

# ETHICS IN PEDIATRIC ANESTHESIOLOGY

---

Decision-making about people

Marije A. Brouwer, PhD.

Medical ethicist

UMC Groningen, UMC Utrecht, Ethiek in zicht

[brouwermarije@gmail.com](mailto:brouwermarije@gmail.com)

# LET'S DISAGREE

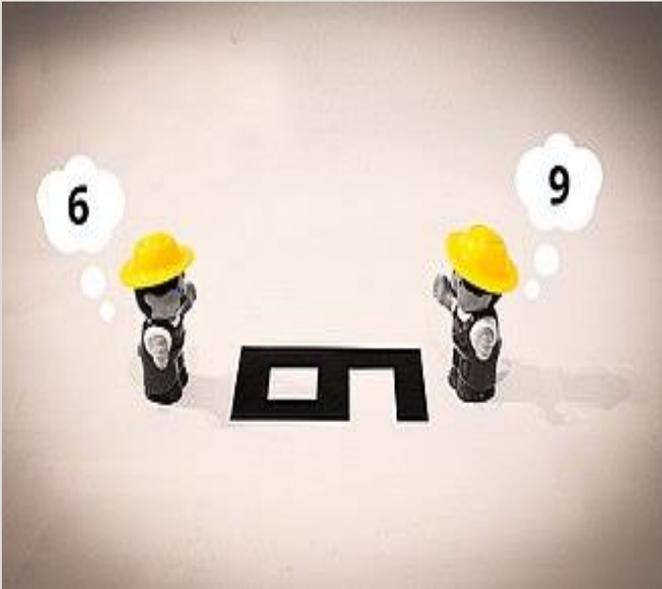


Mounted Medieval Knights, Museum Of The Battle Of Navas De Tolosa Spain

# LET'S DISAGREE

## What is True (episteme)

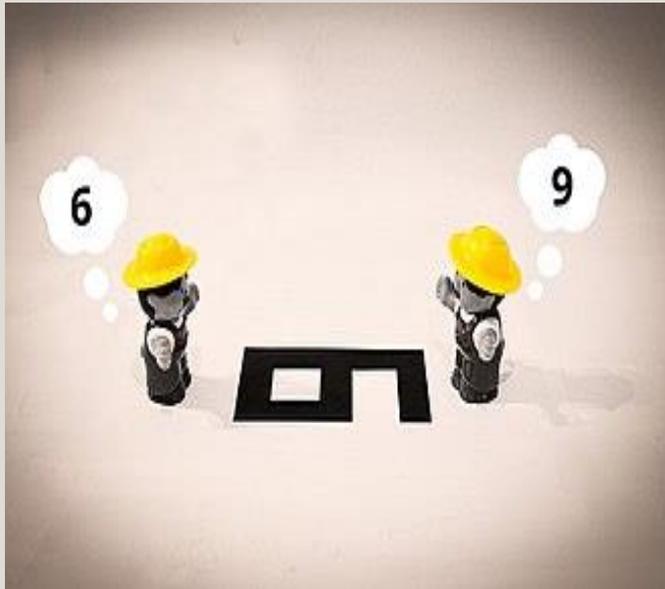
- State of the art
- Interpretation, logic



# LET'S DISAGREE

## What is True (episteme)

- State of the art
- Interpretation, logic



## What is Beautiful (aesthetica)

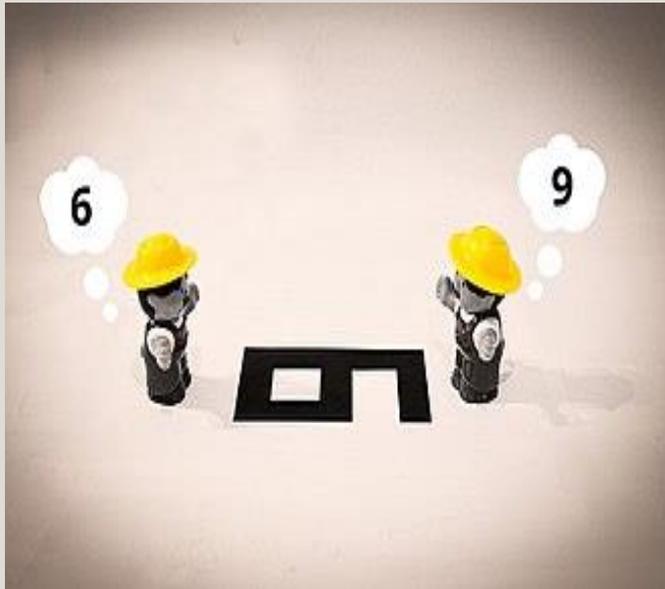
- Preferences, senses
- Opinions



# LET'S DISAGREE

## What is True (episteme)

- State of the art
- Interpretation, logic



## What is Beautiful (aesthetica)

- Preferences, senses
- Opinions



## What is Good (ethica)

- Values, norms
- Moral reasoning



# DIFFICULT DECISIONS IN MEDICINE

## What is True? (factual)

- (Un) certainties about diagnosis/ prognosis
- How will medications affect the patient/ interact?
- Impact of medical interventions

## What is Beautiful? (aesthetic)

- Styles of being a HCP
- Being emotionally affected by decisions

## What is Good? (ethic)

- What are the values that are affected by a decision?
- How do different parties weigh these values?

