

When you should call for an Ethics Consult:

- Consensus cannot be reached within the interdisciplinary team or between the treatment team and the patient/family on goals of care.
- Team is facing a true ethical dilemma. Care options oppose an equal level of benefit and harm to patient/family making decision-making difficult. The team knows the most ethical course of action but this option cannot be pursued due to barriers either within the institution or barriers place by patient and or family.
- Patient/family has challenging expectations about care or posing challenging behaviours.
- Pervasive feeling that something is wrong but ethical dimensions are unclear.
- Not sure that particular benefits of a course of treatment or level of care justifies the burden this will place on patient/family.
- Concerns that the values of organization or individual are not consistent with optimal patient care.
- Conflict or confusion about the appropriate role of SDM.

Visit **STEGHnet** to view our Ethics Framework and information on our Ethics Council.

Ethics consults are available upon request. Please speak with your manager or email ethics@stegh.on.ca. For urgent after hours consults, contact switchboard and ask to speak to the manager on call.



Ethics Pocket Tool

This tool was developed from information shared by The Joint Centre for Bioethics U of T, Bioethics Departments at William Osler Health Centre and St. Joseph's Health Care London.





Team's Perspective of the Problem

What difficulty is being faced?

What is the red flag that drew your attention to this problem?

What ethical concerns have been raised by team members?

Is there consensus on options and goals for care?



Patient Preferences

Who has talked to the patient?

When?

What are the patient's care preferences or goals for care?

Is the patient's decision voluntary and informed?

Who are the important people in the patient's life?

Who is the Substitute Decision Maker (SDM) if the patient is incapable?



Respecting Diversity

What values and beliefs are important to the patient?

Are there religious and/or cultural factors the patient wishes to honour or perform?

How does the patient perceive the cause, nature of the illness and the meaning of death, health and wellbeing?

What supports or resources are needed by the patient/family? (ie: translator, chaplain)



Communicating Effectively

What is appropriate and sensitive language for this family?

Is information being communicated in a manner that everyone can understand?

How timely is communication?

Are patient/family given time to comment and ask questions?

Are patient/family concerns clearly understood?

Is there any sign of conflict? What are your resources to resolve conflict?