



# Ethical Decision-Making Framework

## (Making Decisions with INTEGRITY)

Decisions with ethical implications are made every day in individual patient care and in situations that involve and impact groups of patients or staff members, units, systems, or the organization as a whole. This ethics decision-making tool provides guidance to help you think through challenging individual patient care, organizational and workplace decisions.

<b>I</b>	<b>Step 1: Identify the Problem or Goal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State the problem or goal clearly. What is the red flag that drew your attention?</li> <li>Ask questions that begin with “What” or “How” to avoid simple “yes” or “no” answers. Is it an ethical issue?</li> <li>If yes, proceed to step 2, if unsure ask a colleague. If still unsure, call the ethicist at <b>extension 8026</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>N</b>	<b>Step 2: Name the Decision-maker(s)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify who has a stake in the decision to ensure all perspectives are understood</li> <li>Consider inviting other resources to guide with discussion and/or handling emotional issues</li> <li>If in patient care, is patient deemed capable? If not, who is the appropriate Substitute Decision Maker?</li> </ul>
<b>T</b>	<b>Step 3: Track the Facts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gather information on the situation</li> <li>Note who is affected (biomedical or business/organizational ethics issue?)</li> <li>Consider legal and professional obligations and relevant hospital policies</li> <li>Establish a timeline for making a decision</li> </ul>
<b>E</b>	<b>Step 4: Evaluate the Values and Principles</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which values and principles are relevant? (eg. TSH values of I CARE, personal values, etc.).</li> <li>Which values and principles are in conflict, and which values may be compromised?</li> </ul>
<b>G</b>	<b>Step 5: Generate your Options</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well does each option allow you or those concerned to live the values?</li> <li>What are the benefits and risks of each option?</li> </ul>
<b>R</b>	<b>Step 6: Rank your Options</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider which option best addresses the problem or goal identified in Step 1.</li> <li>For organizational issues, determine which option is most consistent with TSH values and policies</li> </ul>
<b>I</b>	<b>Step 7: Identify your decision</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that everyone involved is made aware of the decision</li> <li>If I disagree with the decision can I live with it professionally and personally?</li> <li>Is it the right thing to do?</li> </ul>
<b>T</b>	<b>Step 8: Take action</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an action plan that includes communication, education, monitoring and evaluation.</li> <li>Create opportunities to appeal or modify the decision should new information emerge.</li> </ul>
<b>Y</b>	<b>Step 9: Your decision – Reflection.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What went well? What was learned from this experience that can be used in future decisions?</li> <li>If this is an organizational decision, is it reasonable, transparent, accountable and inclusive?</li> </ul>

**If at any point during this process you think you need help, contact the following:**

- Colleague/Charge Nurse
- Director
- Ethicist at (416) 438-2911 ext 8026. For after-hours call through locating at (416) 438-2911
- Patient Care Manager/Supervisor
- Chief of Staff/Department Chief

Sources:  
 1. Jon Peel and Doug Wallace (2006), The Ten-Step Method of Decision Making.  
 2. Toronto Community Access Care Centre. Ethics Toolkit. Toronto: Toronto CCAC, 1995.  
 3. Incorporates aspects of accountability for reasonableness developed by Daniels and Sabin (2002)