



The *EthicsLab Essentials* provides a core curriculum designed to enrich ethics committee members through a podcast and website format. A podcast format was chosen due to its easy accessibility and learning schedule flexibility for the listener.

Episode: Beyond Capacity – Assessing Challenging Cases

Description:

One of the challenging areas in clinical practice today is wanting to honor patient wishes but not being clear on the competency or capacity level a patient with dementia or behavioral health issues. In this episode we explore different challenging situations that ask: a) What is the best assessment of capacity? b) What level of risk should be supported? c) How might health care professionals approach these situations at a deeper human level? Our guests, who are national experts in this area and will offer insight and practical consideration and approaches to the questions list above and others.

Process:

Have your ethics team members listen to this podcast prior to your regular ethics committee meeting. Then, at your meeting facilitate a discussion and application of the episode around the following questions.

Facilitation Questions:

1. Regarding behavioral health issues and capacity assessment, what are the challenges that are being identified through conversations with clinical colleagues or through the ethics consultations provided by your ethics committee?
2. How well does your ethics committee address that competence is not “all or nothing” and can change over time regarding “task specificity” and “sun downing” as described by Dr. Paul Applebaum?
3. How might your ethics committee help clinical teams understand the four components of competency in more challenging cases?