

Ethics Tool

Help with Ethical Issues

Ethics Nova Scotia Health

If you have questions about this tool or the challenge you are facing:

- › Phone (toll-free): 1-833-392-1413
- › Email: czethics@nshealth.ca
- › www.nshealth.ca/clinics-programs-and-services/ethics-nova-scotia-health

We will get back to you within 2 business days, Monday to Friday.

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www.nshealth.ca

Ethics Tool: Help with Ethical Issues

Ethics Nova Scotia Health supports all patients, families, volunteers, staff, and health care providers when they need help making hard choices or when there is disagreement about what is most important.

Ethics is about how we connect our actions and our values. We answer ethics questions by thinking about our values, or what is important to us.

When you or someone you care about is sick or hurt, it can be hard to figure out what to do.

It may help to figure out what is worrying you or making you upset. It may also help to think about your choices and talk with others about what is going on.

This ethics tool can help you decide what is important and what to do.

How do I get started?

With ethical issues, it is important to remember that:

- There may be more than 1 answer or approach to the issue.
- The best choice you can make may still not feel fully right.
- Sometimes ethical decision-making means doing the **least bad** thing.

Using this ethics tool may help you to make better decisions. It may also help you feel better about the decisions you make.

As you use the tool, remember:

- The questions are only a guide to help you think and talk about an ethics issue.
- You **do not** have to do the questions in order.
- You **do not** have to answer all of the questions.

Exploring the issue on your own

You can think about the following questions, or it may help to make some notes.

1. What are you worried about? What is the problem you are having?

2. What are your gut feelings about the problem?

3. What kinds of things are making you feel this way?

4. Why does this issue have to be dealt with now? How important is the issue to you?

5. What do you already know about what is going on?

6. What do you need to find out?

7. Who else might be able to help you with this? (See page 3.)

8. What do you want to do next? For example, you could:

- › think more about the issue on your own.
- › talk to friends about the issue.
- › make a decision.
- › wait a bit and see what happens.

Exploring the issue with others

- You may be having big feelings. It is OK to feel this way. It may help to try to think about what is behind your feelings.
- You may also want to talk to your friends about the issue.
- It might be harder to talk about your feelings if you do not feel safe. You may feel powerless. You may be scared of being treated unfairly, judged, or misunderstood. You may also be worried about the effect that this might have on you or your loved one.
- Trying to explain your feelings to others can be hard, but often it can help everyone understand the issue better.
- We can all have a hard time seeing others' points of view if we disagree. Trying to be open to others' thoughts is important for all of us.

Who else do you want to talk to?

You can think about the following questions, or it may help to make some notes.

1. Having thought about it, and maybe talked to others, what are your options? It can help to make a list of options. Remember that you can always leave things how they are.

2. Which option is the best choice at the moment?

3. When you explain the option you think is best to someone else, what comes up in the conversation? Does it make you think about something new?

4. What will you do now? Who do you need to talk to?

Follow-up

It can help to think more about the issue after some time has passed. Time may help you see what happened in a new or different way.

Ethics resources

Ethics Nova Scotia Health

- Ethics Nova Scotia Health provides support to all patients, families, volunteers, staff, and health care providers at Nova Scotia Health when they need help making difficult choices or when there is disagreement about what is most important. For more information or to talk with the Ethics Resource Coordinator, contact:
 - › Phone: 1-833-392-1413 (confidential voicemail)
 - › Email: czethics@nshealth.ca
 - › www.nshealth.ca/clinics-programs-and-services/ethics-nova-scotia-health
- If you have questions about this ethics tool, please contact Ethics Nova Scotia Health.
 - › If you contact Ethics Nova Scotia Health someone will get back to you within 2 business days, Monday to Friday. Staff will talk with you to find out what sort of ethics support might be useful. They will let you know if there are other appropriate resources to address your concerns.
- *Making Health Care Decisions for Someone Else: Acting as a Substitute Decision-Maker (SDM)*
 - › www.nshealth.ca/sites/nshealth.ca/files/patientinformation/2327.pdf

Nova Scotia Health Resources

- *Your Rights and Responsibilities*
 - › www.nshealth.ca/sites/nshealth.ca/files/patientinformation/0466.pdf

prideHealth

- prideHealth works to improve access to safe, comprehensive, and culturally appropriate health services for people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, Two-Spirited, intersex, queer, and questioning (members of the LGBTIQ+ community).
 - › Phone: 902-487-0470
 - › Email: prideHealth@nshealth.ca
 - › www.nshealth.ca/content/pridehealth

Patient and Family Feedback

- › Phone (toll-free): 1-844-884-4177

Patient Rights Advisor Services

- Rights advice is a standard form of information provided to patients in Nova Scotia who experience a change in legal status, for example upon being made involuntary, incapable of consenting to treatment etc.
- Rights advice provides protection to individuals who are experiencing a loss of freedom to make their own decisions. This protection takes the form of explaining the loss, the options available to the affected individual with respect to having the decision reviewed and obtaining legal representation if requested.
 - › <https://novascotia.ca/dhw/mental-health/patient-rights-advisor-services.asp>
 - › Phone: 902-404-3322
 - › Phone (toll-free): 1-866-779-3322

Nova Scotia Mental Health and Wellbeing

- › <https://novascotia.ca/mental-health-and-wellbeing>

Nova Scotia Health Mental Health and Addictions Program

- › <https://mha.nshealth.ca/en>

**What are your questions?
Please ask. We are here to help you.**

