

“Walking the Talk: Taking Ethics to the Next Level”
A presentation by Sharon Lefroy and Ann Marcotte
Ottawa Children’s Treatment
OACRS Conference, Toronto, Ont., November 9, 2009

While many health care organizations, in compliance with accreditation requirements, have introduced value statements, ethics committees and ethical decision-making frameworks, the challenge remains to introduce a culture of ethics that permeates all aspects of the organization and that is integrated into daily practice in a meaningful manner. Obstacles to implementation, amongst others, include excess complexity of ethical principles and frameworks, failure to involve all stakeholders, time limitations and limited dissemination of the committee discussions and recommendation.

The purpose of this presentation is to help Children’s Treatment Centres raise the bar in terms of developing and supporting an ethical climate. The presentation will be divided into two segments. In the first, an overview will be provided of the reasons organizations often falter in their efforts to implement an effective ethics program. Practical suggestions for embedding ethical principles throughout all aspects of the organization, including goal, objectives, program evaluation and human resource management, will be provided. The presenter will also explore how ethical principles can be used, not only for the resolution of ethical dilemmas, but as a road map to the achievement of organizational values.

The second component of this presentation will guide the audience through an actual example of how an ethical dilemma was identified managed, resolved and communicated using a variety of tools and organizational structures that have been developed at the Ottawa Children’s Treatment Centre. The OCTC decision-making framework, systematic program/ service discussions, ethics advisory group, employee ethics brochure, evaluation form, Board/ management summary form and ethics newsletter will be introduced through the context of this particular ethical dilemma.

Additional recommended reading

Michael McDonald’s, “A Framework for Ethical Decision-Making”, with additions by Paddy McDonald and Rosalie Starzomski, Version 6.0 Shareware.