

ETHICS CONSULTATION: Beyond the Basics

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Overview of the Modules

Welcome to Ethics Consultation: Beyond the Basics. The purpose of this program is to provide advanced training on the CASES approach to ethics quality improvement for Ethics Consultation Coordinators and other members of the IntegratedEthics community. It serves as a complement to the introductory [Ethics Consultation](#) (EC) training outlined in the introductory primer and training video, extending the concepts and offering opportunities to practice applying the EC approach to real-life ethical concerns. The program features six modular training sessions, supported by a faculty guide, slides, and handouts.

1. Managing Common Misconceptions About the Role of an Ethics Consultant

This module describes some of the misconceptions about what an ethics consultant does and doesn't do. By role-playing as the Consultant, the Requester, and the Observer during a mock consultation, participants will have a chance to practice listening and communicating to manage and correct these misconceptions.

2. Formulating the Ethics Question

This module describes how to formulate the ethics question by proceeding through five steps, which allow all consultants to focus on the central ethical concern and work toward an effective solution. Participants learn to apply these steps when approached with a request for an ethics consultation.

3. Finding the Available Ethics Knowledge Relevant to an Ethics Question

This module presents how to find the available ethics knowledge relevant to an ethics question—in particular, how to access and use the Internet—and specific suggestions for quickly identifying the most relevant ethics knowledge.

4. Generating Ethical Arguments and Counter Arguments

This module aims to begin to demystify the "black box" called "ethical analysis." Discussions focus on how to construct different types of ethical arguments and counterarguments—and why it is important to be able to categorize them. Participants then practice developing effective arguments and counterarguments in each category.

5. Strengthening Ethical Arguments

This module continues the work to develop ethical arguments and counterarguments that are critical for performing high-quality ethical analysis. Participants learn about what makes an ethical argument strong (or weak), and how to strengthen ethical arguments by *clarifying* them to make them more compelling. *To fully understand this content, Module 4 should be completed before starting this module.*

6. Getting Off to the Right Start in a Formal Ethics Consultation Meeting

This module presents strategies for starting a formal ethics consultation meeting that support the consultant's ability to manage interpersonal dynamics and achieve the objectives of the meeting. Participants learn the tools and techniques they need to get a formal ethics consultation meeting off to the right start, and create a brief speech they can use to describe their role as an ethics consultant.

How to Use These Materials

These materials were developed to train experienced Ethics Consultation teams in extended and applied elements of the IE approach to ethics quality improvement. The modules can be completed individually or in a group within a facility or on a regional level. While originally developed for health care facilities within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, with minimal adaptation the modules can also be used by clinicians and staff at non-VA facilities.

Below, we list some of the ways the modules can be used. Please note, however, that each of the Ethics Consultation modules builds on those that came before, so it is recommended that they be carried out in sequence.

EC Beyond the Basics Use Cases

1. **As a face-to-face conference.** The modules were developed and tested for delivery in a two-day face-to-face training conference. The staff may be drawn from a single facility, from a region, or from a national group, but all should have experience with the original EC materials and ongoing responsibility for implementing the EC approach in their facility.
2. **As on ongoing series.** In this model, the modules are presented in a series of shorter meetings (one to two hours, depending on the module) over a period of several weeks or months. As noted above, the modules should be presented in sequence. This model works best for training a smaller group of EC staff working in a single (or small group of related) facility.
3. **As a self-paced self-study course.** While not developed for this purpose, a motivated and knowledgeable EC professional could, with support, use these training materials as a self-study resource.

Visit the IntegratedEthics website for related materials developed for use in the VA health care system and easily adaptable for use in other health care organizations.

<http://www.ethics.va.gov/integratedethics/ieresources.asp>

A sample two-day training conference agenda follows.

Suggested Agenda

Day 1

7:30–8:00a	Registration
8:00–8:30	Welcome and Opening of EC Beyond the Basics Training Conference
8:30–8:40	Faculty Introductions
8:40–9:05	Participant Introductions
9:05– 9:15	Workshop Overview
9:15–10:45	Module 1: Managing Common Misconceptions about the Role of an Ethics Consultant
10:45–11:00	Break
11:00–12:30	Module 2: Formulating the Ethics Question (Part 1)
12:30–1:30p	Lunch (on own)
1:30–2:00	Module 2: Formulating the Ethics Question (Part 2)
2:00–3:45	Module 3: Finding the Available Ethics Knowledge Relevant to an Ethics Question
<i>Break included</i>	
3:45–4:15	Roundtable Discussions
4:15–4:30	Day 1 Q and A / Wrap-up
5:00–6:30	After hours gathering (optional)

DAY 2

7:30–8:00a	Registration
8:00–8:15	Review plan for the day
8:15–10:15	Module 4: Generating Ethical Arguments and Counter Arguments
10:15–10:30	Break
10:30–12:30	Module 5: Strengthening Ethical Arguments
12:30–1:30p	Lunch (On Own)
1:30–2:45	Module 6: Getting Off to the Right Start in a Formal Ethics Consultation Meeting
<i>Break included</i>	
2:45–3:45	Roundtable Discussions
3:45–4:15	Q and A
4:15–4:30	Concluding Remarks