



Ontario College of
Social Workers and
Social Service Workers

Ordre des travailleurs
sociaux et des techniciens
en travail social de l'Ontario

ETHICS → A

Examine the situation and values.

This is a process of exploration, not jumping into action or decision-making.

1. Examine the facts. Gather all available information and/or evidence. Are there disagreements about the facts?

2. Examine whether an ethical dilemma actually exists. Ask yourself: Are there Standards of Practice, policies or legislation that direct how to proceed? Am I trying to determine what is morally right or wrong? Are values and beliefs in conflict?

3. Examine relevant values. What are the values of the client, society and organization? What are your professional and personal values? Ignoring values is as problematic as imposing values.¹

¹ 1.5 College members are aware of their values, attitudes and needs and how these impact on their professional relationships with clients.

1.6 College members distinguish their needs and interests from those of their clients to ensure that, within professional relationships, clients' needs and interests remain paramount.

Think about the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*.

Think about the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, relevant laws or workplace policies and practices that apply to this situation.

1. How does the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* apply to this situation?

2. What is the legislation that applies to the workplace? Is there legislation that applies to this situation (e.g., *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, Health Care Consent Act, Personal Health Information Protection Act*)?

3. Are there workplace policies or practices that apply to this situation?

Hypothesize all possible decisions or options.

Do not place judgment or look for the best options.

Identify the consequences of each option.

Reflect on the inherent risks and benefits of each option.

Consult with others.

Consult with others about ethical choices. You may choose to consult colleagues, supervisors, managers, ethicists or privacy officers; obtain a legal consult; or contact the Professional Practice Department at the College, for example.

Select an action and document the process. Get **S**upport.

Documentation is important throughout and there needs to be evidence of your decision-making process. Get support to implement the selected action and to manage reactions from stakeholders. Record the selected action, implementation plan and required supports. Document the client's or their decision maker's consent to the plan.

Advocate for change if required or indicated.

Use professional judgment in determining how to advocate. Such advocacy may take the form of documenting concerns and discussing them with a supervisor, manager or other key person in the organization.²

² Principle II: Competence and Integrity, footnote 10.

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