

## Other brochures

The Centre for Clinical Ethics has developed a series of brochures for health care consumers and providers on the following topics:

- Informed Consent to Treatment
- Advance Care Planning
- Capacity Assessment
- Substitute Decision-Making
- Power of Attorney for Personal Care

## Contacting the Centre for Clinical Ethics

If you are facing a difficult situation and are unsure of the best course of action, we may be able to assist. Any patient, family member, staff member, volunteer, or student can contact the Centre for Clinical Ethics in confidence.

### Centre for Clinical Ethics

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Toronto, ON M6R 1B5  
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Lakeridge  
Health

## A Principle Based Framework for Ethical Decision Making (YODA\*)

### YOU

Ethics is Everyone's  
Responsibility

### OBSERVE

Identify the Problem  
Acknowledge Feelings  
Gather the Facts

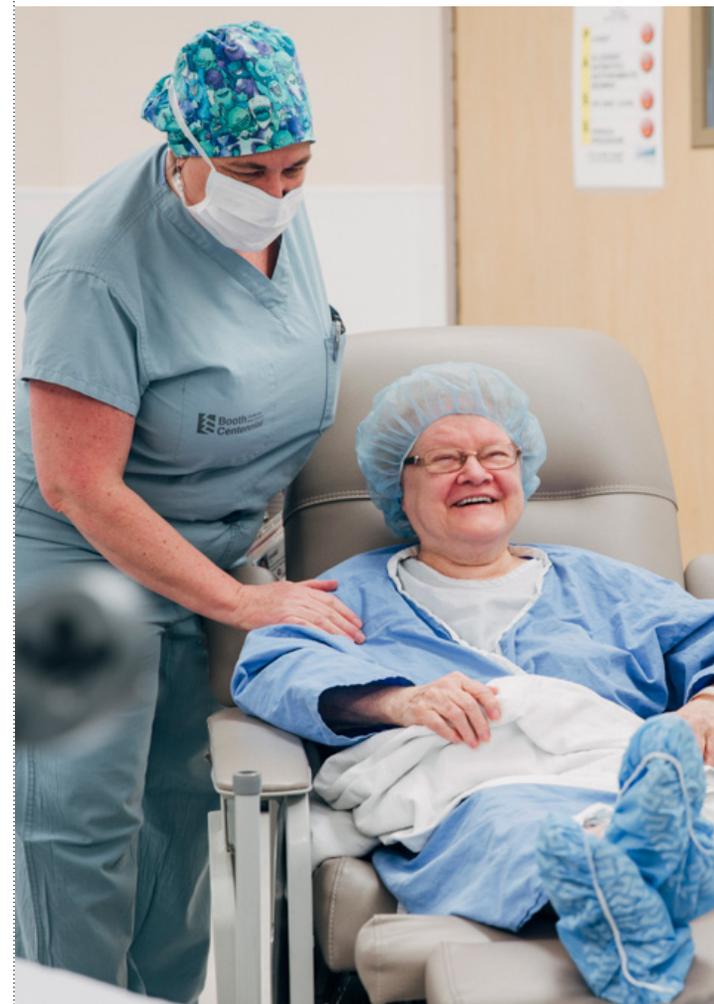
### DELIBERATE

Consider Alternatives  
Examine Values  
Evaluate Alternatives

### ACT

Articulate the Decision  
Implement the Plan  
Perform a Concluding Review

# A Principle-based Framework/Process for Ethical Decision Making



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Lakeridge  
Health

Developed by  
the Centre for  
Clinical Ethics

The Centre for Clinical Ethics provides consultative services to patients, families, hospital staff, volunteers and students on a wide range of ethical issues across the life-span. Frequently encountered issues include value conflicts around decisions, such as withholding or withdrawing treatment; consent and capacity; resource allocation; and organizational ethics.

## Framework/process for ethical decision making

The following principle-based framework/process for ethical decision-making is grounded in the mission, vision and values of Lakeridge Health. It outlines steps for resolving ethical dilemmas.

### You:

#### Observe

##### Step 1: Identify the problem

Name the problem clearly. Where is the conflict?

##### Step 2: Acknowledge feelings

What are the “gut” reactions, biases, and loyalties?

##### Step 3: Gather the facts

What are the ethically relevant facts? Whose account of the facts counts? Have all the relevant perspectives been obtained? What do the institution’s policies or guidelines say? What does the relevant law say?\*

\*Legal information is not the same as legal advice, where legal advice is the application of law to an individual’s specific circumstances. We recommend that you consult a lawyer if you want professional legal advice in a subject area that is appropriate to your particular situation.



• Facts in biomedical ethics issues include:

- Diagnosis/Prognosis
- Quality of Life
- Patient/SDM Wishes
- Contextual features (e.g. religion, culture, psycho-social issues, relationships, etc.)

• Facts in business/organizational ethics issues include:

- Governance
- Partnerships
- Allocation/rationing of scarce resources
- Conscientious objection
- Employer/employee relationships
- Conflict of interest
- Alternative sources of revenue
- Abuse of care providers
- Whistle blowing

#### Deliberate

##### Step 4: Consider alternatives

What are the alternative courses of actions?  
What are the likely consequences?

##### Step 5: Examine values

What are the preferences of the person receiving care? Are other values relevant?  
Which of the values conflict?

##### Step 6: Evaluate alternatives

Identify appropriate decision makers. Rank all relevant values. Here are the values of Lakeridge Health:

- Compassion
- Innovation
- Courage
- Trust

Justify ranking by appealing to the ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence/non-maleficence and justice.

#### Act

##### Step 7: Articulate the decision

Which alternative best reflects the ranking of values? Which alternative best balances more of the values? Have any other alternatives come to light?

##### Step 8: Implement the plan

How should the decision be communicated?  
Who needs to know it? How best to document the process? Who needs to act?

##### Step 9: Concluding review

What are the feelings of those involved?