

How do I access the ethics consultation service?

To contact a clinical ethicist, please call (519) 685-8500 and ask to page the Ethics Consultation Team.

The Ethics Consultation Service is available Monday through Friday, from 7:30am to 5:00pm.

After hours, leave a message at (519) 685-8500 extension x75112 or at ethics@lhsc.on.ca

Resources

For more information visit our websites:

For staff: (LHSC Intranet)

<http://www.lhsc.on.ca/priv/ethics/>

For patients and families:

http://www.lhsc.on.ca/Patients_Families_Visitors/LHSC/Ethics

(available soon)

Notes:

Multiple horizontal lines for taking notes.

Clinical Ethics Consultation



London Health Sciences Centre

Clinical Ethics Department

What is Clinical Ethics?

Ethics is a generic term for ways of understanding and examining the moral life. Clinical ethics is about making values-based decisions in the delivery of health care. When it is not clear what the “right” decision is, clinical ethics provides a platform to discuss the problem.

The primary ethical questions that are dealt with in clinical ethics consultation are:

What should we do? (What actions or steps are good or right?)

Why should we do it? (What are our reasons, and what do they mean?)

How should we do it? (What is the most ethical approach?)

In seeking answers to these questions, clinical ethicists in collaboration with healthcare team members, patients, and family members examine basic ethical principles such as autonomy (the right for individuals to make choices about what happens to them), beneficence (the desire to do good), non-maleficence (the duty to prevent harm), and justice (fairness).

When should I ask for a Clinical Ethics Consultation?

If you find yourself struggling with a difficult ethical decision, or wondering what is the right thing to do in a complex patient care situation, think about contacting the Clinical Ethics Consultation Service. An Ethics Consultant will speak with you to find out your needs, and may offer:

- education and guidance
- referrals
- facilitation of team discussions
- conflict resolution support (mediation)

Common situations where Ethics Consultants can help, include:

- disagreements regarding the plan of care or goals of treatment for a patient
 - uncertainty about how to make decisions for a patient who lacks capacity to make his/her own decisions
 - conflict regarding what treatments are best for patients
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What is involved in Clinical Ethics Consultation?

Ethics Consultants assist the process of making ethical decisions by:

- discussing the facts of the situation with everyone involved to make sure that the issues, choices, goals, and likely outcomes are clearly understood
- exploring ethical values, principles, norms, policies, standards and resources
- making clear the patient’s goals, values, wishes and best interests
- mediating and resolving conflicts between parties
- helping the health care team agree on the right course of action

Ethics Consultants will respect your privacy within legal limits

Ethics Consultants **do not** have the authority to make medical decisions, but they do support those facing difficult moral choices in patient care.
