**BC Health Symposium
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HEMBC
Health Emergency
Management

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Ethical literacy, critical thinking and pluralism
Considerations for Health Emergency Planning and Response in BC

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The plan

- Resource allocation questions
- Central idea
- 3 elements of a resource allocation framework
- Ethics dimensions of system-level decision-making
- Why bother?

RESOURCE ALLOCATION QUESTIONS

Resource Allocation Questions

- Influenza Pandemic
  - What degree of protection should we offer lab and health care workers?
  - Who should get access to life saving interventions?
  - How should vaccines be allocated?

Resource Allocation Questions

- Drug Shortages
  - How should injectable opioids be allocated
    - Between programs?
    - Between patients within a program?
- Medical Imaging
  - How should medical isotopes be distributed
    - Between regions?
    - Between programs in a region?
    - Between patients in a program?

Resource Allocation Questions

- Fort McMurray Fires
  - How, where and when should fire fighting teams be dispatched?
- Lac-Mégantic Tragedy
  - To what extent should a provincial healthcare budget prioritize research and treatment for community mental health needs over other needs?
- Canterbury Earthquakes
  - How should a budget balance investment in infrastructure to prevent possible future harms vs. meeting currrent needs?
- Hurricane Katrina
  - How should access to life-saving medical interventions be allocated?
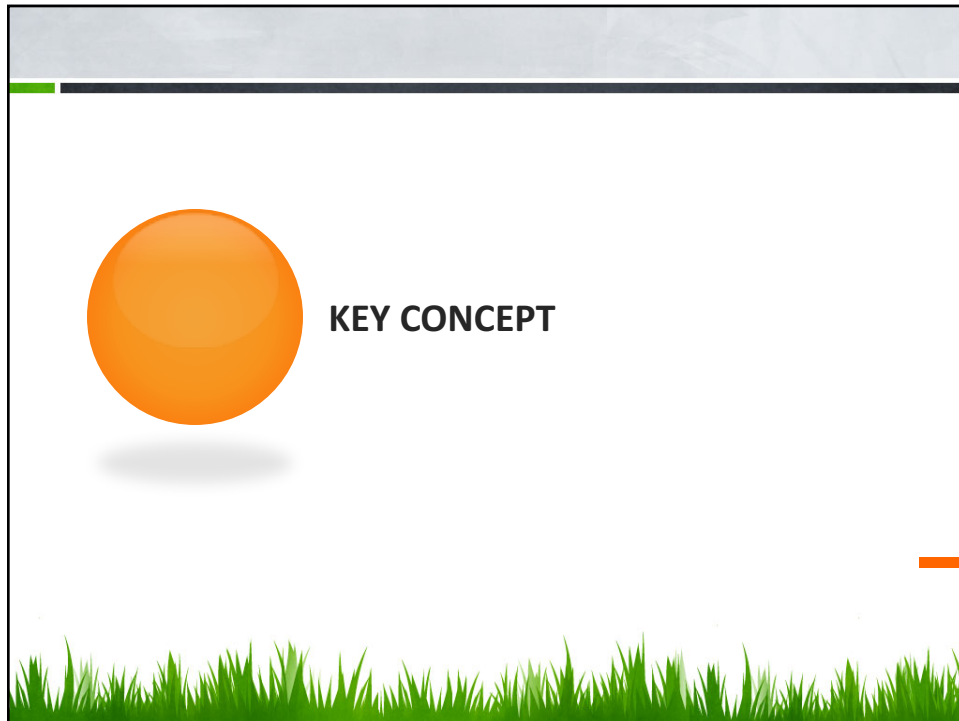
KEY CONCEPT

Every choice is a reflection of

What the decision-maker believes is important &

What the decision-maker believes are the facts

Values and Facts

Every choice is a reflection of

What the decision-maker believes is important &

What the decision-maker believes are the facts

What degree of protection should we offer lab and health care workers?

