

Ethical dilemmas

Policy

Our practice considers ethical dilemmas, documenting any ethical dilemmas that have been considered and the outcome or solution.

Procedure

Whenever presented with an actual or potential ethical dilemma, our practice:

- Documents any ethical dilemmas that have been considered, and the outcome or solution
- Discusses ethical dilemmas at clinical team meetings and documents in minutes
- Provides a buddy or mentoring system where ethical dilemmas can be discussed
- Uses a clinical intranet or group email to pose common ethical dilemmas and solutions for the clinical team to consider and discuss, and
- Displays a notice in the waiting room listing ethical dilemmas that practitioners sometimes encounter, and how they generally deal with them (e.g. referring the patient to another practitioner or clinic, politely refusing all offers of gifts)

Examples:

- Patient–practitioner relationships (familial relationships, friendships, romantic relationship)
- Professional differences
- Patients giving gifts to the practitioner
- Emotionally charged clinical situations (e.g. when a patient has an unwanted pregnancy or terminal illness, or wishes to discuss euthanasia)
- Reporting to the state’s driver licensing authority that a patient is unfit to drive
- A patient’s request for a medical certificate if the practitioner does not believe that the patient’s condition warrants one