

# II. Autonomous Persons

## 4 Necessary Conditions for Decision Making Capacity (DMC)

Patients must be able to:

1. Communicate choices
2. Understand the relevant information
3. Appreciate the situation and its consequences
4. Manipulate information rationally.

# 4. Manipulating information

1. life is not worth living if you become unable to mow your lawn
2. severe arthritis in my knees has made me unable to mow my lawn
3. therefore, life is not worth living.

# 4. Manipulating information

1. I love to run
2. If I have my leg amputated, I will not be able to run
3. If I don't have my leg amputated, I will die
4. I will not have my leg amputated, so that I can continue running

# Does this decisionmaker have capacity?

1. Life is not worth living for oranges
2. I am an orange
3. Therefore my life is not worth living

# Practice questions

Where is the problem?

- A patient arrives in the ER unconscious
- A mentally disabled adult consistently fails to calculate the odds of death from the odds of survival
- A patient with debilitating congestive heart failure insists that she be let go because she "is not really sick"