

# How to Choose an Ethics Framework for Public Health and Community Health

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sur les politiques publiques et la santé  
National Collaborating Centre  
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# The National Collaborating Centres for Public Health



  
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# National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy (NCCHPP)

## Our mandate

- Support public health actors in their efforts to promote healthy public policies

## Our areas of expertise

- The effects of public policies on health
- Generating and using knowledge about policies
- Intersectoral actors and mechanisms
- Strategies to influence policy making



# What will we do today?

- Introduce ethics frameworks for public and community health
- Practise (just a little) ethical deliberation by applying two of them to a case
- Identify the characteristics that distinguish frameworks from one another
- Use that understanding to guide our thinking about which framework(s) might work for us.



# Let's start with a problem



**Between 1985 and 2011, the prevalence of overweight and obesity among Canadian adults increased from 34% (1985) to 52% (2011).**

(Twells, Gregory, Reddigan, & Midodzi, 2014).

**It is estimated that by 2019, 55% of Canadian adults will be overweight or obese (for NL: 72%).**

(Twells et al., 2014).

**Some good news: a recent (May 2016) study reports a first decline in the prevalence of overweight or obesity among Canadian children, down from 30% (2004) to 27% (2013).**

(Rodd & Sharma, 2016).

# And one response...

## Case: Soda Tax



You are a community health nurse representing your health authority on St. John's Food Policy Council. A member from a not-for-profit organization wants the Council, along with City Hall, to recommend that the Govt. of NL implement a soda tax.

Part of the tax revenue would be used to fund the *Healthy Corner Store NL initiative*. The rest would help to balance provincial and municipal budgets.

'lid'

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www. Flickr.com

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On St. John's Food Policy Council: <http://sifpc.ca/> and  
<http://www.foodfirstnl.ca/our-projects/2015/10/st-johns-food-policy-council>

On Healthy Corner Store NL: <http://www.foodfirstnl.ca/our-projects/2015/10/healthy-corner-stores-nl>

# At first glance, would you be in favour of the Provincial Soda Tax?



Yes!



Maybe?



No!

# Why?

There are many different ways of asking, *should we do this?* We could ask:

1. **Is this an effective way to improve health?**
2. **Is this cost-effective?**
3. **Who judges the status quo to be a problem and who is the most affected?**
4. **Is there public support for this program?**
5. **How will individuals and groups be affected by this? Are some groups more affected than others? Were they consulted?**

