

Who is a Capacity Assessor?

A capacity assessor is a healthcare professional who (a) is a member of one of the Colleges specified in the Health Care Consent Act 1996; (b) has completed an approved training course; and (c) is covered by a minimum of \$100,000 in liability insurance. In addition to assessments of capacity for decisions related to personal care and long-term care admission, a capacity assessor is authorized to assess capacity to make property decisions.

When do you Need to Involve a Capacity Assessor?

A capacity assessor should be involved when:

- A formal capacity assessment is specified as the method of determining incapacity in a Power of Attorney document; or
- One has reasonable grounds to believe that a person is incapable with respect to property decisions and is suffering or at risk of suffering serious adverse effects as a result of his/her incapacity.

Do Individuals Need to be Informed of the Findings of Incapacity?

Yes. Individuals need to be informed of a finding of incapacity and provided with information about their rights, including the right to appeal the decision through the Consent and Capacity Board.

If you are uncertain as to how to proceed with what looks like an ethical issue, we may be able to help.

For more information please feel free to contact Crystal Doleman at cdoleman@sjlhc.ca or 519.751.7096 Ext. 3409.

Donations to St. Joseph's Lifecare Foundation (the official fundraising organization for St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre), have brought this beautiful building to life.

Our community has funded vital long-term care programs and services, purchased resident medical equipment, furnishings, therapeutic gardens and everything in between.

Ongoing donations are vital to ensure that our residents get the most enhanced, compassionate care they need and deserve!

If you would like to donate to St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre, please contact the Foundation office or give directly on-line at www.sjlc.ca. Thank you for caring!

St. Joseph's Lifecare Foundation's mailing address is the same as the Lifecare Centre below.



ST. JOSEPH'S LIFECARE CENTRE
99 Wayne Gretzky Parkway
Brantford, ON N3S 6T6
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www.sjlc.ca



Capacity Assessment

How to determine when a person can make healthcare decisions for him/herself

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

70 year old Mohamed Daar recently had a stroke and is unable to speak. He has difficulties swallowing and is at high risk for aspiration. The healthcare team is proposing that a feeding tube be inserted.

Isabella Stewart, a frail 84 year old woman, is recovering from a broken hip. She wants to go home, but doesn't seem to understand the associated safety risks.

67 year old Hadi Darmali recently immigrated to Canada and his English is very limited. He has recently been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. He also has bone cancer and a decision about whether or not to undertake further chemotherapy treatment needs to be made.

What is Capacity?

A person is considered to have capacity with respect to making a treatment decision if he/she has the ability to understand the information that is relevant to the treatment decision, is able to appreciate the foreseeable consequences of consenting or refusing to consent to the treatment, and is able to reach a decision. There is a presumption of capacity, unless there are reasonable grounds to suggest incapacity.

How is Capacity Assessed?

Capacity assessment is the responsibility of the healthcare provider by asking the individual questions related to the treatment decision. It may be supplemented by administering standardized tests and procedures that measure cognitive ability.

It is important to note that capacity is decision-specific. An individual may be able to make a simple, less complex decision, but unable to make more difficult decisions that have potentially serious consequences.

What Factors can Affect Capacity?

Treatable underlying physical and psychological conditions, such as depression, dehydration, infection and fatigue.

An injury or disease that is not curable or likely to improve, such as Alzheimer's Disease.

What Indicators Should Prompt Further Assessment?

If an individual exhibits any of the following:

- Confused and irrational thinking
- Inability to retain information
- Fluctuating wishes and alertness
- Level of suffering that impairs understanding

What Individual Indicators Alone do not Determine Incapacity?

Incapacity is not directly related to any of the following factors:

- Advanced age
- Language barriers
- Psychiatric illness
- Physical disability and/or communication disorders
- Refusal of treatment
- Lower levels of education
- Cultural/Religious background
- Idiosyncratic or unusual beliefs

* Hébert, P.C. (1996). Doing right: A practical guide to ethics for medical trainees and physicians. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Who is an Evaluator?

A healthcare professional who is a member of one of the Colleges specified in the Health Care Consent Act 1996.

An evaluator can assess capacity related to treatment decisions, personal assistance devices and discharge planning. Community Care Access Centre's staff assesses capacity to a Long-Term Care Facility.