

# Compassion not Control Serving At-Risk Older Adults

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PRESENTED BY  
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## Objectives

- Define autonomy, independence, self-efficacy
- Discuss diminished capacity
- Describe supported decision-making

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## Why I Care (so much)

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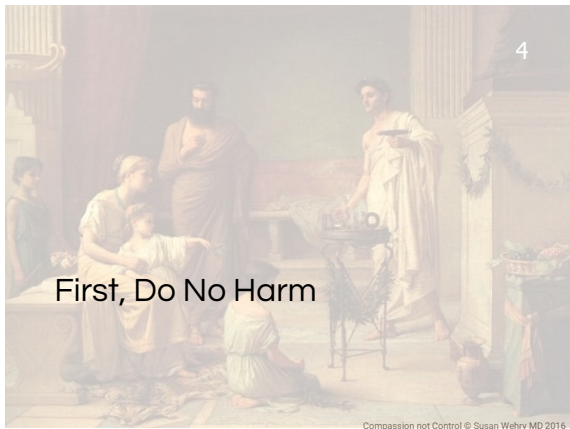
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First, Do No Harm

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Do Good

NOT SAME AS PATERNALISM

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Respect Autonomy

EVEN IN FACE OF DIMINISHED CAPACITY

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## Advocate

FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

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## Why it Matters (Now)

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**CANTANKEROUS OLD-FART**  
ONLY 75¢ JUST LIKE THE GOOD-OL' DAYS.  
A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

THE REAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A MUMBLE AND A GRUMBLE.

HOW TO END BORING CONVERSATIONS WITH JUST A WHACK OF THE CANE.

THE VARY VIRTUES OF DRAGGLED.

HOW TO AVOID ANNOYING RESPONSIBILITIES BY CLAIMING TO HAVE FORGOTTEN.

KEEP THOSE PESKY NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS AWAY WITH AN INCOHERENT GROWL.

THE USE OF THAT LOWER LIP IN BROODINGS.

PRODUCTIVE MUTTERING.

ADVANTAGES OF BEING SET IN YOUR WAYS + 6 NEW WAYS TO BE SET IN!



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# 1 in 10

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↑ Guardianship requests

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## Eleanor



*"I don't want to lose my independence"*

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The diagram consists of three overlapping circles arranged in a triangle. The top circle is orange and contains a red plus sign in the upper left corner and the word "Independence" in white text. The bottom-left circle is orange and contains the text "I can do it my way" in white. The bottom-right circle is blue and contains the text "I can do it myself", "Self-sufficiency", and "Self-reliance" in white. The bottom-right circle overlaps with the bottom-left circle. The word "Freedom" is written in large black text below the circles. At the bottom of the diagram, the text "Compassion not Control © Susan Wehry MD 2016" is written in small black font.

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# Autonomy

CRITICAL CONCEPTS

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[illegible]

# Not Independence

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# It's My Right!

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## Autonomy



- To choose
- To self-determination
- To be responsible
  - Dignity of risk
- To fail
- To privacy

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## ***The right to be left alone***

LEGAL DOCTRINE

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***"...foolish, unreasonable  
and even absurd ideas  
which do not conform..."***

JUSTICE BURGER

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Conflict → Abandonment

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## Threats to autonomy

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## Normative Aging Issues

- Biological
  - Sensory changes
  - Loss of reserve
  - Slower recovery
  - Increased medication sensitivity

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## Normative Aging Issues

- Cognitive
  - Sensory impairment
    - Attention
    - Registration
- ↓ Memory
  - More trials
  - Less efficient recall

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## Normative Aging Issues

- Psychological
  - Positive
  - Resilient
  - Loss
  - Developmental tasks
  - Goals and values may change

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## Normative Aging Issues

- Social
  - Change in role
  - Change in connection
  - Less visible
  - Risk of abuse, exploitation

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## Non-Normative

- Dementia, due to any cause
- Depression
- Substance Use Disorders
- Abuse, neglect, exploitation

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## Net result

- Live in fear
  - of losing autonomy
  - of reprisal
  - of losing options
- Anxious when decisions challenged
- May minimize deficits
- Defend independence

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## Necessary

BUT NOT SUFFICIENT

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## Motivators and Triggers

TO TAKE CONTROL

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## Fear, Frustration, Filial love

- Safety
  - Falls
  - Protection from exploitation
- Fear of Decline
  - Access to medical care
  - Access to services

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## Common Triggers

- Treatment refusal
  - Non-adherence
- Abuse, neglect, exploitation
- Lifestyle intolerance
- Hospitalization

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Enter: Compassion

EMPATHY PLUS RIGHT ACTION

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## Empathize, don't sympathize

- Fear
- Sense of loss
- Sense of risk
- Love

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## Support for at risk adults

FINDING BALANCE

ENHANCING SELF EFFICACY

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## Enhancing Self-Efficacy

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## Self-efficacy

- “What I do makes a difference”
- “I’m in charge”
  - of my destiny
- “I am responsible”
  - for my actions

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## Engage Circles of Support



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## Identify Health Goals



- “get out of the apartment and back to doing things for myself”

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## Create control points

- Time you come
- How you spend time
- Present options
  - clearly
  - realistically
  - without personal bias



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## Start the conversation

- Advance planning
  - Palliation
  - End of life care
  - The Five Questions

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## Everything you do...



...Is an opportunity to enhance or diminish self-efficacy

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Rotting wood beams in John's home that let heat escape and cold in.

*"Leave me alone!"*

WHEN DO WE? WHEN DON'T WE?



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## Competency v. Capacity

- Competency
  - a legal concept
- Capacity
  - a clinical concept
  - the ability to "do" something

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## Capacity assessments

- Assist best performance
- More than one examination
- Decision-making “good enough”

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## Supported Decision-Making

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## In conclusion

- Lead with compassion not control
- Find the balance
- Unite against abuse

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## June 15: Take Action



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## Thank You

FOR BEING HERE  
FOR PARTICIPATING  
FOR ALL YOU DO

More Questions? Comments?

Please contact me [swehrymd@mac.com](mailto:swehrymd@mac.com)  
Visit my website [www.susanwehrymd.com](http://www.susanwehrymd.com)

Or join me on Twitter: @CommishVT12 @beingwithaging  
#changingaging #Oasis2

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