**Ethics Pocket Tool**

### Team's Perspective of the Problem
- What difficulty is being faced?
- What is the ‘red flag’ that drew the team's attention to this problem?
- What ethical concerns have been raised by team members?
- Is there team consensus on options and goals for care?

### Patient Preferences
- Who has talked to the patient? When?
- What are the patient’s care preferences or goals for care?
- Is the patient’s decision voluntary and informed?
- Who are the important people in the patient’s life?
- Who is the SDM if the patient is incapable?

### Respecting Diversity
- What values and beliefs are important to the patient?
- Are there religious and/or cultural factors the patient wishes to honour or perform?
- How does the patient perceive the cause, nature of the illness and the meaning of death, health and well-being?
- What supports or resources are needed by the patient / family? (e.g. translator, chaplain etc.)

### Communicating Effectively
- What is appropriate and sensitive language for this family?
- Is information being communicated in a manner that everyone can understand?
- How timely is communication?
- Are patient / family given time to comment and ask questions?
- Are patient / family concerns clearly understood?
- Is there any sign of conflict? What are your resources to resolve conflict?
When you should call for an Ethics Consult:

- Consensus cannot be reached within the interdisciplinary team or between the treatment team and the family/patient on goals for care.

- Team is facing a true ethical dilemma:
  - care options pose an equal level of benefit and harm to patient/family making decision-making difficult or
  - team knows the most ethical course of action but this option cannot be pursued due to barriers either within the institution or due to special circumstances of the patient and/or family.

- Patient/family has challenging expectations about care or posing challenging behaviours.

- Pervasive feeling that something is wrong but ethical dimensions are unclear.

- Not sure that particular benefits of a course of treatment or level of care justifies the burden this will place on the patient/family.

- Concerns that values of organization or individual are not consistent with optimal patient care.

- Conflict or confusion about the appropriate role of substitute decision-maker.

Moral Community

- What professional ideals or obligations need to be upheld?
- What organizational values are relevant to the situation?
- What organizational policies, protocols or barriers are influencing ethical decision-making in this situation?

Reflecting

- What ethical principles are relevant to this case? (autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice)
- Which ethical principles are unclear, compromised or in conflict?
- Have team members explored feelings, cultural biases and values that may influence decision-making or behaviour?
- What other resources or consultation would be helpful in addressing this situation?
- What has been learned and what proactive measures could be used in the future?

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This tool was developed from information shared by The Joint Centre for Bioethics U of T as well as the Bioethics Departments at Wm. Osler Health Centre & St. Joseph's Health Care London.