Scientific and other evidence

Economic analysis

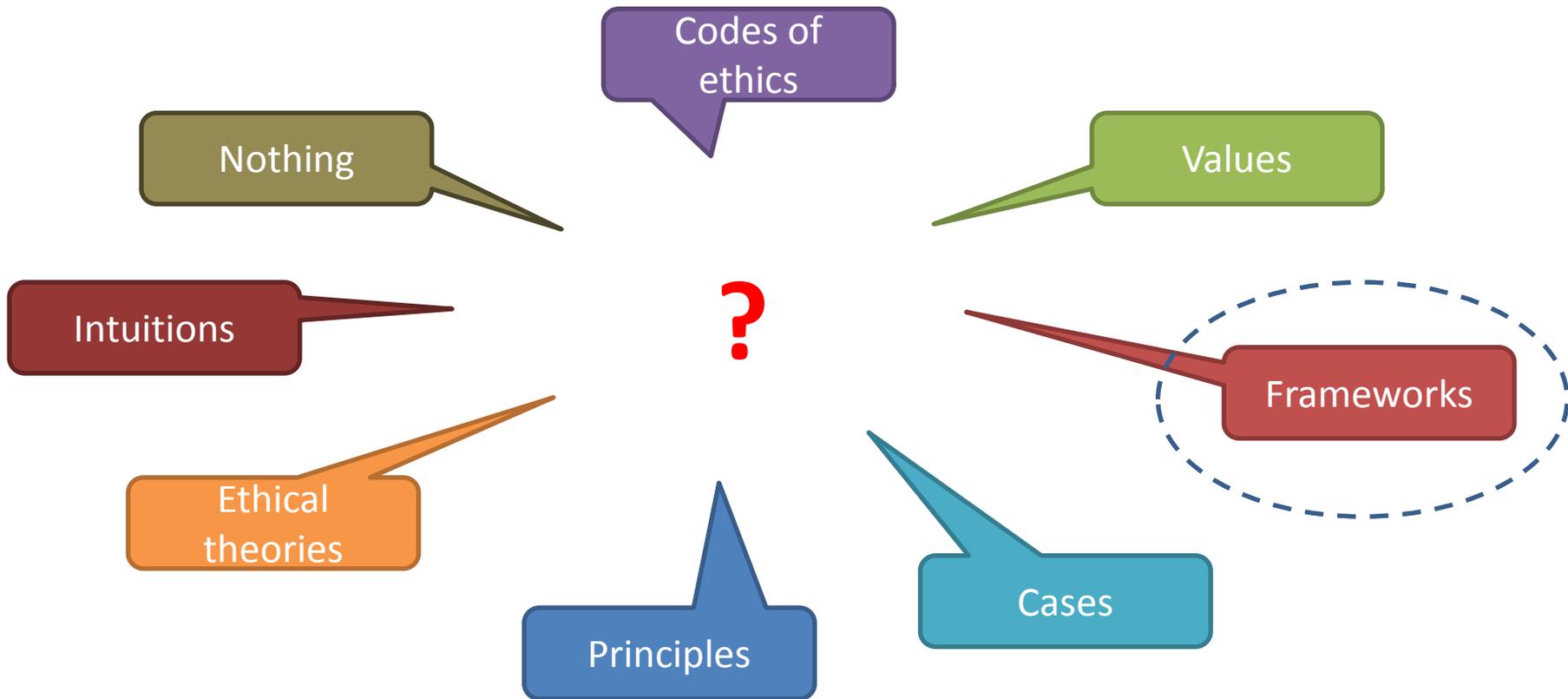
Problematization/  
policy analysis

Acceptability

Beneficence, harm, equity,  
justice, fairness, etc. - ethical  
values more explicitly

1-5 **all** have ethical implications! (not just #5)

# What can we use to help us think about ethical issues in public and community health?



# What is an ethics framework?

**A framework is a guide that can help to highlight ethical values and issues, and serve as an aid to deliberation and decision making.**

## What can it offer?

It provides an entry point and a structure for deliberation.

It can guide specialists in ethics as well as novices.

It provides a common language for addressing issues and values.

It provides a lens for looking at, and thereby seeing, ethical issues.

It helps to 'frame' issues.

## What can it *not* offer?

It won't do the work or the thinking for you.

It won't replace your own critical perspective (and a note of caution ... a framework can produce complacency).

It won't eliminate your cognitive and other biases, though if you deliberate in more diverse groups and use a framework, this might help to reduce their effects.

# Let's discuss our case with the help of a public health ethics framework

## Case:



- Provincial soda tax
- Revenue to be used to
  - fund the Healthy Corner Store NL initiative
  - balance the provincial budget
  - balance municipal budgets

## The framework:



### Its goal:

“to bring clarity to some of the ethical aspects of public health decision making in practice” and to determine when a public health action that infringes upon individual freedom is justified (p. 102).

Upshur, R. E. G. (2002). **Principles for the justification of public health intervention.** *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 93 (2), 101-103.

Available at: <http://journal.cpha.ca/index.php/cjph/article/view/217>

Our adapted summary is available at:

[http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/2016\\_eth\\_frame\\_upshur\\_En.pdf](http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/2016_eth_frame_upshur_En.pdf)

Applied to nursing practice : Canadian Nurses Association. (2006).

### Its structure:

4 principles

# Framework 1: Upshur, 2002

## 1. Harm principle

“The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others” (Mill, 1859, cited by Upshur, 2002, p. 102).

## 2. Least restrictive or coercive means

“[M]ore coercive methods should be employed only when less coercive methods have failed. Education, facilitation and discussion should precede interdiction, regulation or incarceration” (Upshur, 2002, p. 102).

## 3. Reciprocity principle

If ethical duties are imposed, society is obliged “to facilitate individuals and communities in their efforts to discharge their duties.” If one imposes burdens on individuals or groups, “these should be compensated” (Upshur, 2002, p. 102).

## 4. Transparency principle

“All legitimate stakeholders should be involved in the decision-making process, have equal input into deliberations, and the manner in which decision-making is made should be as clear and accountable as possible” (Upshur, 2002, p. 102).

