

Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences Ethics Framework

Introduction

An ethics framework articulates an organization’s approach to identifying, managing, and addressing ethics-related issues and concerns. An ethics framework is an overall organizational strategy which includes structures, policies and procedures, tools and resources, leadership, and expertise. The literature along with experience of ethicists in other organizations demonstrates that an effective ethics framework should be strategically aligned, integrated, sustainable, and accountable. It should be aligned with the organization’s strategic directions. It should be designed structurally to integrate ethics into daily decisions and actions from the front-line to the boardroom. It should be sustained by measurable individual and organizational commitment and with the necessary resources. Finally, it should be enabled with formal accountability in the organizational structure.¹

Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences (Ontario Shores) is dedicated to providing optimal mental health care focused on individual paths to recovery. Over the years, ethics has increasingly been recognized as a key component of high quality patient care, organizational decision-making and practice, and research in health organizations. As a result, Ontario Shores is leading the practice by developing a comprehensive ethics framework to support staff, board members, clients, families, academics and researchers in addressing ethics-related issues and concerns. Our ethics framework is supported and maintained by the Integrated Ethics Council. The [IDEA tool for ethical decision-making](#), including a Guide and Worksheet, is used by our community to guide ethical decision-making on a daily basis.

Our vision is to ensure that ethics is integral and visible in all we do.



Ethics is at the core of all we do. This conceptual model of our ethics framework outlines the four ethics domains: clinical, work environment, academic, and organizational. This represents the interface between programs and services with ethics at the center of care. An integrated, sustainable, and accountable ethics framework has and will continue to be embedded across the organization in all our relationships with clients, patients, families, staff, volunteers, and partners. There is ethics interface through committee involvement, consultation services, ethics education and resources, and project and policy involvement demonstrating a truly integrated and multifaceted ethics approach.

¹ Gibson J, Faith K, Kaufman H, & Winsor S. Ethics framework development at the SE CCAC, 2011.

Clinical Ethics



Guiding Principle

At Ontario Shores, we treat patients, clients and families with respect, dignity, and fairness in their recovery; we apply leading ethical practices to ensure high quality and excellent care.

Common ethical issues/considerations include:

- Client consent to treatment
- Use of control interventions
- Disagreement between clients/families/providers about treatment decisions
- Client advocacy
- Confidentiality/privacy of personal health information
- Disclosure of risk
- Transition/discharge planning

Key Enablers		
Policies/ Guidelines/ Standards/Tools	Corporate Initiatives	Structures/ Personnel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient Rights and Responsibilities • Code of Behaviour • Code of Conduct • Recovery philosophies of care • Key Policies (e.g.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consent to Treatment • Consensual Sexual Behaviour of Hospitalized Patients • Restraints, Chemical, Mechanical and Seclusion • Communication of Actual or Potential Harm • Confidentiality and Security of Personal Health Information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recovery Initiatives (e.g., Recovery 2.0, Intimacy Recovery, Trauma informed care, Cultural competence, etc.) • Patient Experience Surveys • Staff Orientation² • Staff Education Sessions and Workshops³ • Patient Education via Patient Council • Family Education via Family Council • Ethics embedded on units (e.g. at Rapid Rounds) • Intranet and Internet Resources • Patient Portal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethicist • Patient Council • Family Council • Patient Experience Department • Quality Councils • Patient Advocate • Rights Advisor • Spiritual and Religious Care Services • Risk Management and Patient Safety • Privacy and Access • Professional Practice • IPPAC⁴ • Recovery Rounds & Case Conferences • Community Meetings

² Ethics as a component of staff orientation.

³ Includes ethics-specific National Mental Health Week, Let's Talk, Family Education and Grand Rounds; Creative Minds: Reducing Stigma through the Arts, Imagine Film Festival and Series, Mindful Music and Art Program; Talking About Mental Illness (TAMI) Stomp Out Stigma Program.

⁴ IPPAC is the abbreviation for the Interprofessional Practice Advisory Committee

Key Enablers		
Policies/ Guidelines/ Standards/Tools	Corporate Initiatives	Structures/ Personnel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient Identification • Interpretation Services • Clinical Monitoring • Reflective Practice and Debriefing • Transfer of a Patient • Discharge of a Patient • Clinical Care Standards – Expectations for All Healthcare Clinicians • Accreditation Canada Standards • Professional College Standards • IDEA Worksheet for Ethical Decision-making • Patient Satisfaction Survey 		

Work Environment Ethics



Guiding Principle

At Ontario Shores, we foster a culture of mutual caring and wellness through a positive and respectful work environment that enables staff members to fulfill their roles and reach their potential.

