



What Should We Do With Coerced People?



Eric Mathison, PhD, HEC-C
Assistant Professor of Philosophy,
University of Toronto Scarborough;
Adjunct Assistant Professor,
John Dossetor Health Ethics Centre

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ONLINE via Zoom application

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Voluntariness is widely considered a necessary condition of valid informed consent. Coercion is one way voluntariness can be compromised, and when it is, the standard view holds that valid consent is impossible. But what should we actually do when a patient has been coerced? This practical question has received surprisingly little attention compared to the extensive literature on what coercion is. I examine this question through a case of third-party coercion, which occurs when the person making the threat is not the party who requires the patient's consent to proceed. The coercer and the consent-seeker are distinct agents. I survey the main available responses and argue that each turns out to be deeply unattractive. I then conclude that there are cases where full voluntariness is not a necessary condition of valid informed consent. In certain cases, we should proceed with the patient's decision despite the coercion.

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