

# A Principle Based Framework for Ethical Decision Making: YODA\*

Y  
O  
U

## Steps For Thinking Through An Ethical Issue

**YOU: OBSERVE DELIBERATE ACT**

*Ethics is everyone's Responsibility*

O  
B  
S  
E  
R  
V  
E

Identify the Problem



Acknowledge Feelings



Gather the Facts



D  
E  
L  
I  
B  
E  
R  
A  
T  
E

Consider Alternatives



Examine Values



Evaluate Alternatives



A  
C  
T

Articulate the Decision



Implement the Plan



Perform a Concluding Review

What is causing the uneasiness?  
Speak with your manager, direct supervisor and/or the physician.

What are your intuitions?  
What does your conscience tell you?

Separate legal, clinical and ethical facts.  
Review professional standards, relevant legal information and hospital policies.  
Who else needs to be involved?

List the benefits and risks of each alternative.  
Have any new alternatives come to light?

What are the relevant values of each stakeholder?  
Examples: respect, teamwork, compassion and social responsibility

Which ethics principles are operative? Examples: respect autonomy, do no harm, foster what is good for the patient and promote social justice

Which alternative best reflects the values and principles?

How will the decision be documented and communicated?  
Who needs to act? What follow-up is needed?

How can we do things differently in future similar cases?  
What additional resources and/or training would be useful?

*\*adapted from the CHAC Health Ethics Guide*