

## Ethical Resolution Process Summary: Partner Notification Scenario

Ethical Dilemma	
State the <b>ethical dilemma</b> as a question.	Should Priya be informed of her potential exposure to syphilis without Sohail's consent?
Identify relevant <b>values and principles</b>	<p>Humanization, respect, trust, and wholistic wellbeing for Sohail may be in conflict with upholding the same values for Priya.</p> <p>Maintaining Sohail's trust may be in conflict with a proportional, reasonable, and utilitarian response aimed at preventing the spread of syphilis.</p>
Interested Parties	
Who are the <b>interested parties</b> ? Which parties were engaged. Which were not engaged?	<p>The interested parties include Sohail, Priya, and Mandeep and the MHO.</p> <p>Mandeep engaged with Sohail and the MHO. Priya has not been contacted.</p>
Information	
What <b>information</b> is central to the analysis?	<p>If Sohail's family members and community become aware of his syphilis infection or male sexual partners, he and Priya could face ostracization, impacting their wholistic wellbeing.</p> <p>Priya and Sohail are trying to become pregnant. A particular concern is the risk of congenital syphilis due to transmission to a fetus. Congenital syphilis can be a debilitating and life-threatening infection.</p> <p>If Priya is not treated, Sohail could be re-infected through sexual contact with her in the future. Additionally, he would then potentially infect any future sexual partners he may have.</p> <p>Mandeep and the MHO are available to support Sohail in making decisions about partner notification.</p> <p>Anonymous notification options are available.</p>

## Information

What **information** is central to the analysis?

Potential stigma, biases and assumptions related to Sohail's cultural and religious community, race, newcomer status, sexual activity, and relationship with Priya should be considered. In BC, the Public Health Act can support MHOs to notify sexual contacts of their potential exposure to reportable infections like syphilis without the consent of the person with the first diagnosed case. This is a rare last resort, as the goal is to engage with individuals to find a collaborative path forward.

## Options

Which **options** were considered?

- Option A:** Sohail notifies Priya himself.
- Option B:** Sohail and Mandeep notify Priya together.
- Option C:** The MHO decides Priya will be notified without Sohail's consent.

Summarize the **ethical analysis** of the options considered.

### Narrative ethics analysis

A narrative ethics analysis can be helpful when interested parties hold different viewpoints. In this scenario, it can be applied in analyzing whether to proceed with partner notification without the consent of a client with syphilis. Narrative ethics can support understanding of the impact of this resolution on the wellbeing of each interested party.

- The key characters were Sohail, Mandeep, the MHO, and Priya. Priya's voice was missing from the story.
- A rupture occurred in Sohail's story when he was diagnosed with syphilis. There are implications for Priya's health and a risk of congenital syphilis if Priya becomes pregnant.
- At this point, Sohail wants to find a way to support Priya's wholistic wellbeing and sustain healthy relationships with his family and community. This is supported through Option A and Option B.
- Mandeep wants to maintain trust and respectful relationships with Sohail and Priya. This is best supported through Option A or Option B.
- It matters to Mandeep and the MHO that Sohail and Priya are tested and treated for syphilis. This is best supported through Option B and Option C.

## Options

Summarize the **ethical analysis** of the options considered.

### Narrative ethics analysis

- We can presume that Priya would want to be informed of health risk, which is supported by all options.
- Options A and B are aligned with previous actions of Mandeep and the MHO, in the form of standard practices for consent-based partner notification. Option C is consistent with actions taken as a last resort in the absence of consent.
- Options A and B are best suited to supporting Sohail's relationship with Priya, but depend on Sohail's willingness to share his syphilis status with Priya.
- With Option B, Mandeep can provide information and answer questions to help Priya make a plan to move forward.

Describe the **feasibility** of the options considered.

Resources are available to realistically and safely implement all of these options.

## Resolution

Describe the **resolution**.

Option B: Sohail and Mandeep will notify Priya together.

Describe the **ethical justification** for the resolution.

Consent-based partner notification is consistent with standard practices and best fits with Sohail's values and past practices of being honest with Priya and supporting her wholistic wellbeing.

This process allows Mandeep to maintain a good relationship with Sohail and helps Sohail support Priya's wholistic wellbeing.

Was there **consensus** about the resolution?

Through engaging in a narrative ethical analysis, Mandeep, Sohail, and the MHO have reached consensus that Sohail and Mandeep should notify Priya together about her exposure to syphilis.

How was the resolution **implemented**?

Mandeep centres Sohail and Priya in the partner notification process, focusing on the importance of addressing immediate health risks and approaches to disclosure that can minimize relational conflict.

Resolution	
What are the key considerations for <b>communication</b> ?	Mandeep, who has a relationship with Sohail, is well-suited to work with Sohail on partner notification. Information should be tailored to Sohail and to Priya and their identities and life experiences.
What were the key findings from the <b>evaluation</b> ?	Priya was notified of her exposure to syphilis and treated. Trust was maintained with Sohail.