

Ethics Workup at the Bedside

1. What are the clinical facts?
 - a. Medical history, diagnosis, prognosis, capacity for independent decision-making, social history
 - b. Presence of verbal or written health care directive or DPOA
 - c. History of conversations confirming preference, belief, values
2. Define the ethical dilemma(s) as perceived by the key stakeholders.
3. What are the ethically relevant facts?
 - a. What is the patient's best interest as seen by each stakeholder?
 - b. What is the decision-making capacity of the patient?
 - c. What are the perceived risks of either acting or not acting?
 - d. Is there a health care directive or appropriate surrogate?
4. What options for action are open? Identify the ethical implications and give ethical arguments for each action considered.
5. What are the conflicts among the stakeholders? Identify the objections to the choices considered.
6. Respond to objections by facilitating communication amongst the conflicting parties.
7. Identify what is optimal for *this* patient and provide ethical reasoning.
8. Respond to objections.
9. Determine what actions are appropriate and in what order they should be taken.