

Ethical Issues for Social Work in Health Care

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The following discussion questions are provided as an additional educational tool to accompany this fireside chat video. Please feel free to select the questions that are most relevant to your committee or group, and to revise and adapt them as needed. As always, we welcome feedback on this or any other NSHEN resource.

Questions:

- Gail MacDougall and Sherry MacPherson mention a variety of roles that social workers play in the health care setting. These include roles as counsellors, discharge planners, negotiators, conflict mediation specialists, navigators, supporters and patient advocates. How might work in these roles interact with the ethical principles that guide social work?
- MacDougall and MacPherson discuss the importance of balancing institutional values and patient/family values. Discuss the social worker's responsibilities to the patient and to the health care organization and how they might come into conflict.
- Social Workers consider patients to be experts in their own lives. How might social workers support and empower patients as the most important member of the health care team?
- Gail MacDougall mentions the 'duty to report' as a common challenge in social work. Discuss how and when to communicate to the patient and or the family about their rights and limitations to confidentiality.
- MacPherson and MacDougall state that ethics is an integral part of social work – is this more true in social work than in other professions? Discuss.
- Gail MacDougall describes an example of how a specific problem arising in the clinical setting can influence systemic processes and/or policies. Discuss the role of social worker in identifying ethical issues in the health care setting that may call for systemic changes.

Resources

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<http://www.familiesinsocietyjournal.org/doi/abs/10.1606/1044-3894.1018?code=afcf-site>

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<http://ethicsinthehelpingprofessions.socialwork.dal.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Ideological-Dilemma-final-pdf-copy.pdf>

Weinberg, M. (2016). *Paradoxes in social work practice. Mitigating ethical trespass*. New York: Routledge.

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