



**Providence
Health Care**
How you want to be treated.



Ethics
Ethics are fundamental
to all we do

A FRAMEWORK FOR ETHICAL DECISION MAKING

Ethics Services

Ethics is the philosophical discipline that examines ideas about right and wrong, how we should act, and how we make decisions in light of who we say we are. At Providence Health Care, we believe that ethical reflection and discussion should be at the center of everything we do. Ethical issues may arise at the bedside, at the system level or both. Approaching these challenges with a sound ethics framework can help bring partners toward a person-centered resolution that is both respectful of the perspectives of all those involved, and grounded in a well-considered set of values.

Please reach out to us if you have questions or concerns about ethical issues such as:

- Supporting patients/residents who choose to live in risk
- Disagreement among patients/residents, families, and care team members
- Fairness and resource allocation
- Issues or questions about our Catholic identity and our Mission, Vision and Values

Reach out to us

You can reach us from Monday to Friday between 8 am and 4 pm.

Email: ethics@providencehealth.bc.ca

Phone: 236-996-3879

Website: ethics.providencehealthcare.org

A FRAMEWORK FOR ETHICAL DECISION MAKING

Step 1 Identify the Issues

- Identify the key ethical issue(s)
- Consider whether the issue is individual, organizational or both

Step 2 Identify the Partners

- Identify the partners - be as inclusive as possible
- Include partners who have authority to implement decisions and who are accountable for decisions
- Consider potential conflicts of interest

Step 3 Acknowledge Biases, Feelings and Worldviews

- Identify 'gut' reactions (positive or negative) and acknowledge 'worldviews' and biases

Step 4 Gather and Clarify the Facts

- Establish what we know and don't know about the issue
- Jonsen's 'Four Boxes' is helpful in gathering and organizing information for clinical issues:

Medical Indications

- History, diagnosis, prognosis
- Available treatments and expected outcomes
- Balance of benefits and burdens for each treatment or care option

Patient/Resident Preferences

- What are the patient/resident's values, goals and preferences?
- Does the patient/resident have capacity to understand and make decisions?
- Is a substitute decision maker needed?

Quality of Life

- What does 'Quality of Life' mean to the patient/resident?
- What was the patient/resident's quality of life before illness?
- What are the prospects for quality of life with various options?

Contextual Factors

- Are there religious, cultural, and family issues to consider?
- Are there legal, risk financial, and resource considerations?
- Is this a case that involves research or teaching?

Step 5 Analyze in Light of Ethical Principles

- Consider PHC's Mission, Vision and Values and the Health Ethics Guide in all ethical decision making
- Identify which principles are in play and which carry more weight in this situation

CLINICAL ETHICS PRINCIPLES

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Respect for Autonomy (respect individual's dignity and freedom) | 3. Beneficence (promote wellbeing) |
| 2. Non-Maleficence (do no harm) | 4. Justice (be fair) |

ORGANIZATIONAL ETHICS PRINCIPLES

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Respect human dignity | • Pursue fairness/distributive justice |
| • Foster trust | • Prioritize accountability and transparency |
| • Promote social justice | • Ensure excellence |
| • Be compassionate | • Build a just workplace |
| • Support spiritual needs and faith traditions | • Commitment to research/innovation |

Step 6 Identify Options and Weigh with Values and Principles

- Identify the options available, and the pros and cons of each option, including the option of doing nothing
- Determine which option(s) best advances the goals and values of the patient/resident
- Consider the interest of the partners and PHC's Mission, Vision and Values as well as clinical and organizational ethical principles

Step 7 Make a Decision

- State clearly what the decision is, and why it is the best option in light of the above
- Identify contingency plans in case of unintended outcomes or unforeseen problems

Step 8 Implement and Evaluate the Decision

- Develop a plan for communication and implementation
- Review decisions, outcomes and key learnings