



Bermuda Hospitals Board

Hospital Ethics Consultation: Overview

Introduction

The Bermuda Hospitals Board Ethics Committee recognises that attending to the ethical dimensions of medical care is crucial to the delivery of compassionate excellence. Among its responsibilities, the Ethics Committee provides ethics consultations when these are required.

An ethics consultation is a meeting, convened to discuss the ethical concerns of patients, their next of kin, other family members, friends or staff members in the delivery of clinical care. Such concerns may arise especially when there is disagreement or uncertainty about treatment decisions.

Requesting a consultation

If you wish to initiate an ethics consultation, please complete the BHB Ethics Consultation Request Form and submit it to ethics@bhb.bm or to a member of the Ethics Committee or Ethics Consultation Subcommittee.

In exceptionally urgent cases, the BHB Ethics Consultation Request Form should be submitted directly by email to ethics@bhb.bm and to the following members of the Ethics Consultation Subcommittee:

- Jaime.Dennehy@bhb.bm
- Merate-Kristos.Place@bhb.bm
- Sanja.Malbasa-Thompson@bhb.bm

The Subcommittee will review the request and respond as promptly as possible, taking into consideration the urgency of the case.

The consultation

An ethics consultation aims to clarify ethical aspects of a case, including ethical values and the norms that should assist decision making. For this reason, consultations engage relevant expertise and resources. They are conducted with respect for the values, needs and interests of all participants.

Each consultation follows a standard procedure, as documented in the BHB Ethics Consultation Policy. A **full ethics consultation** may include seven stages: intake, notification, opening of the consultation, presentation and deliberation, summary, debriefing, and evaluation. **Urgent ethics consultations** should be completed within 48 business hours.



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At least two members of the Ethics Committee participate in each consultation. One member acts as the consultation facilitator. This person opens the meeting by introducing all those present, giving their names and their role in the process.

The consultation facilitator explains the ground rules for the consultation:

- The consultation continues until it is complete or until the pre-set time limit is reached.
- Everyone is expected to stay for the whole process.
- To avoid interruptions, everyone is asked to switch off all phones.
- Everyone is encouraged to participate. If anyone wishes, they may prepare a written statement beforehand, to be read at the consultation.
- Everything said during the consultation is confidential. All present must agree to and abide by this rule.

Another member acts as the recorder. This person takes notes, which are checked at the end of the session to ensure everyone's contribution has been recorded correctly, along with conclusions and recommendations. These notes are added, perhaps in a shortened form, to the patient's clinical notes, where they comprise the Ethics Consultation Record.

Participants in the consultation will be invited to complete the Ethics Consultation Feedback Form within two months of the completion of the consultation.

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