Common ethical issues/considerations include:

- Fair hiring practices
- Workplace safety
- Staff health and well-being
- Workload
- Interprofessional conflict
- Conflict in the workplace
- Mandatory vaccination, etc.
- Duty to care requirements (e.g., pandemic)
- Cultural sensitivity (holiday support e.g. Eid, Yom Kippur, etc.)

Key Enablers		
Policies/ Guidelines/ Standards/Tools	Corporate Initiatives	Structures/ Personnel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Policies (e.g.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Conduct • Workplace Harassment • Workplace Violence Policy • Conflict Resolution • Incidents and Good Catches – Patient and Non-Patient • Recruitment and Selection • Transfer of Accountability, Interprofessional • Guidelines for Follow-up Post Incidents of Physical Aggression • Accreditation standards • Professional Association Standards • Regulatory College Standards of Practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological Health and Safety Standard • Staff Orientation • Staff Education and Workshops • Respect in the Workplace Awareness Program • Violence in the Workplace Awareness Program • Everyday Heroes Program • Bright Ideas Program • Workplace Violence Prevention Program • Annual Rewards and Recognition and Values in Action Awards • Employee Opinion Surveys • Patient Safety Culture Survey • Ethics Institutional Scan • Staff Development Programs • Wellness Programs (including employee assistance program (EAP)) • Intranet and Internet Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources Consultants • CEO/OD • Integrated Wellness • Occupational Health & Safety • Risk Management and Patient Safety • Health and Safety Specialists • Professional Practice • Patient Experience • Ethicist • Employee Assistance Program

Academic Ethics



Guiding Principle

At Ontario Shores, we advance a culture of innovation and discovery through a passionate commitment to research, education, and creative professional activities that are grounded in an ethical approach and advance the well-being of individual research subjects, students and trainees.

Common ethical issues/considerations include:

- Ethical review of research protocols
- Research-related adverse events
- Conflict of interest

- Preceptor-trainee relationships
- Fair evaluation of students and trainees
- Relations with academic institutions
- Scientific misconduct

Key Enablers		
Policies/ Guidelines/ Standards/Tools	Corporate Initiatives	Structures/ Personnel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Policies (e.g.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical Authorship • Research Impact Analysis • Responsibilities of Local Principal Investigator/Co-Investigator Research Ethics • Code of Conduct • Confidentiality and Security of Personal Health Information Policy • Academic and Research Appointments • Research Publication and Publication Rights • Responsible Conduct of Research • Allegations of Research Misconduct • Tri-Council Policy Statement 2010 • Academic Affiliation Agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Plan • Research Day • Mental Health Forum • Intranet and Internet Resources • Staff Orientation/Preceptorship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research & Academics Office • Academic Council • Research Ethics Board • Ethicist • Researchers • Preceptors • Privacy and Access
<p>Opportunity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines regarding students/trainees (currently code of conduct and affiliation agreements) 		

Organizational Ethics



Guiding Principle

At Ontario Shores, we are committed to providing exemplary mental health care by being accountable for stewardship of public resources and making ethical decisions.

Common ethical issues/considerations include:

- Resource allocation
- Conflict of interest
- Access to care
- Continuity of care
- Vendor relations
- Philanthropic fundraising
- Pandemic planning
- Balancing competing accountabilities (system vs. institution)

Key Enablers		
Policies/ Guidelines/ Standards/Tools	Corporate Initiatives	Structures/ Personnel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission, Vision, and Values • 2017-2022 Strategic Plan • Key Policies (e.g.) • Procurement and Competitive Bid Accreditation standards • Outpatient Services Framework • Approved Budget Principles • Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) Policy • An Ethics-based Analysis and Recommendations for Implementing Physician-Assisted Dying in Canada <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict of interest policy (currently Code of Conduct April 1, 2011 and Procurement and Competitive Bid April 1, 2011 both contain references to conflict of interest. Also, one of the research related P&Ps references conflict of interest.) • Fundraising policy • Uninsured patient policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethics Framework • Psychological Health and Safety Standard • High-Performance governance practices • Quality Improvement Plan • Mental Health and Addictions Quality Initiative • Intranet and Internet Resources • Ethics Institutional Scan • Employee Opinion Survey • Pandemic Planning • Integrated Wellness • Ontario Human Rights Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Directors and relevant sub-committees • Senior Management Team • Patient Experience • Quality Councils • Professional Practice • Patient Safety and Privacy • Organizational Development • IQPSC⁵ • Stewardship Committee • Ethicist • MAiD Steering Committee

⁵ IQPSC is the abbreviation for the Integrated Quality Programs and Services Committee