Ethics Framework

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POLICY

This policy applies to all physicians, staff, volunteers and students at Windsor Regional Hospital (WRH). When used in the Purpose and Procedure below, the words "staff" and "personnel" are understood to include physicians, employees and volunteers, notwithstanding that physicians and volunteers are not in an employment relationship with the organization. Everyone has a role to play in ethics.

Windsor Regional Hospital expects all physicians, staff and volunteers to adhere to a high standard of conduct, and to be familiar with and use the ethics resources available to guide their actions and behaviour in the workplace.
As an employer, Windsor Regional Hospital recognizes its responsibility to staff and volunteers to behave with consideration and fairness. As a publicly funded organization, the Hospital has a responsibility to be a good steward of the resources used to provide care and service.

PURPOSE

To provide a framework and resources for all staff and hospital personnel to use in order to guide them in making health care related decisions for the vulnerable population served.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Windsor Regional personnel including staff, physicians, students and volunteers while providing care to patients and families.

DEFINITIONS

Ethics- the branch of philosophy dealing with values relating to human conduct, with respect to the rightness and wrongness of certain actions and to the goodness and badness of the motives and ends of such actions.
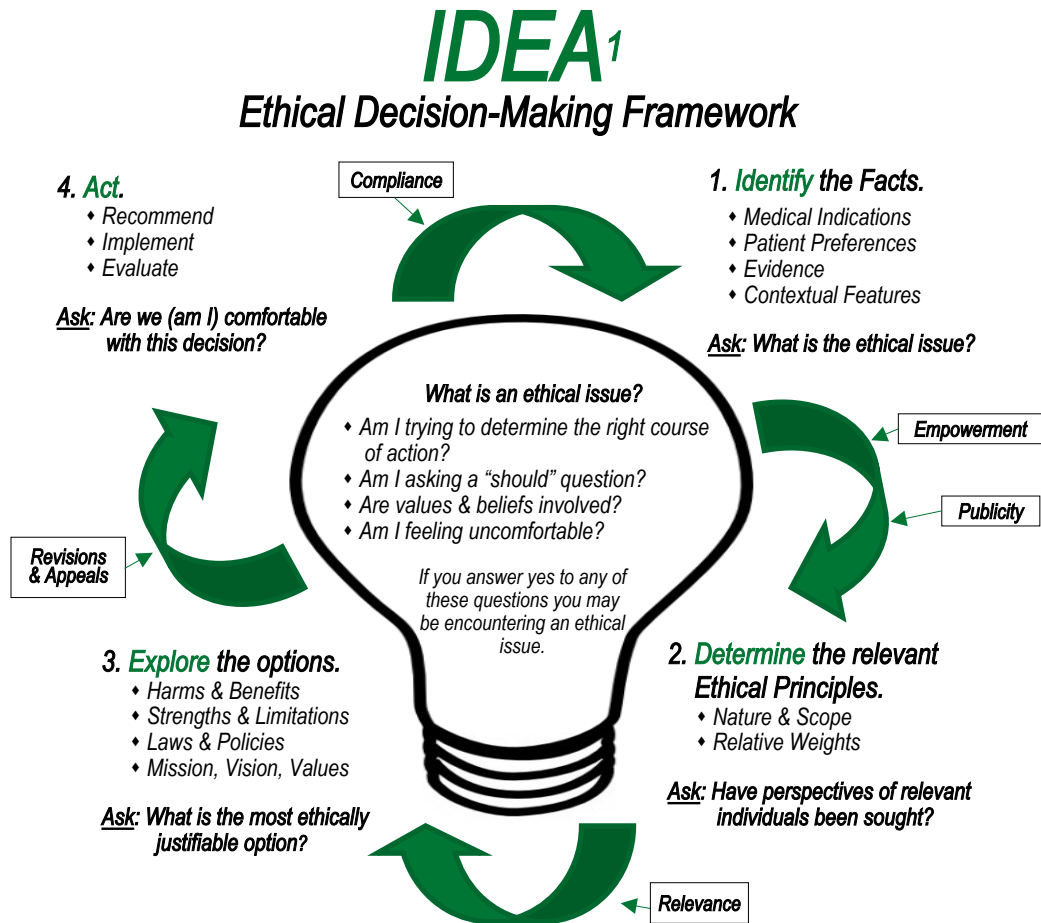
Framework- a frame or structure composed of parts fitted and joined together, the Ethics Decision Making Framework described in this policy offers guidance to all members of the hospital community in making decisions which are congruent with the hospital's mission, vision and values.

Staff or Personnel – physicians, employees, volunteers and students.

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		Author: Dr. Wallace Liang, GP Ethicist & Chair REB	**Authorized By:** Monica Staley, VP Patient Relations & Legal Affairs David Musyj, CEO	**Effective Date:**11/23/2015 **Last Review Date:** 10/10/2019 **Next Review Date:** 10/10/2021 **Origination Date:** 04/01/2012

PROCESS

IDEA₁
Ethical Decision-Making Framework

Step 1: Identify the Facts
Given that ethical issues often arise because of a lack of sufficient information or evidence, as well as disagreements about the facts, the first step in the ethical decision-making process is an explicit call for identification of the facts. This may help to resolve some conflicts and sets the stage for an effective process in others. Begin by asking the question, **"What is the ethical issue that has been identified?".**

Step 2: Determine the Relevant Ethical Principles
In the second step, open discussion about the dominant values and principles of the relevant parties individuals and/or groups, as well as those of the organization) is necessary to further clarify the ethical issue(s) at hand. This step requires an exploration of the nature and scope of the identified ethical principles and consideration of the relative weights to assign to each principle (see Appendix B for a list of ethical principles). The agreed upon set of prioritized principles (decision-making criteria) will be used to guide the decision-making process.
- What principles/values do stakeholders consider most relevant to this issue?
- Which principles/values do the stakeholders agree are most important?
- Are there any additional factors that ought to be considered?