Values:
- Minimize risk of illness and death
- Protect worker health
- Minimize spread
- Minimize cost
- Increase volume and quality of tests
- Consistency
- Build worker trust

Facts:
- Virulence of the virus
- How virus spreads (droplets v. aerosol transmission)
- Effectiveness of tools (e.g. surgical masks) at preventing infection
- Effectiveness of tools (e.g. surgical masks) at preventing spread
- How expensive are the options?
- What will make the lab workers most productive?
- How are other lab workers being treated?
- What do workers believe and want?

Fact and value relationship

- Facts by themselves can't tell us how to act
- Values give facts their worth
- We're only interested in facts that help us to understand whether they help us live up to a value

Effective disease prevention

Minimize cost

How the disease spreads, effectiveness of tools to minimize spread

Cost of different options

Staff beliefs and values

Building trust with staff

A decision will be justified to the extent that it is based on

A well-considered and **defensible understanding of what should matter most** &

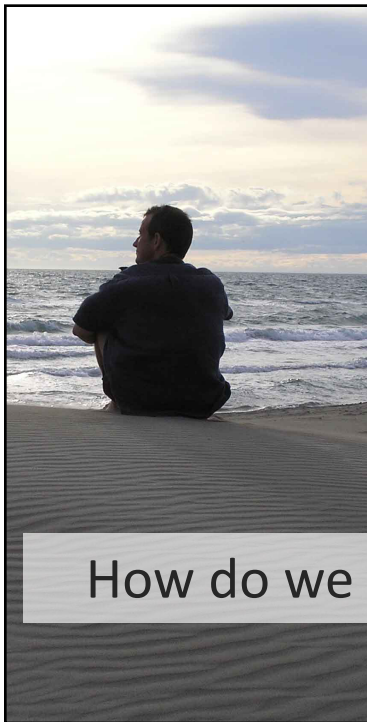**Beliefs about the world we have good reason to believe are true**

This requires the skills of ethics – ethical literacy

Ethics literacy: Part 1

Critical Thinking

- The ability to
- Systematically identify and evaluate
- The beliefs about
  - What should matter
  - What is true
- In any given attitude, decision and action

How do we figure out our talk?

Ethics literacy: Part 2

Ethics Literacy
pluralism

Fear — Hope

Trust
respect   humility
partnership

Alone — Community

Pluralism

- The ability to
- Treat others with respect
- Listen to understand others' perspective
- Be present and share one's own perspective
- Collaborate effectively

3 NECESSARY PARTS OF ANY RESOURCE ALLOCATION FRAMEWORK

3 Parts of Resource Allocation Framework

1. What criteria
2. Who will apply ?
3. Through what process?

1) Criteria

- What criteria will we use (and how are these developed)
  - Distributive justice
    - Why are these the right criteria?
    - How are they justified?

Justice

Our intellectual inheritance

- Economics:
  - Marginal analysis
  - Ensure benefits outweigh opportunity cost
- Business Ethics:
  - Honesty
  - Promise-keeping
  - Respect for law & order
  - Maximize overall wealth & well-being
  - Respect for free choice & voluntary agreements

- Clinical Ethics:
  - Respect for autonomy
  - Advancing Patient Wellbeing
  - Discharging fiduciary responsibility
- Public Health Ethics:
  - Social justice
  - Community wellbeing
  - Community engagement

2) Decision-Maker(s)

- Who will apply these criteria to decide between possible candidates
  - Fairness/avoidance of conflict of interest
    - How do we know they're interpreted appropriately?
    - What standards will they use to ensure they're applied fairly?

3) Decision Process

- Through what process will these be applied?
  - Procedural Fairness/Epistemic Justice
    - How will those impacted be involved?
    - How will they be treated with respect along the way?
    - How will they be supported along the way?
    - How will we recognize and overcome the prejudices/biases implicit in the system?

