

# Conversations in Ethics

## Insights regarding respect for autonomy in patients with autism spectrum disorder

A Continuing Medical Education Course  
Presented by the Baptist Health Bioethics Department

Live Webinar | 1 Cat. 1  
Wednesday, February 25, 2026  
12:00 pm to 1:00 pm EDT

This lecture explores the ethical principle of respect for autonomy as it applies to individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in healthcare, educational, and social care contexts. Autonomy—understood as the right and ability to make informed decisions about one’s own life—is a core principle in bioethics; however, its application to autistic individuals is often misunderstood or inconsistently practiced.

The lecture will examine how assumptions about cognitive ability, communication differences, and behavioral expressions can lead to the unjust limitation of autonomy for autistic patients. Through ethical theory, clinical examples, and case-based discussions, learners will develop skills to support decision-making while respecting neurodiversity, dignity, and individual preferences.

### Faculty

**Jeanie L. Sauerland, MA, BSN, RN, HEC-C**  
Director of Ethics Services  
University Health System

### Learning Objectives

- Define the ethical principle of respect for autonomy and explain its relevance to individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
- Analyze ethical dilemmas involving autonomy, beneficence, and safeguarding in the care of individuals with ASD.
- Differentiate between communication differences and decision-making capacity in autistic patients.

**[Preregistration is required. Scan the QR code or visit CMEOnline.BaptistHealth.net/ethics0225to enroll.](#)**



### Accreditation

Baptist Health South Florida is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

Baptist Health South Florida designates this live activity for a maximum of 1 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™*. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

This activity has been approved for 1 credit hour, CE Broker Course #20-700581, by the Florida Boards of Medicine, Osteopathic Medicine and by the Florida Council of Physician Assistants.

This activity has also been approved for 1 credit for Nurse Practitioners, Nurses, Occupational Therapists, Pharmacists and Techs, Clinical Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Mental Health Counselors and Respiratory Therapists. Baptist Health South Florida CE Broker Provider #50-182.



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