# Questions? Comments?



Photo: Michael Keeling

**Next:**

Small group exercise:  
Applying an ethics  
framework

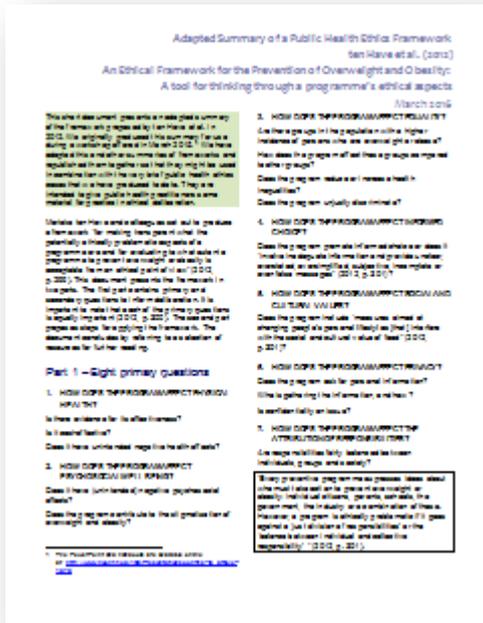


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# Let's discuss our case with the help of another public health ethics framework



## Its goal:

“for making transparent what the potentially ethically problematic aspects of a programme are and for evaluating to what extent a programme to prevent overweight or obesity is acceptable from an ethical point of view” (2012, p. 299).

## Its structure:

- 1<sup>st</sup> part: 8 questions to inform the deliberation.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> part: 8 steps for doing the deliberation.

ten Have et al. (2012). An ethical framework for the prevention of overweight and obesity: a tool for thinking through a programme's ethical aspects.

*European Journal of Public Health*, 23(2), 299-305.

Available at:

<http://eurpub.oxfordjournals.org/content/23/2/299.long>

Our adapted summary is available at:

[http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/2016\\_eth\\_frame\\_tenHave\\_En.pdf](http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/2016_eth_frame_tenHave_En.pdf)

# Framework 2: ten Have et al., 2012

## 1<sup>st</sup> part

How does the program affect:

1. Physical health?
2. Psychosocial well-being?
3. Equality?
4. Informed choice?
5. Social and cultural values?
6. Privacy?
7. Attribution of responsibilities?
8. Liberty?

## 2<sup>nd</sup> part

1. Describe the program's main ethical weaknesses.
2. Describe its main ethical strengths.
3. Discuss whether it is possible to adjust the program in order to maximize its strengths and minimize its weaknesses.
4. Discuss whether the program is likely to be effective in preventing overweight and obesity.
5. Discuss whether the program's strengths outweigh its weaknesses.
6. Discuss whether there is an alternative program with fewer ethical weaknesses.
7. Discuss whether sound justification can be provided for the remaining weaknesses.
8. Define whether and under what conditions the program is acceptable from an ethical point of view.

# Questions? Comments?



Photo: Michael Keeling

**Next:**

How to choose a  
framework?



# How to choose a framework?

- Many are available in both the scientific and grey literatures
- Also, there are probably many more out there that have been developed or adapted for use but that are not publicly available
- There are significant differences among them
- Some will be better adapted for your context / organization / community / issue / policy / etc.



The screenshot shows the website 'Repertoire - Ethics Frameworks for Public Health' from the National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy. The page has a blue header with the Institut national de santé publique Québec logo and navigation links. The main content area is titled 'Repertoire - Ethics Frameworks for Public Health' and includes a list of publications with brief descriptions and links. The list includes:

- Baym, N. M., Ouellet, S. E., Good, S. D., & Jacobson, P. D. (2007). Looking ahead: Addressing ethical challenges in public health practice. *Global Health Law, Ethics and Policy*, Winter 2007, 657-667. Available at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC20274274/47811748/70X/2007/00188.x.cdf#page=18&atoc=18>. Our adapted summary is available at: [http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/00188\\_eth\\_frame\\_baym\\_en.pdf](http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/00188_eth_frame_baym_en.pdf)
- Baylis, F., Kerry, N. P., & Strain, S. (2008). A relational account of public health ethics. *Public Health Ethics*, 2008, 1-14. Available at: <http://jov.oxfordjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1093/pubeth/eth001.001.0001>
- Bernheim, R., Ozare, Nieburg, P., & Bonnie, R. J. (2007). Ethics and the practice of public health. In R. A. Goodman, R. E. Hoffman, W. Lopez, G. W. Mathers, M. Rothstein, & K. Foster (Eds.), *Law in public health practice*, pp. 110-135. Oxford: Oxford University Press. For information (p. xvi): <http://www.oxfordjournals.org/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195301489.001.0001/acprof:9780195301489>. Our adapted summary is available

