

When does it make sense to ask for support from the Covenant Health Ethics and Discernment Centre?

For Individuals...

When an individual has concerns about whether an action or decision they need to make truly 'fits' with who they are and what is important to them. Example indicators:

- "I don't have the right words to explain it...I have a yucky feeling about this that won't go away"
- "No one else seems to be bothered about this but I think it is wrong. What should I do?"
- "This decision doesn't make sense! We say that respect is important but this isn't respectful"

Supports for individuals thinking through a decision that may have negative consequences for themselves or others:

- Ethics coaching conversation to help you think through and gain clarity on your situation and what truly matters as you make your decision.
- Tools that help you think through your situation and decision on your own—such as question prompts, decision-making frameworks, ethics guides, research on a topic of concern.
- Facilitated discussion with you and your trusted colleagues that broadens your perspective and helps you to make a well thought out decision.
- Supportive conversation to debrief experiences of moral distress and decisions that compromised your integrity.

For Groups and Care Teams...

When team members have concerns about whether the care plan, decision-making or actions of a resident, patient or substitute decision maker, makes sense in light of the care goals. Example indicators:

- Non-clinical groups or departmental staff have concerns about the impact or alignment of their work in light of their own and COV values and mission
- Patient/resident refuses care that is needed to help achieve the care goals or maintain the patient's/resident's quality of life.
- Family members insist on types of care that the patient/resident does not want.
- Patient/resident is not able to make care decisions for themselves and no one knows what the patient would want.
- The care plan doesn't make sense mostly because the care goals are not clear.
- Patient/resident or family behaviors interfere with providing care and/or meeting care goals.
- Care team members have conflicting commitments to their profession, to the organization, to the care team, to the patient and/or the patient's family.



Supports for groups or teams thinking through decisions that try to balance safety, patient/resident preferences, the team's obligations, and action that aligns with the organization's mission and values:

- A structured way of making decisions that are well thought through and can be clearly explained to others if asked "Why did you do that?"
- Interviews with the people supporting the patient to help everyone better understand the different views of "What is best?"
- Facilitated team and/or family meetings about "doing the right thing" for the patient/resident.
- Supportive coaching conversation to help team members identify, describe and balance conflicting commitments or obligations.
- An ethics report that includes recommendations about actions or decisions that best fit with the patient's/resident's care preferences and the care team's responsibilities.

For Leaders and Leadership Teams...

When leaders or leadership teams have concerns about whether a decision aligns with core organizational commitments, organizational culture, mission, and/or personal values. Example indicators include decisions that:

- Involve significant changes to how care is delivered to patients/residents.
- Impact the program or site's relationship with the local community.
- Lead others to question the organization's commitment to mission and values or Catholic identity.
- Set a precedent, or are likely to set a precedent for how similar situations will be handled or decisions will be made in the future.
- Ongoing lack of ability or capacity to meet standards, honour organizational values or maintain mission fidelity due to resource constraints

Supports for Leaders thinking through organizational or administrative decisions that involve high expectations for quality service, financial and resource allocation pressures, mission and reputational risks, or misalignment with personal values:

- An in-depth facilitated process to examine the decision from multiple angles.
- Executive and leadership ethics coaching and consulting
- Tools to support collaborative reflection and decision-making (e.g. the COV Mission Discernment Tool, Outsourcing Framework, Just Workplace Framework)