



**CLINICAL ETHICS NEEDS  
ASSESSMENT SURVEY  
(CENAS)  
November 2012**



The Clinical Ethics Needs Assessment Survey (CENAS) was designed to understand health professionals' perceptions of: (1) their organization's ethical climate; (2) frequently encountered ethical issues; and (3) educational priorities for enhancing ethics-related knowledge and skills. The purpose of the CENAS is to support informed priority-setting, planning and advocacy for Ethics Committees and/or Ethicists responsible for delivering ethics services in healthcare organizations.

The CENAS was developed by a team of ethics consultants, ethicists and ethics committee members, with input from research experts, at Hamilton Health Sciences, Hamilton, ON, Canada, including: Andrea Frolic, Barb Jennings, Wendy Seidlitz, Sandy Andreychuk, Angela Djuric-Paulin and Donna Peace. Information about the development and implementation of the CENAS is available in two peer-reviewed published articles:

Frolic, A., Jennings, B., Seidlitz, W., Andreychuk, S., Djuric-Paulin, A., Flaherty, B. & Peace, D. (2012). From reactive to proactive: Developing a valid clinical ethics needs assessment survey to support ethics program strategic planning (Part 1 of 2). HEC Forum. doi:[10.1007/s10730-012-9204-y](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10730-012-9204-y).

Frolic, A., Jennings, B., Seidlitz, W., Andreychuk, S., Djuric-Paulin, A., Flaherty, B., Peace, D. (2012). Implementing a clinical ethics needs assessment survey: Results of a pilot study (part 2 of 2). HEC Forum. doi:[10.1007/s10730-012-9205-x](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10730-012-9205-x).

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## Clinical Ethics Needs Assessment Survey (CENAS)

### Introduction

Ethics is the systematic examination of facts, beliefs, standards and values in determining the rightness or wrongness of decisions and actions. Ethical decision-making involves disciplined reflection and reasoned deliberation on how to make decisions about what should be done in a particular situation.

As health care professionals, we are continuously challenged with difficult ethical scenarios in our daily practice. Although there is general awareness that ethics education is crucial to support patient care and quality work environments, after graduation many health care professionals don't have access to relevant ethics education. In addition, there is a lack of evidence to help define what ethics education is most helpful. To address this gap, our research team developed a survey to determine the ethics education needs of staff and physicians in select programs or sites.

This survey queries a number of topics including: perceptions of the ethical climate within the surveyed programs; awareness of ethics-related policies; awareness of ethics resources and finally, staff and physician experiences of ethical issues. The aggregate data will be shared with key stakeholders and leaders in each of the programs, to support the development of a strategy to meet staff and physician needs.

We anticipate this questionnaire will take 15-20 minutes to complete. Your responses will be anonymous and you may withdraw at any point before you submit your completed survey.

### About You

1. Please indicate the group to which you belong.

*Response Options: List relevant profession groups, such as: Administration; Business Clerk or Front Line Clerk; Medicine; Nursing; Health Care Aides; Professional Practice (i.e. chaplain, child life, dietician, OT, pharmacy, PT, RT, SLP, SW); Other*

2. Please indicate the place where you predominantly work.

*Response Options: List programs/sites in which the survey is being implemented*

### Ethical Climate

3. Please indicate if you agree or disagree with each statement, based on your experience in your current program. There are no right or wrong answers. Select the item that best reflects your opinion.

*Response Options: Disagree Fully, Disagree Somewhat, Agree Somewhat, Agree Fully, Not Applicable*

- a) I feel RESPECTED by other staff members.
- b) I feel staff members respect the CONFIDENTIALITY of patients and colleagues. (Confidentiality: the right of an individual to have personal, identifiable medical information kept private)
- c) I feel decisions involving ETHICAL DILEMMAS are made in a fair, consistent, and respectful way. (Ethical dilemmas: situations when knowing or doing the right thing is unclear or difficult)
- d) I feel the practices of the LEADERSHIP TEAM within my program are fair, consistent, and respectful (Leadership team may include: director, manager, clinical leader and medical director)
- e) I feel encouraged to express my ETHICAL CONCERNS (i.e. uncertainty or conflict about values or principles).
- f) I know whom to contact about my ethical concerns when I need support.
- g) I feel staff work collaboratively to address ethical concerns.
- h) I feel the leadership team promotes access to ethics resources (eg. Ethics Consultation, ethics education, relevant policies and procedures).
- i) I feel staff are provided with adequate ethics education.
- j) I feel the values of my hospital are reflected in everyday practices and decisions in my program.



