

RENFREW VICTORIA HOSPITAL

WHAT IS ETHICS?

Ethics can be described as a way of critically looking at issues that includes:

- Deciding what we should do (what decisions are right or acceptable)
- Explaining why we should do it (justifying our decision using ethical principles)
- Describing how we should do it (the method or manner of our response)

Definition paraphrased from Dr. Barbara Secker, University of Toronto Joint Centre for Bioethics.

WHAT IS AN ETHICAL ISSUE?

If you answer yes to one or more of the following questions you may be facing an ethical issue:

- Am I trying to determine the right course of action?
- Am I asking a “should” question?
- Are values and beliefs involved?
- Am I feeling uncomfortable?

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ETHICS IN AN ORGANIZATION?

Much like the accountability for quality or patient safety, everyone has a role to play in ensuring the ethical delivery of healthcare, from the point of care to the boardroom.

Ethical principles and values should be incorporated into the way that decisions are made and care is delivered every day.

ETHICS IN OUR ORGANIZATION

Renfrew Victoria Hospital recognizes that, in the course of delivery of service to patients and residents, situations may arise that result in conflict among service providers, patients, residents, families, substitute decision-makers (SDMs) and the community about an appropriate course of action or non-action or allotment of resources. These may be ethical situations. The Ethics Committee's role is to support and assist staff, physicians, patients, residents, families and SDMs through a resolution process. The Ethics Committee acts in advisory capacity only.

ETHICS COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Ethics Committee is to support patient autonomy and to act as a resource for staff, patients and patient's families in issues related to ethics.

The function of the Committee is

1. Education of the committee, staff, patients and patient families on ethics, rights and how to do ethical thinking.
2. Input into the establishment of policies related to confidentiality, anonymity, privacy, informed consent and release of information to the local news media. The committee may also assist in developing policies for the use of new technology and end of life care.
3. The Committee will function as a patient centered committee and raise the consciousness of patient rights and the need for shared decision-making.
4. The development of a framework for moral discourse that will support good ethical decision-making and make contributions towards the quality of care given to patients.
5. The development of protocols for presenting issues to and communicating the ethics committee's recommendation back to family members and the institution's staff.
6. Assist with the naming of surrogates for incapacitated patients.
7. To seek judicial review when a decision is beyond a reasonable range.
8. Support patient autonomy and act as a resource for staff, patients and patients' families in issues related to ethics.
9. Support and promote organ donation in a compassionate manner.

In addition, all professionals also have commitments to their own professional principles and codes of ethics.

Ethical decisions are guided by the values of our organization!

IDEA: ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK



The RVH Ethics Committee uses the IDEA: Ethical Decision-making Framework as a guide to help healthcare providers and administrators work through clinical ethical issues.

The Accountability for Reasonableness Framework (A4R) may be used for organizational decisions at the Board and Senior Management level.

CASE CONSULTATION REQUEST

Date of Request: _____

Requested by: _____

Department: _____

Purpose of Consultation:

Urgency of Request:

- Urgent – as soon as possible
- Somewhat urgent – within 5 days
- Not urgent – within 1 month

Recommended participants:

Will patient, resident and/or family members be invited?

- Yes No

Other comments:

*Please contact:
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