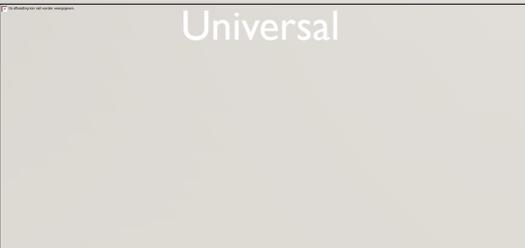
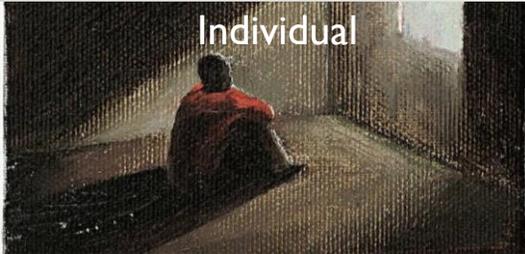


# TAKE HOME MESSAGE #1

---

- Disagreement *can* be a valuable asset
- When encountering a complex problem, cut it into different elements:
  - What are the factual elements?
  - What are the aesthetic elements?
  - What are the ethic elements?
- Interpretations of facts, opinions, and moral reasonings are not the same.

# UNDERSTANDING ETHICAL VALUES IN PEDIATRIC MEDICINE



VALUES

Autonomy

Fairness

Wealth

Happiness

A pain-free life

Connectedness

A long life

Self-development

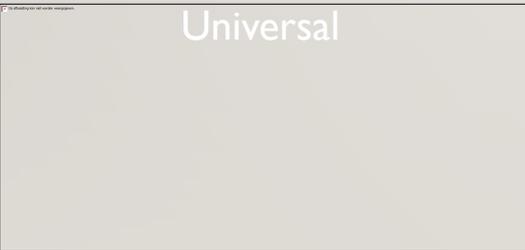
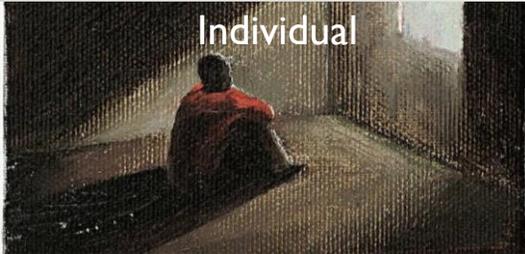
Dignity

Respect

Self-expression

...

# UNDERSTANDING ETHICAL VALUES IN PEDIATRIC MEDICINE



VALUES

Autonomy

Fairness

Wealth

Happiness

A pain

edness

A long life

velopment

Dignity

Respect

Self-expression

...

Quality of life

- Daler Usmonov, Solitude  
- Etaples, Ward of the order of st. john  
- Whitehead, J. Reflections Contemporary crowd scene. 2022

**Girl (10)  
with a complex, severe  
epilepsy syndrome.**

- Has 10-100 seizures p/day
- non-communicative
- Life-expectancy limited but unknown

“If our daughter would need resuscitation during her scoliosis-operation, I want you to respect her DNR”



## WHAT ARE THE REASONS BEHIND THIS REQUEST?

---

- Parents see their child suffering and discomfort each day, without any signs of enjoyment or being comfortable.
- They feel like death is the only escape for her to end her suffering, and a DNR is signed.
- During the operation, they want the team to respect their wishes of the DNR

“We feel like we have put a burden on her, by keeping her alive.

So we want to give her a chance, when she is ready to, to pass away.



# WHAT ARE THE REASONS BEHIND THIS REQUEST?

---

What would it signify when a child needs resuscitation during surgery?

For us, when her heart stops, that is a sign that she is ready to go.

# WHAT ARE THE REASONS BEHIND THIS REQUEST?

---

What would it signify when a child needs resuscitation during surgery?

For us, when her heart stops, that is a sign that she is ready to go.

What is the position of a resuscitation within the context of surgery?

A resuscitation within the context of a surgery holds the same status as one in another context

# WHAT ARE THE REASONS BEHIND THIS REQUEST?

---

What would it signify when a child needs resuscitation during surgery?

