

Shannex Six-Step Process of Ethical Clinical Decision-Making

(adapted from Purtilo, 2005)

Step 1: Get the Story Straight – Gather Relevant Information

Clinical Indicators:

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| What is the diagnosis or prognosis? | |
| Is the illness or condition reversible? | |
| Is life-saving treatment medically futile? | |
| What is the present care plan? | |
| What is the usual plan of care /interventions for this situation? | |
| What is needed to relieve suffering or to provide comfort and safety? | |
| What and how can you learn about this client's medical and social history? Are there any traditions or cultural influences? | |

Preference of the Resident /Substitute Decision Maker:

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| What does the resident/ Substitute Decision Maker (SDM) want in this situation? | |
| Who has communicated the options to the resident? (Physician, SW, Licensed Staff, PT, OT, Recreation, Dietitian) | |
| What forum was used or should be used to communicate information? (e.g. special CCC, meetings, etc.) | |
| What was the resident/SDM actually told? What options were discussed? | |
| What evidence do you have that what the resident/SDM said has been heard by key decision makers? | |
| Does he or she have capacity to make decisions about this situation? | |
| If the resident lacks capacity is there a Personal Care Directive, or other document indicating his/her preferences? | |
| If the client lacks capacity is there a legal substitute decision maker? | |

Quality of Life:

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| What are the resident's beliefs and values that make up his or her personal value system? | |
| What quality of life considerations are the decision makers bringing to this situation, and how are their biases influencing the processes? | |
| How is the resident's quality of life affected? | |

Contextual Factors:

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| What institutional policies may influence what can be done? | |
| What are the legal implications regarding this issue? | |
| Are resources an issue? How will these services be paid for? | |

Step 2: Review Values/Code of Ethics and Ethical Principles

- Shannex Values
- Code of Ethics for your profession
- Ethical Principles (As noted below)

Step 3: Identify the Possible Solutions *(Brainstorm the possible solutions)*

Based on this situation, how do the ethical principles apply and what are the possible solutions?

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| "above all do no harm" – Non-maleficence | |
| Prevent harm, remove harm when being inflicted and bring about good -Beneficence | |
| Respect for persons. Assumes a competent person is free to determine a self-chosen plan unless that plan interferes with the rights of others -Autonomy | |
| How we treat individuals and groups within society, fairly distribute benefits and burdens and compensate those who've been unfairly treated - Justice | |

Step 4: Identify the Best Practical Solutions Within Your Means and Job Description

Please Note: An optimizing solution is one that looks at the best alternatives for the long-term. It is not necessarily the quickest or easiest solution. In contrast a satisfying solution only looks at satisfying the immediate needs or demands.

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| What you are going to do? | How you are going to do it? |
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Step 5: Action/Intervention

Step 6: Evaluate the Process and Outcome *(Reflect on and evaluate the action)*

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| What did you do well and why? | |
| What were the most challenging aspects of this situation? | |
| How did this situation compare with others you encountered/read about? | |
| To what other kind of situations will your experience with this one apply? | |
| What was the most helpful? | |
| What does the resident/family/SDM have to say about your actions? | |
| Overall, what did you learn? | |