## Ethical Issues

4. On average, how often do you encounter an ethical issue in your work?

*Response Options: Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Yearly, Never*

## Awareness of Ethics-Related Policies and Legislation

Part of fostering an ethical climate in a health care organization involves providing policies and procedures which support ethical decision making in practice.

5. Please indicate if you are familiar with the following policies and legislation and how to apply them to your practice. Select the item that best reflects your opinion.

*Response Options: Not Familiar, Somewhat Familiar, Very Familiar, Not Applicable*

I am familiar with: *(list most relevant policies for your institution, see examples below)*

- End-of-Life Care Protocol
- Consent Policy
- Organ Donation Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Disclosure of Harm Policy
- Confidentiality Policy

6. Is there a need for additional guidelines or policies to support ethical practice in your program?

*Response: Free Text*

## Awareness of Ethics Resources

Creating an ethical climate and supporting ethical patient care requires access to helpful ethics resources for staff and physicians.

7. Please indicate if you are aware of the following ethics resources listed below. Select the item that best reflects your opinion. *(list resources relevant for your institution, see examples below)*

*Response Options: Not Aware, Somewhat Aware, Very Aware, Not Applicable*

I am aware of:

- a) Clinical Ethics Committee
- b) Ethics Consultation Service
- c) Clinical Ethics Website
- d) Ethicist
- e) Ethics Framework
- f) Patient education materials

## Education

8. Please indicate which educational methods YOU feel are most effective for you. Select the item that best reflects your opinion.

*Response Options: Least Preferred, Less Preferred, More Preferred, Most Preferred, Not Applicable*

- Interdisciplinary team rounds
- Departmental rounds
- Half-day workshop or retreat
- Facilitated informal discussions (e.g. lunch and learn sessions)
- Self-Study (e.g. articles, books, videos, brochures)
- Web-based learning (e.g. e-learning)
- Other (*Free Text*)



**9. Educational Needs:**

How important do you consider ethics education to support patient care in your program?

*Response Options: Not Important, Somewhat Important, Important, Very important*

**10.** Below are a list of topics which might be appropriate for ethics education. Please indicate YOUR needs in receiving education about each topic listed.

*Response Options for each topic: Not Needed, Somewhat Needed, Really Needed, Not Applicable*

- Determining patient capacity
- Role of the Substitute/Surrogate Decision Maker (SDM)
- Informed Consent
- Quality of Life
- Personal ethics and reflective practice
- Ethical decision-making tools
- Resource allocation and priority setting
- Communication with families
- Roles in decision making (professional, family and patient)
- Family-centred care and the role of family
- Conflict resolution
- Breaking bad news / truth telling
- Confidentiality / privacy issues
- Strategies for working with challenging patient/family situations
- Providing quality end of life care
- Shifting to palliative care
- Withholding / withdrawing life-sustaining treatments
- Interprofessional team communication
- Establishing clear goals and plans for care
- Ethical issues related to pain, symptom control and sedation
- Adverse medical events (reporting, disclosure, and follow-up)
- Dealing with prognostic uncertainty
- Genetic testing
- Religious and cultural diversity
- Least restraint policy
- Research ethics
- Mental health ethics

**11.** Please identify other educational needs not captured in the topics listed above.

*Responses: Free Text*

Your Ethics Experiences

*Responses: Free Text*

**12.** What are the three ethical dilemmas / conflicts / issues that you encounter most frequently in your practice?

**13.** How are the issues (from Q#12) usually addressed in your program?

**14.** What are the barriers or challenges to addressing these issues (from Q#12) effectively?

**15.** What barriers do you see in utilizing the hospital's clinical ethics consultation service?

**16.** Describe a situation when you or a team member experienced an ethical issue with which you struggled. What would have helped you in this situation?