For us, when her heart stops, that is a sign that she is ready to go.

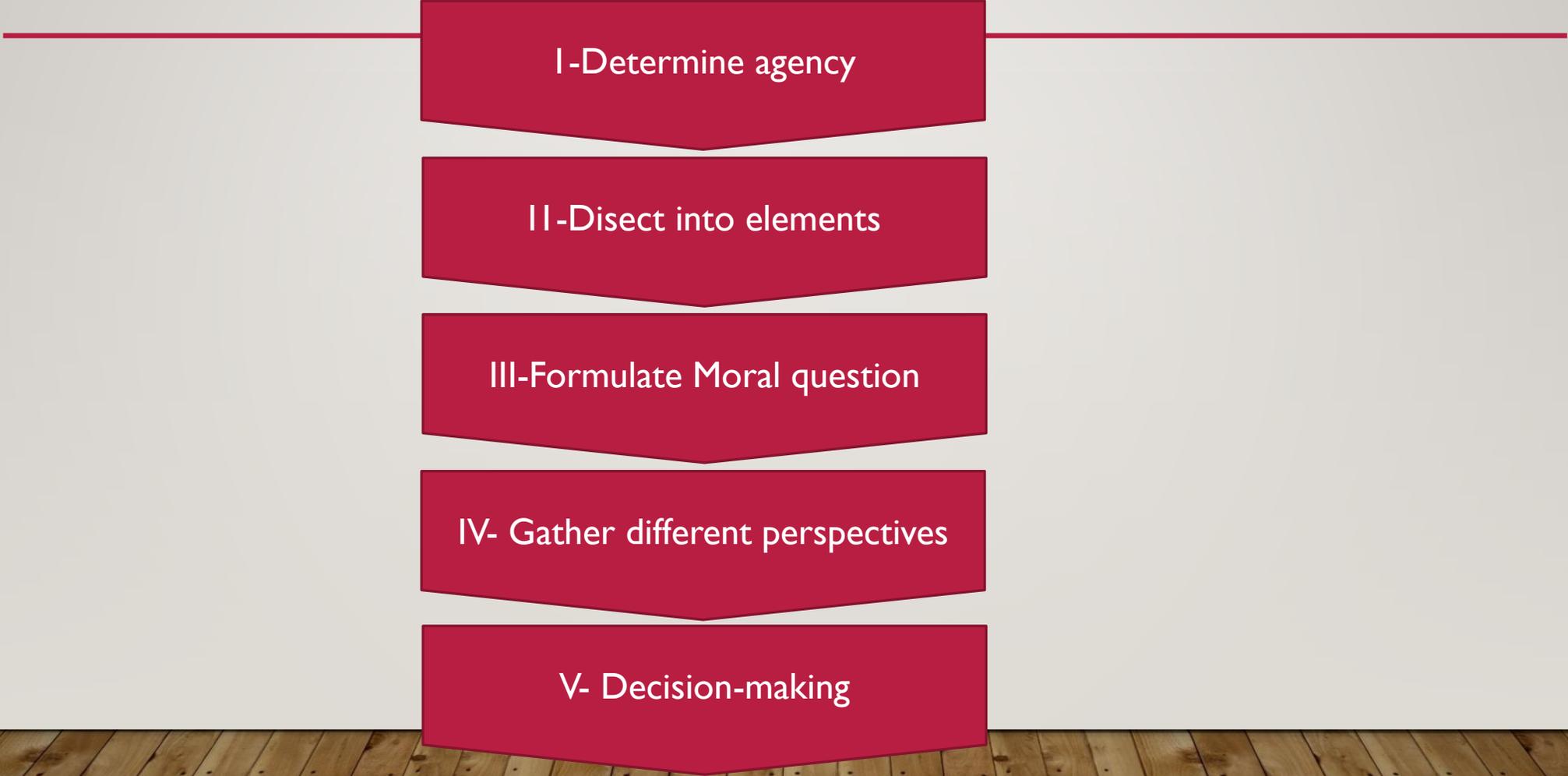
What is the position of a resuscitation within the context of surgery?

A resuscitation within the context of a surgery holds the same status as one in another context

What do the parents want for their child?

To relieve her suffering as much as possible and grant her death when she is ready.

# BASIC STEPS TOWARDS DECIPHERING COMPLEX DILEMMA'S.



I-Determine agency

II-Disect into elements

III-Formulate Moral question

IV- Gather different perspectives

V- Decision-making

# WHAT I HOPE YOU TAKE AWAY FROM THIS TALK

## Embrace disagreement

Take disagreement as a reason to investigate.

We often are more alike than we think.

## Disect decisions

What lies at the heart of the dispute?

## Value values

What are the values that drive your/others decisions?

## Act with agency

Don't judge, but act

