

Ready to start planning your care? Call us at [800-525-2225](tel:800-525-2225) to make an appointment.

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Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

[Make an Appointment](#)

[← Back](#)

[Patient Support](#)

[Research, Diagnosis & Treatment](#)

[Refer a Patient](#)

ABOUT US

[Our mission, vision & core values](#)

[Leadership](#)

[History](#)

[Equality, diversity & inclusion](#)

[Annual report](#)

[Give to MSK](#)



Danielle Novetsky Friedman, a pediatrician and member of the Ethics Committee, with Louis Voigt, an intensivist and Chair of the Ethics Committee.

Being treated for cancer can sometimes raise difficult ethical or moral questions for you, your family members, caregivers, friends, and healthcare team. For example, you or your caregivers' personal values and preferences may lead to a disagreement with your healthcare team about treatment plans.

These types of ethical concerns can be addressed with open communication, but we understand that having these conversations

can be difficult. MSK's Ethics Consultation Service is available to help support you and your healthcare team in constructive communication that can help lead to a solution.

Our ethics consultants are doctors, nurses, social workers, and hospital staff who are specially trained in mediation, communication, and ethics.

During an ethics consultation, our team members will remain neutral and objective, and will facilitate constructive and open communication. They act independently from your care providers and do not act as a judge or dictate how care should proceed.

Basics of an Ethics Consultation

VIDEO | 01:17

An Introduction to MSK's Ethics Consultation Services

Learn about how to request an ethics consultation from Louis Voigt, chair of the Ethics Committee.

[Video Details](#) →

We strive to make our services easily accessible to everyone.

MSK ethics consultations are:

- available to all MSK patients and caregivers, at all stages of disease

- available at all locations in Manhattan and at [MSK's regional sites](#)

- available to take place in person or via phone call or video chat, depending on your preference

- free of charge to you and your insurance provider

When to Request an Ethics Consultation

Ethics consultations are intended to support communication between you and your family, friends, and healthcare team about challenging ethical issues.

There are many situations in which an ethics consultation can help. Some scenarios that patients or caregivers may encounter are listed below. Even if your situation does not exactly match one of these examples, our ethics consultants may still be able to help.

We can help support conversations related to:

- Having to make or articulate difficult medical decisions that involve moral values, religious beliefs, professional duties, or obligations

- Disagreements with the healthcare team about treatment

- Difficulty or disagreement over voicing your decisions or wishes

- Disagreements or confusion about who a patient's appointed health care agent is or should be

- Differences of opinion about treatment plans for a child with cancer

If you are not sure if what you are going through is something that an ethics consultation can help with, please call us at [212-639-8604](tel:212-639-8604).

What to Expect During an Ethics Consultation

A member of the Ethics Consultation Service will listen to your concerns and may ask for more information to get a better understanding of what you are facing. The consultant may need to contact your doctors, nurses, or other members of your care team. They may arrange a meeting with you and others.

At the start, you may feel uneasy sharing your feelings, opinions, or concerns because you do not want to “rock the boat” or to put anyone in an uncomfortable position. Those concerns are valid and are important to us.

The goal of an ethics consultation is to help you feel less burdened by the questions you are confronting and the decisions you need to make so that you can focus on yourself and your caregivers.

An ethics consultant will help you with the following:

- Determine the root cause of the issue you are facing

- Ensure that your views and those of the people involved in your care are understood and communicated clearly

- Work with everyone to find a viable solution that you, your caregivers, and your care team can agree on

How to Request an Ethics Consultation

There are 2 ways to request an ethics consultation:

1. Call us

Call [212-639-8604](tel:212-639-8604) to request an ethics consultation.

2. Ask your care team

You can request an ethics consultation by speaking with any member of your care team. They will contact us, and we will reach out to you.

PREVIOUS

[Hospice Services](#)

NEXT

[Who We Are](#)

▾ Connect

[Contact us](#)

[Locations](#)

APPOINTMENTS

[800-525-2225](#)



▾ About MSK

[About us](#)

[Careers](#) 

[Giving](#) 

▾ Cancer Care

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[Child & teen cancer types](#)

[Integrative medicine](#)

[Nutrition & cancer](#)

[Find a doctor](#)

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