



Joint Centre for Bioethics
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

BIOETHICS SEMINAR

April 13, 2016, 4:10-5:30 pm

155 College St., Room 106 (main floor, to the right of the elevators)

This event will be webcast:

<https://jcb.adobeconnect.com/bioethicsseminars/>

The Limits of Substituted Judgment

Dave Langlois

Clinical Bioethics Fellow, Centre for Clinical Ethics

Abstract: According to the Substituted Judgment Standard (SJS), a surrogate decision-maker for an incapacitated or incompetent patient ought to make the same choice for the patient that the patient would make for herself if she were capable. The SJS is the most widely endorsed standard for surrogate decision-making, due to its focus on protecting the autonomy of incapable patients. In this seminar, I will explore the ethical tensions that emerge when we apply the SJS to cases that involve complex familial and interpersonal dynamics. I will propose that when a patient's core values and priorities concern the well-being of the surrogate decision-makers themselves, the SJS may produce uncomfortable and ethically contentious results. I will aim to expose the underlying problem with the SJS and I will analyze whether this problem can be remedied.