COMPETENCIES FOR ETHICS CONSULTATION: Preparing a Portfolio

Harvard Clinical Bioethics Course
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Objectives

- Review core competencies for clinical ethics consultation
- Discuss the Quality Attestation process being piloted by ASBH
Starting with a definition

Healthcare Ethics Consultation (HCEC)

“...is a set of services provided by an individual or group in response to questions from patients, families, surrogates, health care professionals, or other involved parties who seek to resolve uncertainty or conflict regarding value laden issues that emerge in health care....

ASBH 2011
Goals of HCEC

- To identify and analyze the nature of the value uncertainty or conflict that led to the consult

- To facilitate resolution of ethical conflicts in a respectful atmosphere with attention to the interests, rights, and responsibilities of those involved

- To improve the quality of health care by addressing ethical questions and concerns
Competencies (ASBH)

- The ASBH published their report on Core Competencies for Healthcare Ethics Consultation in 1998 to specify the particular
  - knowledge
  - skills (assessment, process, interpersonal)
  - attributes
  required to conduct effective ethics consultation (2nd Edition, 2011)

- ASBH also publishes: Improving Competencies in Clinical Ethics Consultation: An Education Guide (2009)
Knowledge

- Ethical theory
- Modes of moral reasoning
- Bioethical issues and concepts
- Policies and health systems information
- Clinical and other consensus guidelines regarding common ethical problems
- Codes of ethics
- Relevant health law
Skills

- **Assessment and analysis (22)**
  - Identify and articulate value uncertainty or conflict
  - Gather relevant information; Note beliefs, values and assumptions
  - Apply relevant ethical knowledge and concepts

- **Process skills (23)**
  - Triage consult requests; Establish expectations; Introductions;
  - Convene and facilitate meetings
  - Recognize underlying systems issues

- **Interpersonal skills (24)**
  - Listen and elicit
  - Communicate respect, understanding, empathy
  - Elicit moral views
  - Enable effective communication
Attributes

- Tolerance, patience, compassion
- Honesty, forthrightness and self-knowledge
- Courage
- Prudence and humility
- Leadership
- Integrity
How does an ethics consultant approach or address an ethical question?

- Authoritarian?
- Consensus?
- **Facilitation**
  - Help identify ethical concerns and values
  - Aid effective communication
  - Bring in views of relevant stakeholders
  - Build principled ethical resolution
How? ...the core method

Qualified facilitation model

“...we believe that a qualified facilitation model is most appropriate for health care ethics consultation ... consistent with the fact of pluralism and the political rights of individuals to live by their own moral values...”

How?

6 phases

- Request
- Assessment
- Planning
- Meeting
- Deliberative
- Documentation
- Review and evaluation
The EC PAT is a self assessment instrument developed by the VA, based on ASBH Core Competencies* with added skills and knowledge:

- Create an individualized professional development plan for each ethics consultant
- Identify and improve on critical knowledge and skills gaps in the ethics consultation service as a whole
Portfolio for QA

- CV or resume
- Education
  - (Master’s degree or significant experience and evidence of qualifications)
  - Copies of diplomas
  - Written summary of education related to HCEC
- Written summary of CEC experience
- Written summary of candidate’s philosophy of CEC (500 words)
Portfolio for QA

- 6 case consults (de-identified)
  - Variety of ethical issues
  - Variety of settings
  - Case narrative; synopsis; ethical issues; assessment; recommendation; outcome;
  - Evidence of competency
    - Redacted chart notes; data base summaries; memos to colleagues; minutes of meetings; policies

- One page descriptions of 6 add’l cases
  - Date; type of requester; clinical setting; ethical issues and resolution

- 3 letters of evaluation
  - Individuals responsible for clinical oversight;
  - Knowledgeable about ethics consultation activities
Questions? Comments?
We invite you to come learn and work with us.

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