

Who may request an ethics consultation?

Anyone who has to make a decision and wants to do what is right, but is pulled in opposite directions by different values, beliefs or duties that are important to them or to others may request an ethics consult. Patients, residents, clients, family members and staff may request a consult. You do not need to ask anyone for permission to contact Ethics Services.

When should I request an ethics consult?

- When you have to make a choice but you are uncertain what the “right” choice is.
- When it seems impossible to reach an agreement on which value, belief or duty should be preferred.
- When you have tried as a team to resolve disagreements and reach consensus on what the “right” choice is, but have not been successful.



How do I request an ethics consult?

Ethics consultants are available for consultation during regular work hours (8am to 4pm Monday to Friday, excluding statutory holidays).

Call **HealthLine 811** and an operator will ask questions about your ethical dilemma to connect you to an ethics consultant who could assist you. If the ethics consultant is not available you should expect to receive a return call within one business day.

**Anyone may
request an ethics
consultation by calling**

HealthLine 811

ethics@saskhealthauthority.ca

The ethics program is a collaboration between the Saskatchewan Health Authority, Emmanuel Health and Saskatchewan Cancer Agency.



Bioethics and You:



**Where Practice
Meets Principle**

What are Ethics Services?

Every day, people make decisions about how to provide the best care possible for patients, residents, clients and families. Ethics Services is available to help anyone who may want help thinking through their decisions. This includes patients, residents, family members, employees or physicians. Some of the issues people bring to Ethics Services are simple. Others are much more complicated.

The decisions people face in health care can be complex because we are always developing new technology and new ways of treating people. However, even with these new developments, the way that people think about problems has not changed. We still have values and principles that guide our decisions, and are still able to talk through our problems with other people.

What is an ethical dilemma?

Having to choose between two conflicting values, beliefs or duties is an ethical dilemma.

For example, you want to be honest, but you know if you tell the truth someone will be harmed. Or, you may want to honour the wishes of a loved one, but you know that following their wishes will result in their death.

What are the signs of an ethical dilemma?

You might be experiencing an ethical dilemma if you are:

- Feeling uncomfortable about a decision or course of action.
- Faced with more than one possible course of action and do not know which is the best choice.
- Disagreeing with others about what should be done in a particular situation.
- Worrying that someone has been treated unfairly.

Ethical dilemmas may include issues like:

- Ability to provide consent (capacity)
- Advance care directives
- Beginning-of-life or end-of-life care
- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)
- Conflict of interest
- Conscientious objection
- Deciding who makes a decision for someone who cannot make a decision for themselves
- Diversity and cultural sensitivity
- Having trouble letting go of a decision that has been made
- Finding ways to ensure the patient's voice is heard
- Medical assistance in dying
- Privacy and confidentiality
- Saying no to a treatment
- Stopping a treatment
- Trying to access care or treatment

What does an ethics consultant do?

An ethics consultant works with you and those involved, ensuring that all options are carefully considered. The ethics consultant will try to help you figure out what is most important to you, and help you find ways to deal with the things you are worried might happen because of your decision.

What can I expect from an ethics consultation?

A consultation may take place over the phone, in person or through a meeting with you and anyone you think needs to be part of the decision-making process. The ethics consultant will let you know if there is anyone else who can help you with your decisions, such as a lawyer or a social worker, and work with you to make sure you feel comfortable as you move forward with making your decision.

You do not need to follow the advice of the ethics consultant. They are there to offer you suggestions and support you, not to take your decision away from you.