<http://www.ncchpp.ca/708/repertoire-of-frameworks.ccnpps>

# Do we want a general framework or one designed for a specific purpose?

## Scope:

**For public health interventions that infringe upon individual autonomy:**

Upshur, 2002

**For pandemic preparedness:**

Thompson et al., 2006

**For any situation:**

Kass, 2001

Marckmann et al., 2015

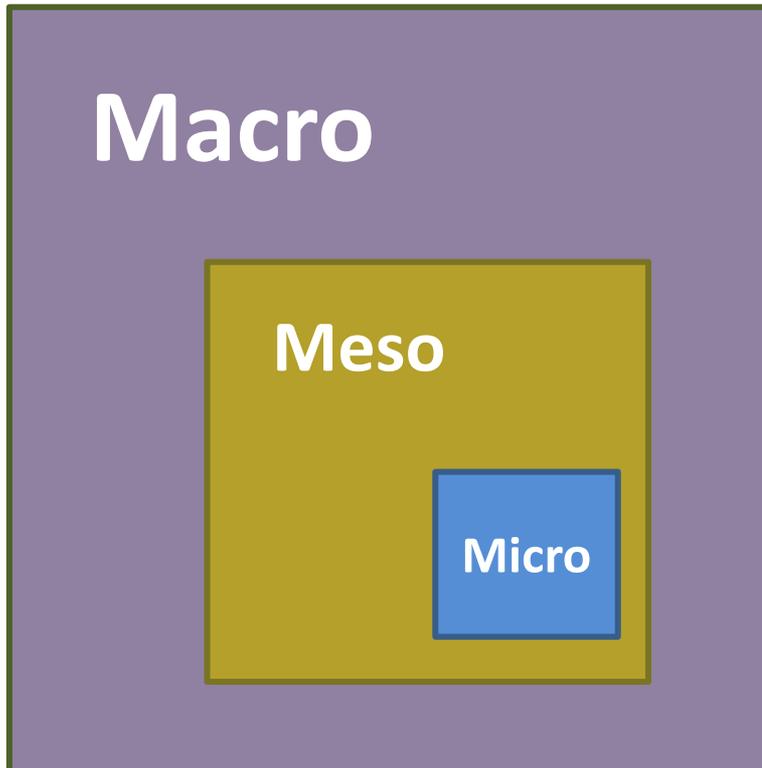
WRHA, 2015

**For obesity or overweight prevention:**

ten Have et al., 2012

Will we be evaluating at the level of programs/policies or situations involving just a few people?

Scale/perspective:



### More meso-macro:

Focus more at  
policy/program/structural/  
population/macro levels ...

E.g., [ten Have et al., 2012](#); [Upshur, 2002](#)

### More micro:

Focus more on what to do at an  
individual/interpersonal/situation  
level ...

E.g., [WRHA, 2015](#)

