broomhead Road
Chapleau, Ontario

Main Hospital: 705-864-1520
Charge Nurse: 705-864-3060
Patient Care Manager
Services: 705-864-3078
CEO: 705-864-3050
Subcommittee Chair: 705-864-3090
Fax: 705-864-0449

Website: www.sschs.ca

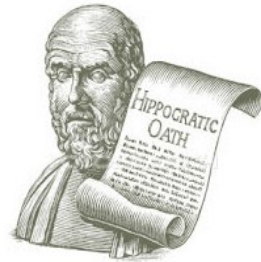


ETHICS

- ◆ Autonomy
- ◆ Justice
- ◆ Welfare



In health care settings ethical questions arise when “the right thing to do” is unclear, or people disagree about what is best for the patient.



Ethics refers to the standard of behavior that should be followed in situations we may find ourselves when questions arise as health team members, family, friends, parents or children.

The Ethics Advisory Sub-Committee exists in order to meet the needs of Chapleau Health Services patients, their families and staff, in relation to ethical issues. The committee is a consultative and advisory body and does not make decisions regarding a person's care or the organizations policies. The committee provides leadership in developing an ethical framework for the organization and promotes an ethical culture. If ethical issues arise in the clinical setting, it also acts as a resource and assists clinical teams to use the framework to guide decision making. We also provide ethics resources upon request.

An ethical problem or dilemma is characterized by the presence of a conflict between values that we accept as important. In healthcare, the following values are seen as the primary ones:

- Autonomy
- Welfare
- Justice

When two or more of these values come into conflict, such as when good value based reasons can be given for each of the possible courses of action, then you have an ethical dilemma. No matter which action you choose, some values (s) must be compromised or sacrificed so that it seems that anything you do has an element of “wrong” in it.

The types of ethical dilemmas typically experienced may include :

- End of life care decisions
- Pain control and management
- Confidentiality
- Informed consent



When an ethical issue arises, the ethical committee and/or Ethicist in consultation will review the situation and try to assist those involved to make the best decisions. They will look at several factors that need to be considered when trying to resolve issues and include:



- Medical indicators
- Patient preferences
- Quality of life
- Contextual factors

The Committee will help select the information to collect and assist to identify a clear statement of the problem. They will then assist to clarify and evaluate the problem and investigate what has already been done to resolve the issue. Once all the factors have been evaluated, they review the decision and assist with resolution of the dilemma in consultation with the clinical ethicist.

If a decision is not urgent, a case conference will be held with the health team, the patient and their family.