### UNDERTAKE a Plan

**Plan how to carry out the strategy**
- Determine what steps need to be done and who needs to do them
- Recruit others to help with the plan if necessary
- Involve frontline staff
- Consider who else needs to be involved or informed
- Anticipate barriers to implementation and address them proactively

**Plan how to evaluate the strategy**
- Develop measures to assess:
  - How well the strategy was implemented (execution)
  - How well the strategy accomplished the improvement goal (results)
- Use a combination of several complementary measures
- Be sure that the measures selected correlate well with the desired practice
- Keep measures simple by focusing on what can be counted easily
- Consider collecting data over time and comparing practices before and after implementing the strategy
- Develop a plan for analyzing the data collected
- State up front how much data will be adequate to demonstrate whether the change is working

**Execute the plan**
- Spell out each task in detail, assign it to a specific person, and set explicit deadlines
- Appoint a team member to oversee and monitor the execution of the plan
- Also appoint someone to monitor the results in real time
- Make mid-course corrections as needed based on what works and what doesn’t

### EVALUATE and Adjust

**Check the execution and the results**
- Consider these questions:
  - Was the strategy executed as planned?
  - Did the strategy achieve the improvement goal? Did it improve the practice as intended? Did it narrow the ethics quality gap? If not, why not?
  - Is the strategy having other positive or negative effects?

**Adjust as necessary**
- If the strategy worked, determine whether the improvement was sufficient to declare victory
- If the strategy didn’t work, modify it and conduct another test, look at a different strategy, or start over with a new issue

**Evaluate your ISSUES process**
- Complete a self-evaluation of each ISSUES cycle
- Compare what you did with the ISSUES approach
- Discuss lessons learned and opportunities for improvement
- Seek input from other participants in the process to determine how it could be improved

### SUSTAIN and Spread

**Sustain the improvement**
- If the strategy was successful, integrate the change into standard operating procedures

**Disseminate the improvement**
- Implement the change more broadly, if applicable
- Disseminate results to management, those involved in the process, and others who could learn from the process

**Continue monitoring**
- Follow up to make sure practices do not revert to the pre-intervention baseline

This card describes the ISSUES approach, a practical, systematic process for identifying and addressing systems-level ethics issues that arise in healthcare institutions.

This process involves six steps:
- **Identify an Issue**
- **Study the Issue**
- **Select a Strategy**
- **Undertake a Plan**
- **Evaluate and Adjust**
- **Sustain and Spread**

Based on established principles and methods of quality improvement, the ISSUES approach was specifically designed to help preventive ethics teams improve the systems and processes that influence ethical health care practices within a facility.

Although these steps are presented in a linear fashion, it should be recognized that ISSUES is a fluid process and the distinction between steps may blur in the context of a specific ethics issue. At times, it may be necessary to repeat steps in order to achieve a particular improvement goal.
To prevent future occurrences of the problem, you must identify the major causes of the ethical issues. This is a crucial step in addressing the problem effectively. Once the major causes are identified, you can work towards implementing strategies to address them. This may involve making changes to policies, procedures, or the organization's culture. It is important to consult with knowledgeable experts in the field and to seek advice and guidance from those who have experience in dealing with similar issues. Establishing a feedback mechanism is also essential to ensure that any changes made are effective and that the issue is being resolved. With a comprehensive approach, you can work towards implementing best practices and ensuring that the ethical issues are addressed in a meaningful way.