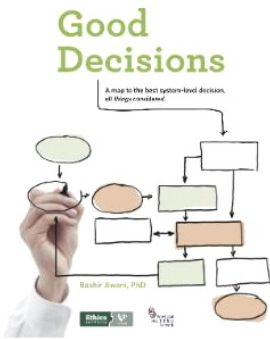**ARRIVING AT A RESOURCE ALLOCATION FRAMEWORK:**

ETHICS DIMENSIONS OF SYSTEM-LEVEL DECISION-MAKING

How do we arrive at a resource allocation framework?

Key Ethics Dimensions

1. Decision team
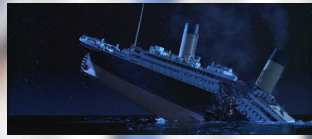2. Method of analysis
3. Consultation
4. Decision justification, articulation and communication
5. Implementation plans
6. Execution

WHY BOTHER?

Integrity
Alignment of talk and walk

Central to a meaningful life
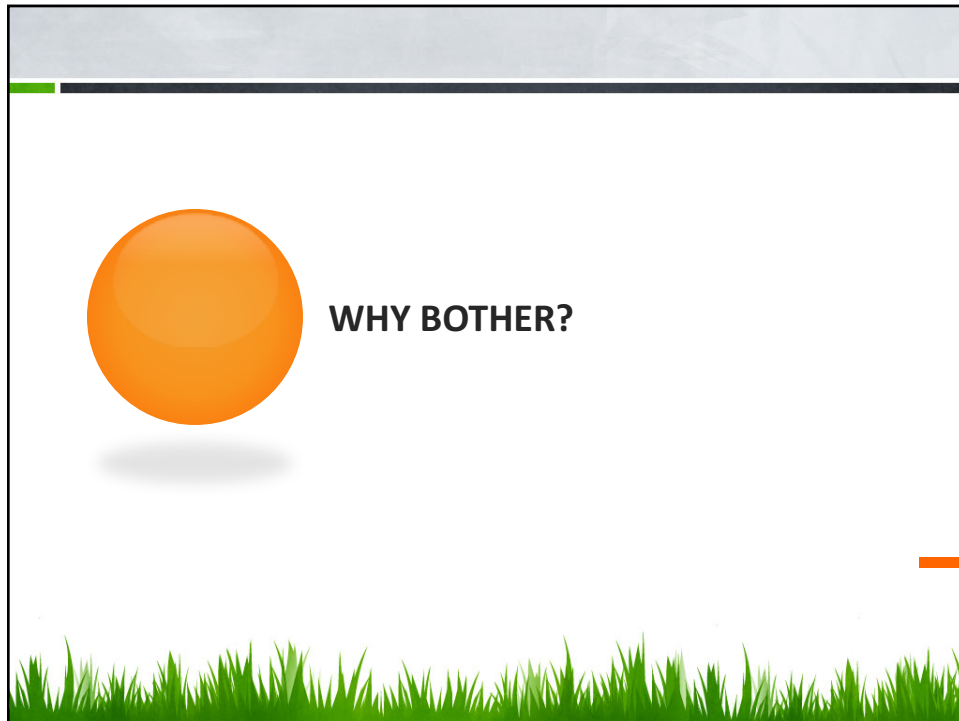
Integrity

Breakdowns show up:

For individuals, as feelings of pain in our hearts, minds and bodies

In organizations, as chaotic environments, inconsistent decisions, deviations of standards of practice, unmet goals, risk of causing harm

So…

Do we have a clear and shared understanding of what's going on

- the facts?

Do we have a clear and shared understanding of what should matter most

- the values?

So…

- What resources can we anticipate being in short supply?
- For this context
  - What criteria should we use to distribute these resources?
  - Who should have the responsibility of using the criteria to do the allocation?
  - Through what process?
- How will we arrive at this framework?
- What resources will we allocate for this work?

Questions or reflections?

Thank you!