

John Dossetor
Health Ethics
Centre



**JOHN DOSSETOR
HEALTH ETHICS CENTRE**

**2022-
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SERIES**

HEALTH ETHICS SEMINAR

Dignity as a Guiding Principle and its Application in Disorders of Consciousness



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Thursday, 27 April 2023

12:00 - 13:00 MDT

WEBINAR Presentation via Zoom application

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Dignity is an often-employed term that is variably used and conceptually vague in its meaning. In health care it is unclear what it adds to our obligations that are already guided by other ethical principles. When we appeal to a principle to support decision making it is critical that meanings are shared and its application brings added value to an ethical concern. In our talk we will be exploring the foundations of dignity and its normative functions. In doing so, we will consider the limits of our common conceptions of dignity. These conceptions, grounded in autonomy, identity, human rights, species membership, etc. struggle to provide a strong action-guiding basis when caring for patients who suffer from disorders of consciousness. To address this, we will propose a conception of dignity originating in virtue ethics, but which is orientated around relational obligations and conduct. By adopting this framework of dignity, we hope to better capture how it guides the reasons for action and inaction when caring for patients who do not clearly display the capacities that other dignity conceptions seem to require.

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