

Patient Safety Bulletin of the Week

December 2020: **Ethical Decision Making**

Ethical Issues

- What if substitute decision-makers make decisions not based on the patient's wishes?
- How do we navigate dual roles in a small community as care providers?
- Is it ever acceptable to hide medication in food for non-compliant patients?
- Should physicians share information about reproductive choices of an adolescent with parents?
- How do we support a pregnant woman who foregoes life-saving treatment for her unborn child?
- How do you tell a client that their decisions and choices are negatively impacting their ability to take care of their children?



Please refer to the Ethical Decision Making Framework:

- As a resource to support patient and family voice
- As a guideline to consult when you or your colleagues are stuck in an ethical issue
- To embed organizational ethics into your daily practices

View the framework here:

https://ournthssa.ca/document_library/territorial-ethical-decision-making-framework/

Find a complete listing of published bulletins:

https://ournthssa.ca/accreditation/accreditation-tools/ROP_bulletins

Why Ethics?

Employees in healthcare are sometimes required to make difficult decisions due to complex situations. Asking the following questions provide guidance to patients, families and health care providers while making difficult choices in regards to treatment choices and patient care.

1. "What is the right thing to do?"
2. "How should this decision be made?"
3. "Is this a reasonable compromise?"

Where do I go for help?

- Colleagues, supervisor, or anyone you feel comfortable discussing an issue with.
- Use the guidelines and framework!
If need further assistance, contact the Territorial Ethics committee via phone at (867) 767-9106 ext. 40081 or email NTHSSA_Ethics@gov.nt.ca
- For questions related to ethics research, contact the Aurora Research Institute.

What does the Territorial Ethics Committee do?

- Reviews ethical issues, dilemmas and identified concerns relating to health and social services matters, and to provide guidance, recommendations and consultation.
- Provides guidance and support to the development, revision and implementation of procedures and/or processes which impact ethical issues in client/patient, family and community care.
- Provides case consultation and/or reviewing prospective or retrospective ethical concerns.