# Are my values, those of my organization and those of the community more liberal or communitarian?

## “Framing” the issues:

**More liberal**  
(emphasis on individual autonomy)

**More communitarian**  
(emphasis on common goods)



Childress et al., 2002

Upshur, 2002

WRHA, 2015

Kass, 2001

Thompson et al., 2006

Public Health Leadership  
Society, 2002

Baylis et al., 2008

Tannahill, 2008

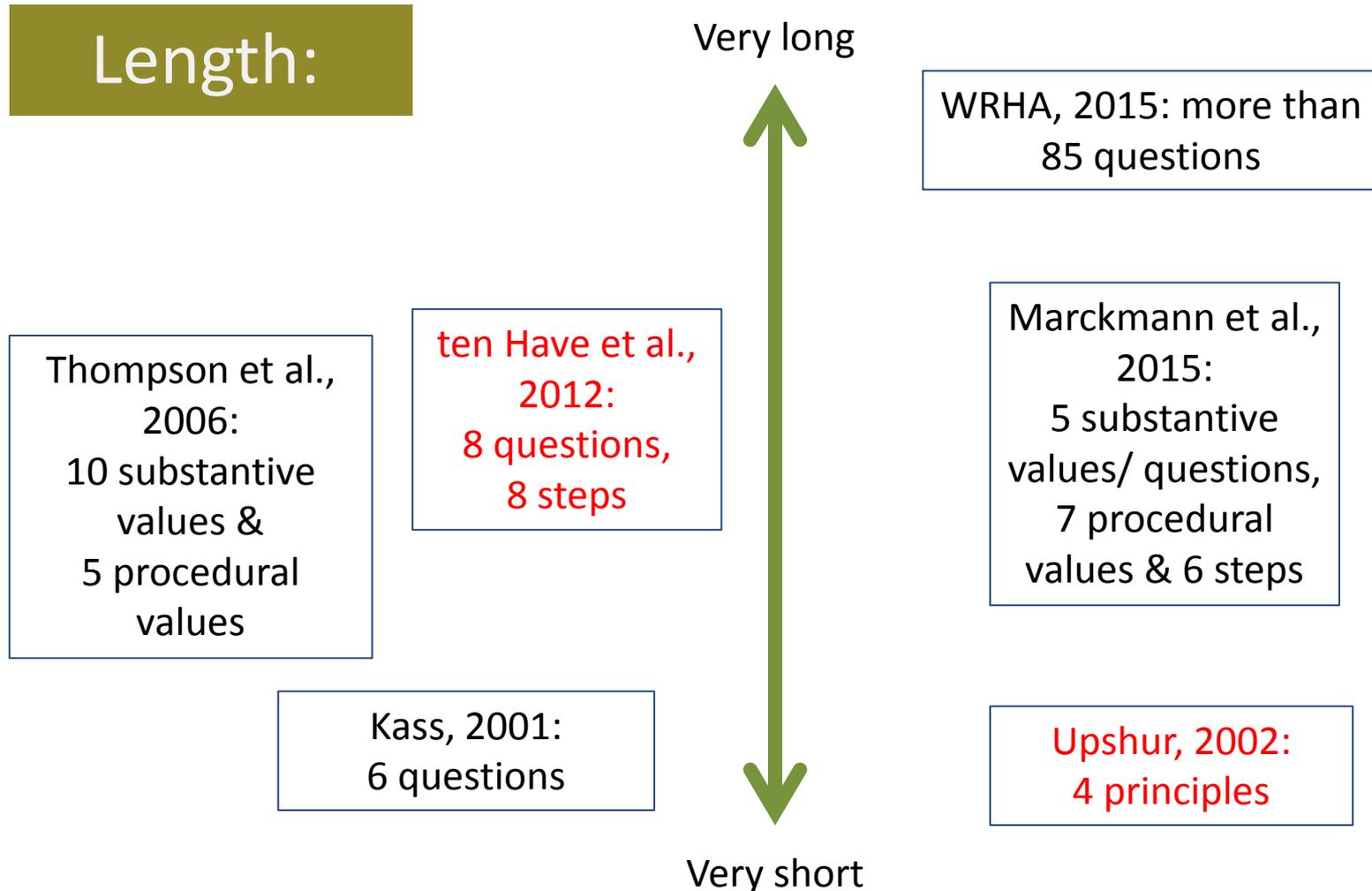
ten Have et al., 2012

# Do we prefer using principles or questions to raise ethical issues?

Form:

- **Principle-based frameworks:**
  - Propose a series of principles to consider
    - Childress et al., 2002
    - **Upshur, 2002**
- **Question-based frameworks:**
  - Pose a series of questions that evoke principles or values
    - **ten Have et al., 2012**
    - WRHA, 2015
    - Public Health Ontario, 2012

