

Ethics Case Consultation Summary

About the Ethics Case Consultation Summary Template

This tool is designed to help individuals who perform health care ethics consultation summarize their cases and document their work. In conjunction with the ethics consultation pocket card and the CASES approach, the print version of this template provided below can also be used as a worksheet while performing an ethics consultation. An electronic version of this template can be downloaded for local use from vaww.ethics.va.gov/IntegratedEthics.

The template is designed to help consultants generate a comprehensive summary at the end of the “Synthesis” step of each case consultation. This is useful not only for recordkeeping and documentation purposes, but also as a guide for communicating information to key participants, including family members when appropriate. Consultation summaries can also serve as a valuable educational resource to others involved in the patient’s care when placed in the patient’s health record.

The template is longer than most clinical consultation notes. However, the comprehensiveness of the form helps to ensure that the record is complete, and that steps are not overlooked in the consultation process. If a particular data field is not relevant to the case at hand, the consultant should enter “Not Applicable” to indicate to the reader that this element was considered. Since some readers will only read the final two sections (Recommendations and Plans), consultants should pay special attention to these sections and how they are phrased.

About the Sample Ethics Case Consultation Summary

This sample demonstrates how the summary might look at the completion of an ethics case consultation. Please note that the names and events in the sample case are fictionalized and any similarity to actual people or events is unintentional.

Ethics Case Consultation Summary Template

Requester Information

First name: Last name: Degree(s): Title:

Role in the case:

- Physician – Staff
- Physician – Trainee
- Nurse – NP
- Nurse – RN
- Nurse – LPN
- Physician assistant
- Social worker
- Other clinical staff
- Patient
- Family member
- Other

Date of request: Time of request:

Timeframe (Check one): Routine Urgent

Requester’s Description of Ethics Case and Concern:

Type of assistance requested (Check all that apply):

- Forum for discussion
- Conflict resolution
- Explanation of options
- Values clarification
- Policy interpretation
- Recommendation for care
- Moral support

Patient Information

First name:

Last name:

Age:

Gender: Male Female

Clinical service (check one):

- Medical and Subspecialty Care (including Neurology)
- Geriatrics and Extended Care/Rehabilitation Medicine
- Mental Health
- Surgical and Anesthesia
- Other (Specify):

Patient's location:

Attending physician:

Was the attending notified? Yes No

If no, explain:

Ethics Question (Use one of the following formats):

Given [uncertainty or conflict about values], what decisions or actions are ethically justifiable?

- or -

Given [uncertainty or conflict about values], is it ethically justifiable to [decision or action]?

*The ethics question is:***Ethics Consultants**

Primary:

Other (List):

Decision-Making Capacity

Does the patient have decision-making capacity?

- Clearly yes
- Clearly no
- Partial/fluctuating/unclear (If checked, explain):

Surrogate Decision Maker

Does the patient have an authorized surrogate? Yes No

If no, explain:

Name of surrogate:

Surrogate's contact information:

Surrogate's relationship to patient:

- Health Care Agent
- Legal guardian or special guardian
- Next-of-kin (If checked, specify):
 - 1) Spouse
 - 2) Child
 - 3) Parent
 - 4) Sibling
 - 5) Grandparent
 - 6) Grandchild
 - 7) Close friend

Comments about surrogate selection:

Advance Directive

Does the patient have an advance directive? Yes No

If yes, did the consultant(s) review the directive? Yes No

If no, explain:

If yes, summarize the relevant content of the directive, using direct quotes if possible:

Data Sources and Summary

The consultant(s) collected data from the following sources:

Examination of the patient's medical record: [] Yes [] No

(If no, explain):

Face-to-face patient visit: [] Yes [] No

If no, explain:

Other people interviewed and their roles (staff, family/friends, etc.):

The *medical facts* of the case are summarized as follows:

The *patient's preferences and interests* in the case are summarized as follows:

Other parties' preferences and interests in the case are summarized as follows:

Summary of Ethics Knowledge

The following sources of ethics knowledge were reviewed or consulted:

- VA policy
- Professional codes and guidelines
- Published literature
- Precedent cases
- Outside ethics experts
- Other (Specify):

The *ethics knowledge* relevant to this case is summarized as follows:

Summary of Formal Meetings

Did formal meeting(s) take place? Yes No

If yes, list date(s), time(s), and attendees, and summarize:

Ethical Analysis

Options Considered

Describe the options considered and explain whether each option was deemed ethically justifiable and why:

Ethically Appropriate Decision Maker

Who is (are) the rightful decision maker(s) regarding the critical decision(s) in the case?:

Explain:

Agreement

Did the relevant parties reach agreement in the case?: [] Yes [] No
(If no, explain):

RECOMMENDATIONS

PLANS