Step 3: Explore the Options
The third step encourages brainstorming and reflection on a range of possible alternative courses of action. In any given situation, an attempt to identify at least three options should be made. Strengths and limitations of each option are explored. Options consistent with relevant laws and policies are identified. Options must be consistent with mission, vision, and values of organization. The agreed upon principles of decision-making as identified in Step 2 are applied to each viable option.

Step 4: Act
Finally, the fourth step focuses on action. The most ethically justifiable option as identified in Step 3 is recommended for implementation. The decision(s) and the process used to arrive at the decision(s) is documented and communicated to relevant parties. An implementation plan is articulated. A process for evaluating the decision is determined.

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OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER

1. Accepted Ethical Principles

These include but are not limited to broad concepts such as respect for patient autonomy, beneficence (acting in the best interest of the patient), non-malfeasance (the duty to avoid harm), justice, fairness, corporate responsibility, the duty to avoid conflicts of interest, etc. The most important of these concepts are covered in the WRH Ethical Framework document and the WRH Library includes a number of helpful texts on ethical principles in healthcare. The following link will take you to the Ethic Framework document which includes instruction on how to use and apply the framework and helpful worksheets.
http://wrhintranet.wrh.on.ca/Site_Published/intranet/document_render.aspx?documentRender.IdType=5&documentRender.GenericField=&documentRender.Id=36754

2. Legislation

This includes, but is not limited to statutes such as:
- Ontario's Personal Health Information Protection Act
- Consent to Treatment Act
- Public Hospitals Act
- Regulated Health Professions Act

All physicians and staff are expected to be familiar with legislative requirements relevant to their practice and to observe legislative requirements consistently and carefully.

3. Professional Codes of Ethics

These include, but are not limited to, the codes which govern the practice of professionals governed by Ontario's Regulated Health Professions Act. All regulated health professionals and members of other professional organizations are expected to be familiar with and able to apply the particular code of ethics relevant to their work.

4. WRH Policies

The hospital has developed a number of policies, located on the Intranet and unit/department manuals that offer guidance to staff dealing with ethical conflicts. Examples include but are not limited to policies on confidentiality, resuscitation, reporting abuse, and conflict of interest. The hospital has also developed a values-based Code of Conduct including a conflict resolution process.

5. WRH Ethics Committees

WRH has an Ethics Committee with staff, management, physician and community member representation.
WRH also has a Research Ethics Board that focuses on ensuring that the interests of human subjects are protected when research is approved at WRH. The Research Ethics Board also ensures that staff treat human samples, tissues or remains according to relevant legal requirements. The Ethics Facilitator Committee is comprised of the Patient Representative, Spiritual Care, Social Work and other volunteer members of the hospital staff. The Ethics Facilitator Committee members are available to the healthcare team when an ethical violation or ethical dilemma is identified. The Ethics Facilitator will provide consultation, review the facts and provide guidance to the health care team at the point of care delivery. The Ethics Facilitator Committee will report point of care ethics consults to the Ethics Committee.

6. OUTSTANDING CARE, NO EXCEPTIONS!

Windsor Regional Hospital mission "We provide outstanding care with compassion" and our values, were developed as part of our strategic planning exercise. Our values identify specific behaviours hospital personnel are expected to demonstrate in the workplace.

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PROCEDURE

1. Staff or family identifies an ethical issue that requires further discussion.

2. Ethics Facilitator Team is contacted for consultation in collaboration with the health care team and family. The Ethics Facilitator team contact information is located on the Intranet at http://wrhintranet.wrh.on.ca/Site_Published/intranet/Default.aspx listed under Programs and Services.

3. IDEA framework is used to work through the ethical issue identified to arrive at a plan of care.

4. The health care team agrees to the plan of care and the plan is documented in the patient care record for staff to follow.

5. Family, substitute decision maker and or power of attorney are kept informed of the plan of care.

REFERENCES

Credit Valley Hospital

Daniels, Sabin (2002).Accountability for Reasonableness framework

Ethics Toolkit (2008), which was based on the work of Jonsen, Seigler, & Winslade (2002); the work of the Core Curriculum

The IDEA: Ethical Decision-Making Framework builds upon the Toronto Central Community Care Access Centre *Community*

IDEA1: Ethical Decision-Making Framework – Toronto Central Community Care Access Centre, Community Ethics Toolkit (2008)

Jonsen, Seigler, Winslade (2002). The Work of the Core Curriculum Working Group at the University of Toronto Joint Centre for Bioethics

Trillium Health Care

Working Group at the University of Toronto Joint Centre for Bioethics; and incorporates aspects of the accountability for reasonableness framework developed by Daniels and Sabin (2002) and adapted by Gibson, Martin, & Singer (2005). It is also based on the work of The Credit Valley Hospital and Trillium Health Centre.

Work sheets and framework can be found at:
http://wrhintranet.wrh.on.ca/Site_Published/intranet/document_render.aspx?documentRender.IdType=5&documentRender.GenericField=&documentRender.Id=36754