# How much time do we have for the ethical analysis?

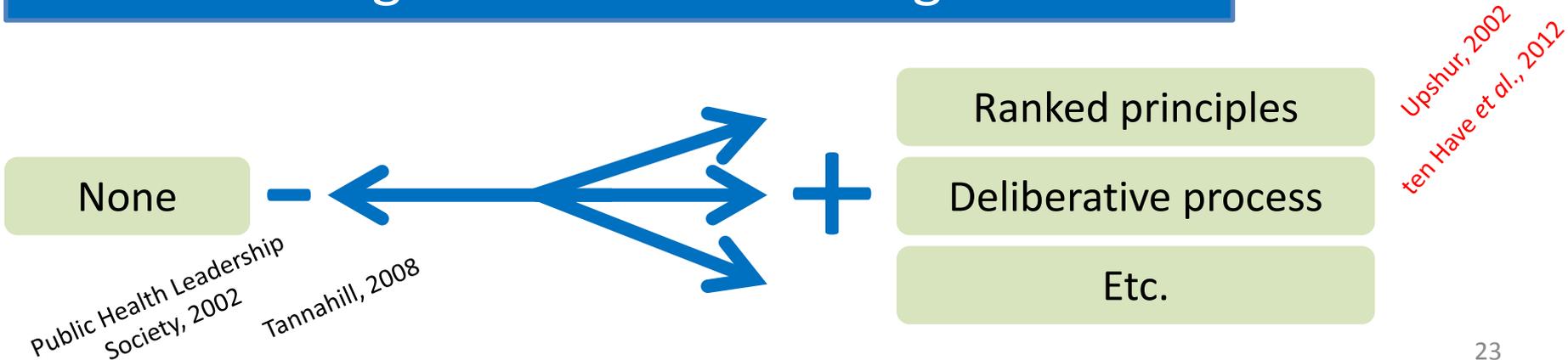


# What sort of guidance do we want?

## Practical guidance for how to proceed:



## Normative guidance for resolving conflicts:



# Take home messages

- Ethical frameworks are not algorithms, and they cannot do the work for you, but they can help you to:
  - Identify ethical issues
  - Structure deliberation
  - Make decisions
  - Justify them.
- Many frameworks exist for public and community health:
  - We have listed 30+ below with links
  - You might find one or more that work for you
  - You might find elements to add to your current framework.
- Learning to ‘read’ their characteristics can help you to select one or more according to your professional context and the kinds of issues you tackle.

# Discussion, questions, and evaluation forms

- All of this material will be made available on our website in June (in French and English).
- Please complete your evaluation forms before you go – we *really* use those ...

Thank you!

# Resources



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# Links to selected frameworks for public health ethics

Baum, N. M., Gollust, S. E., Goold, S. D., & Jacobson, P. D. (2007). **Looking ahead: Addressing ethical challenges in public health practice.** *Global Health Law, Ethics and Policy*, Winter 2007, 657-667. Available at: <http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/75478/j.1748-720X.2007.00188.x.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>  
Our adapted summary is available at: [http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/2016\\_eth\\_frame\\_baum\\_En.pdf](http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/2016_eth_frame_baum_En.pdf)

Baylis, F., Kenny, N. P., & Sherwin, S. (2008). **A relational account of public health ethics.** *Public Health Ethics*, 2008, 1-14. Available at: <http://noveltechethics.ca/files/pdf/259.pdf>

Bernheim, R. Gaare, Nieburg, P., & Bonnie, R. J. (2007). **Ethics and the practice of public health.** In R. A. Goodman, R. E. Hoffman, W. Lopez, G. W. Matthews, M. Rothstein, & K. Foster (Eds.), *Law in public health practice*, pp. 110-135. Oxford: Oxford University Press. For information (paywall): <http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195301489.001.0001/acprof-9780195301489>  
Our adapted summary is available at: [http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/2016\\_eth\\_frame\\_bernheim\\_En.pdf](http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/2016_eth_frame_bernheim_En.pdf)

Canadian Nurses Association. (2006). **Public health nursing practice and ethical challenges.** *Ethics in Practice for Registered Nurses*, February 2006, 12 pp. Ottawa: Canadian Nurses Association. Available at: [http://cna-aiic.ca/~media/cna/page-content/pdf-en/ethics\\_in\\_practice\\_jan\\_06\\_e.pdf](http://cna-aiic.ca/~media/cna/page-content/pdf-en/ethics_in_practice_jan_06_e.pdf)

# Selected frameworks (2)

- Carter, S. M., Rychetnik, L., Lloyd, B., Kerridge, I. H., Baur, L., Bauman, A., Hooker, C., & Zask, A. (2011). **Evidence, ethics and values: A framework for health promotion.** *American Journal of Public Health*, 101(3), 465-472. Available at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3036693/pdf/465.pdf>
- Childress, J. F., Faden, R. R., Gaare, R. D., Gostin, L. O., Kahn, J., Bonnie, R. J., Kass, N. E., Mastroianni, A. C., Moreno, J. D., & Nieburg, P. (2002). **Public Health Ethics: Mapping the Terrain.** *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, 30 (2), 169–177. Available at: [http://www.virginia.edu/ipe/docs/Childress\\_article.pdf](http://www.virginia.edu/ipe/docs/Childress_article.pdf)
- Childress, J. F. & Bernheim, R. G. (2015). **Introduction: A framework for public health ethics.** In R. G. Bernheim, J. F. Childress, R. J. Bonnie and A. L. Melnick (Eds.), *Essentials of Public Health Ethics*. Burlington, MA: Jones and Bartlett Learning. Available at: <http://samples.jbpub.com/9780763780463/Chapter1.pdf> (N.b.: 20 MB).
- Désy, M., Filiatrault, F., & Laporte, I. (2012). **A tool for ethical analysis of public health surveillance plans.** In Canadian Institutes of Health Research – Institute of Population and Public Health, *Population and Public Health Ethics: Cases from Research, Policy, and Practice* (pp. 52-57). Toronto, Ottawa: University of Toronto Joint Centre for Bioethics. Available at: <http://www.icb.utoronto.ca/publications/documents/Population-and-Public-Health-Ethics-Casebook-ENGLISH.pdf>
- Fry, C. (2007). **Making values and ethics explicit: a new code of ethics for the Australian alcohol and other drugs field.** Canberra: Alcohol and other Drugs Council of Australia. Available at: [http://www.adca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/ethics\\_code.pdf](http://www.adca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/ethics_code.pdf)

