



ACED:
Assessment of
Capacity for
Everyday
Decision
making



Before beginning make sure patient has received adequate information relevant to making an informed decision about their treatment (purpose of treatment, the risks and benefits, including the option of no treatment at all).

4 decision-making abilities that constitute capacity:

Understanding: To know the meaning of information presented to them.

Expressing a choice: Ability to clearly communicate a choice when presented with multiple treatment options.

Appreciation: Applying facts to one's life/ability to recognize how facts are relevant to themselves.

Reasoning: The ability to compare options (comparative reasoning) and to infer consequences of a choice (consequential reasoning).

For each answer, the interviewer scores the patient's answer as adequate (2 points), marginal, (1 point), or inadequate (0 points).

Adequate
2 points

- Patient recalls the content of the information and offers a fairly clear version of it.

Marginal
1 point

- Incomplete or vague response, the patient shows some recollection of the item content but describes it in a way that renders understanding uncertain. Responses contain some correct pieces of information but lack key features.

Inadequate
0 points

- Clearly inaccurate response with serious distortion, patient does not recall the contents of the item or offers a response unrelated to the question.

Understanding: To know the meaning of information presented to them. (Can you tell me in your own words what I just said?)

EX: A man has just been told he has diabetes. You offer him an explanation of the disease process and treatment options. He declines to take metformin for his diabetes. To ensure understanding, ask him about your explanation of diabetes and why metformin is indicated given the risks and benefits.

Is the patient:

- Able to understand medical problem
- Able to understand proposed treatment
- Able to understand alternative to proposed treatment
- Able to understand option of refusing proposed treatment

Understanding

Adequate

2 points

- Patient recalls the content of the item and offers a fairly clear version of it

Marginal

1 point

- Patient shows some recollection of the item content but understanding appears uncertain, vague responses partial correct pieces of information that lack key features

Inadequate

0 points

- Clearly inaccurate response with serious distortion, response seriously alters the meaning of contents or is unintelligible

Expressing a choice: Ability to clearly communicate a choice when presented with multiple treatment options.

Adequate

2 points

- “Don’t bother, I won’t take it.”

Marginal

1 point

- Ambivalent (frequent reversal of choice) or more than one choice

Inadequate

0 points

- Unable to states a choice at all

Appreciation: Applying facts to one's life/ability to recognize how facts are relevant to themselves.

Adequate

2 points

- Acknowledges the problem, or alternatively disagrees with diagnosis with some reasonable verifiable explanation. Acknowledges the benefit of treatment or offers clear reasoning otherwise

Marginal

1 point

- Disagrees with diagnosis or is ambivalent about the existence of the problem and provides vague reasoning or distorted version of reality or acknowledges the problem but denies need for treatment.

Inadequate

0 points

- Does not believe he has diabetes or does not appreciate its severity, does not appreciate his diagnosis even if he can explain the disease in general terms. He may offer reasons for not wanting treatment that are delusional or serious distortion of reality or cannot answer the question.

*Previous patient when presented with facts (high blood sugar and HgA1c values)

Reasoning: The ability to compare options (comparative reasoning) and to infer consequences of a choice (consequential reasoning). The diabetic patient above may engage in a bit of consequential reasoning.

Adequate

2 points

- “I take too many pills.” Patient provides a clear statement about how he will be affected. The consequence of one more pill is having too many pills to take.

Marginal

1 point




- The patient provides a general statement with the details of the current situation could or could not affect the patient’s life.

Inadequate

0 points

- The patient provides no comparative statements or an illogical comparison. Patient provides no everyday consequences or an otherwise illogical answer

Score on a spectrum 0 - 8 (total patient's responses)

-  Score 0-2, very likely that patient lacks capacity.
-  Score 3-5, needs further evaluation, use other information from chart, statements from other providers and family members and other clinical tools to support your observation. Consider monitoring and documenting behavior over time to help determine capacity.
-  Score 6-8, very likely that patient has capacity