

# The Ethics Committee

## Ethics in healthcare

In healthcare settings, ethical questions arise when “the right thing to do” is unclear, or when people disagree about what is best for the patient.

## Ethics Committee role

- serve as a resource for those who make decisions about patient care
- act as an educational resource for healthcare workers
- help increase awareness and knowledge about healthcare in our community



528 Washington Highway,  
Morrisville, VT 05661  
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[www.copleyvt.org](http://www.copleyvt.org)



The Ethics Committee is available on request to help patients, families and staff explore options for their difficult ethical questions

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## How the Ethics Committee can help

It can be difficult to make a healthcare decision for yourself or for a loved one. During a time of great stress, it can be a confusing, frightening, and painful decision to make.

At Copley, we want you to feel informed and supported when making difficult healthcare decisions.

Copley Hospital provides assistance on ethical decision making to:

- patients and families
  - physicians
  - hospital staff

This assistance is provided through a consultation process of the Ethics Committee which is made up of physicians, nurses, clergy, administrators, trustees and interested community members.

## To request an ethics consult

ask your doctor or nurse, or contact Patient and Family Services at 888-8311 or contact Copley's Chaplain at 888-8112



## What is an Ethics Consult Like?

The Ethics Committee acts as advisors, providing guidance and perspective; but does not make decisions on individual patient care. They will listen to you, help provide more information and increase understanding among all involved including patients, families and healthcare providers. Only you can make the final decision that is best for your situation.

Anyone may request a meeting with the Ethics Committee at any time, day or night.

We strive to have the ethics consultation held within 24 hours of your request.

All consultations are confidential.

## Examples of situations where ethics consultations have been used:

- Decisions about how long to continue major treatments for a patient who is doing poorly
  - Decisions to withhold or withdraw life-sustaining treatment
- Questions about patient privacy or confidentiality
- Issues about consent for, or refusal of treatment
  - Interpretation/application of a patient's advanced directive
- Uncertainty regarding who should help with decisions for someone who is too ill to make his or her wishes known

During an ethics consultation, a subcommittee of the Ethics Committee will meet with you. Your doctor will be fully informed and invited to attend any and all subsequent meetings.