# Selected frameworks (3)

Gostin, L., Mann, J. M., & Gostin, L. (1994). **Towards the development of a human rights impact assessment for the formulation and evaluation of public health policies.** *Health and Human Rights*, 1(1), 58-80. Available at: <http://academic.udayton.edu/richardghere/NGO%20Man/Gostin%20article.pdf>

Gostin, L. (2003). **Public health ethics: Tradition, profession and values.** *Acta Bioethica*, 2003; año IX, No 2, 177-188. Available at: <http://www.scielo.cl/pdf/abioeth/v9n2/art04.pdf>.

Grill, K. & Dawson, A. (2015). **Ethical frameworks in public health decision-making: Defending a value-based and pluralist approach.** *Health Care Analysis*, 2015, July 14. Available at: <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10728-015-0299-6/fulltext.html>

Kass, N. E. (2001). **An ethics framework for public health.** *American Journal of Public Health*, 91(11), 1776–1782. Available at: <http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/pdf/10.2105/AJPH.91.11.1776>  
Our adapted summary is available at: [http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/2016\\_eth\\_frame\\_kass\\_En.pdf](http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/2016_eth_frame_kass_En.pdf)

Marckmann, G., Schmidt, H., Sofaer, N., & Strech, D. (2015). **Putting public health ethics into practice: A systematic framework.** *Frontiers in Public Health*, February 2015, 3(23), 8 pp. Available at: <http://journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fpubh.2015.00023/full>  
Our adapted summary is available at: [http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/2015\\_TOPHC\\_Ethique\\_HandoutB\\_EN\\_Final.pdf](http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/2015_TOPHC_Ethique_HandoutB_EN_Final.pdf)

New Zealand Ethics Advisory Committee. (2007). **Getting through together: Ethical values for a pandemic.** Wellington: Ministry of Health. Available at: <http://neac.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/getting-through-together-jul07.pdf>

# Selected frameworks (4)

Public Health Leadership Society. (2002). ***Principles of the ethical practice of public health***. Available at: [https://www.apha.org/~media/files/pdf/about/ethics\\_brochure.ashx](https://www.apha.org/~media/files/pdf/about/ethics_brochure.ashx)

Schröder-Bäck, P., Duncan, P., Sherlaw, W., Brall, C., & Czabanowska, K. (2014). **Teaching seven principles for public health ethics: Towards a curriculum for a short course on ethics in public health programmes.** *BMC Medical Ethics*, 2014, 15:73. Available at: <http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1472-6939-15-73.pdf>

Selgelid, M. J. (2009). **A moderate pluralist approach to public health policy and ethics.** *Public Health Ethics*, 2 (2), 195–205. Available at: <http://phe.oxfordjournals.org/content/2/2/195.full.pdf+html>

Tannahill, A. (2008). **Beyond evidence—to ethics: a decision-making framework for health promotion, public health and health improvement.** *Health Promotion International*, 23 (4), 380-390. Available at: <http://heapro.oxfordjournals.org/content/23/4/380.full.pdf+html>

ten Have, M., van der Heide, A., Mackenbach, J., & de Beaufort, I. D. (2012). **An ethical framework for the prevention of overweight and obesity: A tool for thinking through a programme's ethical aspects.** *European Journal of Public Health*, 23(2), 299-305. Available at: <http://eurpub.oxfordjournals.org/content/23/2/299.long>

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[http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/2016\\_eth\\_frame\\_tenHave\\_En.pdf](http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/2016_eth_frame_tenHave_En.pdf)

# Selected frameworks (5)

Thompson, A. K., Faith, K., Gibson, J. L., & Upshur, R. E. G. (2006). **Pandemic influenza preparedness: An ethical framework to guide decision-making.** *BMC Medical Ethics*, 7(12). Available at:

