



Haldimand War Memorial Hospital & Edgewater Gardens

ETHICAL FRAMEWORK AT HALDIMAND WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL AND EDGEWATER GARDENS LONG TERM CARE

Introduction

Ethics is the study of values and morals, and their translation into decisions and actions. Ethics seeks to answer the question “What is good and what makes it so?” Ethics are intrinsic to the practice of everyday life, and include an analysis of the variables that influence our moral decisions. Thus, ethical decision-making is the disciplined reflection on how we make decisions about what we should do. Ethical practice means living our values from moment-to-moment every day.

Best practices require that organizations provide a written ethics framework to guide ethical behaviour throughout the organization. This document is our enterprise-wide organizational ethical framework at Haldimand War Memorial Hospital (HWMH) and Edgewater Gardens Long Term Care (EG) and is available to the Board of Directors, all staff, patients, residents and families, and the general public.

It is recognized that practitioners encounter ethical conflict, uncertainty or distress in their everyday practice. Not all practitioners experience the same situation in the same way, and there is room for disagreement among practitioners related to how they weigh the different ethical values.

However, good therapeutic relationships are centred on the needs and informed choices of the person receiving care. The majority of ethical conflicts or dilemmas are resolved between the patient, the resident, their family, the Power of Attorney for personal care, their Living Will and the clinician; however, if the patient or resident is unable to make an informed consent then the substitute decision-maker (SDM),. Clinicians balance the preferences and wishes of patients or residents with HWMH and EG values, and their own professional codes, to reach the best outcomes possible for the patient and for resident-centred care.

As part of educating employees, medical staff members, volunteers, board members, patients, residents and patients' and residents' family members, the HWMH and EG Ethics Committee developed a pamphlet for distribution and posting to the campus website.

Ethics and Values

An organization's values are the foundation of building ethical policies and procedures. Ethical programs translate an organization's values into the everyday tools required to guide decision-making. The foundation of HWMH's and EG's ethical decision making is the values, preferences, and needs of the patient or resident and our own vision, mission, and values.

Vision:

Best care, every person, every time.

Mission:

Our excellence in health care is guided by our patients and residents, their families, research, and our highly skilled team of professionals. We provide that care in a safe and supportive environment, within a vibrant, rural community.

Values:

- **Compassion:** We are known for exceptional caring and compassion.
- **Respect:** We respect the dignity of every person under our care and with whom we work.
- **Honesty:** We act with honesty, integrity, and transparency.
- **Teamwork:** We value the knowledge, opinions, and diversity of our team.
- **Service:** We will take the time to listen, respond and show courtesy to everyone in everything we do.

Motto:

Embracing the Health and Hearts of the Community.

Philosophy of Care

- We will introduce ourselves and identify our role in your care.
- We will communicate openly, and consult with you in all aspects of your care.
- We will treat you, your family and friends with dignity, respect and compassion.
- We will collaborate with you to create an individualized care plan that acknowledges your unique physical, mental and emotional needs.
- We will promptly address any issues and concerns that are brought to our attention.
- We will respect your wishes about treatment choices, including refusing treatment.
- We will keep your personal health information private, respected and protected.
- We will respect your individual identity, beliefs, history, culture and ability as part of your care.
- We will treat you in a manner that is free from stigma and assumptions.

The Patient and the Therapeutic Relationship

The needs, values and preferences of the person receiving care are the primary considerations in the provision of quality health care and resident-centred care. HWMH and EG strive for the ideal in which health care decisions or resident-centred care reflects agreement between the person receiving care and all others involved in his or her care. The core of clinical ethics is thus the therapeutic relationship between the patient and clinician or the resident, if capable of decision-making and the clinician.

Professional Codes

Health care providers are bound to their own professional Codes of Ethics as set out by their respective professional colleges; those non-professional health care providers are bound by the HWMH and EG Code of Ethics policies.

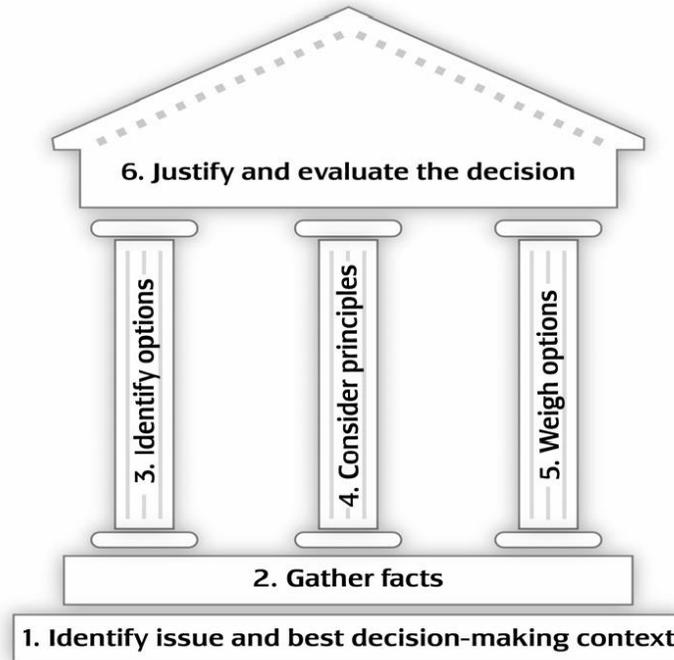
HWMH and EG's ethical programs and decision making procedures are designed to enhance and foster an individual's ethical development and learning within their professions. The HWMH and EG *Code of Conduct* identifies that a core competency of all employees is to use moral principles, professional code of ethics and organization values in day-to-day activities. In addition, HWMH and EG conducts their clinical practice in compliance with the spirit and letter of laws regulating the provision of health care in Ontario.

Ethical Decision-making Toolkit

The Ethics Consultation Service pamphlet is a guide to staff, patients, residents and their families, volunteers and physicians, promoting patients and residents rights and shared decision-making to maximize the likelihood of achieving good, patient-centred outcomes or resident-centred care.

The HWMH and EG Ethical Decision-making Toolkit (see Appendix A) consists of a worksheet, an ethics decision-making process guide, and an ethical principles primer. This toolkit is designed to help individual health care professionals, teams and families work through the ethical challenges they encounter in providing patient care. The process includes six steps as visually presented in the image below.

Diagram 1: **Six step ethical process building**



This six-step process for ethical decision-making is represented as a building to emphasize the importance of accurately defining and analyzing the problem before reaching a conclusion. A rigorous decision-making process reduces mistakes and improves the transparency and integrity of the decisions reached.

Ethical Culture

It is important that all HWMH and EG staffs are empowered to “do the right thing” and integrate ethical reflection and questioning into daily practice. Our decision-making processes are transparent and must be perceived as just. Finally, our ethical basis of decisions is articulated and “owned,” bedside to boardroom.

(This framework has been adapted, with permission, from the Hamilton Health Sciences’ Ethical framework. HWMH and EG would like to thank the team at Hamilton Health Sciences for sharing their expertise.)