<http://www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6939/7/12>

Upshur, R. E. G. (2002). **Principles for the justification of public health intervention.** *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 93 (2), 101-103. Available at: <http://journal.cpha.ca/index.php/cjph/article/view/217>

Our adapted summary is available at: [http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/2016\\_eth\\_frame\\_upshur\\_En.pdf](http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/2016_eth_frame_upshur_En.pdf)

Willison, D., Ondrusek, N., Dawson, A., Emerson, C., Ferris, L., Saginur, R., Sampson, H., & Upshur, R. E. G. (2012). **A framework for the ethical conduct of public health initiatives.** Public Health Ontario. Available at: <http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/PHO%20%20Framework%20for%20Ethical%20Conduct%20of%20Public%20Health%20Initiatives%20April%202012.pdf> Also, this shorter

document discusses the framework and provides a table of its ten guiding questions: Willison, D. J., Ondrusek, N., Dawson, A., Emerson, C., Ferris, L. E., Saginur, R., Sampson, H., & Upshur, R. (2014). **What makes public health studies ethical? Dissolving the boundary between research and practice.** *BMC Medical Ethics*, 15(61), 1-6. Available at: <http://bmcomedethics.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1472-6939-15-61>

# Selected frameworks or supporting documents for community health ethics

Alberta Health Services. (2014). ***Ethics Framework: A Guide for AHS Staff, Physicians and Volunteers***. Available at: <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/Infofor/hp/if-hp-ethics-framework.pdf>

Community Ethics Network (CEN). (2008). ***Community Ethics Toolkit***. Available at: <http://www.communityethicsnetwork.ca/docs/toolkit2008.pdf>

McDonald, M., Rodney, P., & Starzomski, R. (2001). ***A Framework for Ethical Decision-Making: Version 6.0 Ethics Shareware***. Available at: <http://www.ethics.ubc.ca/upload/A%20Framework%20for%20Ethical%20Decision-Making.pdf>

Nova Scotia Health Ethics Network. (2015). ***Ethics Case Database***. Available at: <https://nshencases.wordpress.com/> List of resources available at: <http://nshen.ca/docs/Health%20Ethics%20Resources%20for%20Website.pdf>

Trillium Health Centre. (2010). ***IDEA Ethical Decision-Making Framework. Guide and Worksheets***. Available at: [http://www.trilliumhealthcentre.org/about/documents/TrilliumIDEA\\_EthicalDecisionMakingFramework.pdf](http://www.trilliumhealthcentre.org/about/documents/TrilliumIDEA_EthicalDecisionMakingFramework.pdf)

# Selected frameworks, supporting documents and resources for community health ethics (2)

Wagner, F. & Buchman, D. (2013). ***Ethical Decision-making in Community Practice***. (Practice examples of applying CEN Toolkit, with instruction.) Available at:

[https://uwaterloo.ca/school-of-social-work/sites/ca.school-of-social-work/files/uploads/files/ethical\\_decision-making\\_in\\_community\\_practice.pdf](https://uwaterloo.ca/school-of-social-work/sites/ca.school-of-social-work/files/uploads/files/ethical_decision-making_in_community_practice.pdf)

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, Ethics Services. (2015a). ***Ethical Decision-Making Framework: Evidence Informed Practice Tool***. Available at: <http://www.wrha.mb.ca/extranet/eipt/EIPT-037.php>

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, Ethics Services. (2015b). ***Ethical Decision-Making Framework Workbook: Evidence Informed Practice Tool***. Available at: <http://www.wrha.mb.ca/extranet/eipt/EIPT-037.php>

Manitoba Provincial Health Ethics Network (MB-PHEN). ***Ethics Resources: Frameworks***. Available at: <http://www.mb-phen.ca/er-frameworks.html>; ***Ethics Resources: Links***. Available at: <http://www.mb-phen.ca/er-links.html>

# NCCHPP Resources in Ethics

## Recent publications:

[Introduction to Public Health Ethics 3: Frameworks for Public Health Ethics](#)

[Introduction to Public Health Ethics 2: Philosophical and Theoretical Foundations](#)

[Introduction to Public Health Ethics 1: Background](#)

[Solidarity in Public Health Ethics and Practice: Its Conceptions, Uses and Implications](#)

[Methods of Economic Evaluation: What are the Ethical Implications for Healthy Public Policy?](#)

## Web presentation:

[Public Health Ethics: What is it? And Why is it Important?](#)

## New in 2016:

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