



Ethically Sound Discussion Guide: Podcast Series Discussion Questions

The Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues ([Bioethics Commission](#)) has produced a podcast series, *Ethically Sound*, based on the 10 reports it produced during its tenure. Each podcast focuses on an ethical challenge the Bioethics Commission addressed in a specific report, and illustrates how its work influenced how these challenges were handled. To facilitate classroom or seminar discussion of the *Ethically Sound* series, we developed a set of questions for each podcast to spark discussion. These questions can be used in a variety of educational settings and learning platforms, and adapted for many learning levels. All of the Bioethics Commission's educational materials can be downloaded at www.bioethics.gov/education. The *Ethically Sound* podcast series is available at www.bioethics.gov/podcasts.

Episode 1: “Safeguarding Children”

1. How is research with children ethically different from research with adults?
2. What are the ethical and logistical issues in countermeasure research when it is conducted before a bioterrorism attack as compared to after a bioterrorism attack? What should researchers do to address the issues in each scenario?

Episode 2: “Ethics and Ebola”

1. How can fear in a public health emergency contribute to ethical challenges?
2. What are some approaches public health officials can use to help to counter the spread of misinformation during a public health emergency? Why is it ethically important for them to do so?

Episode 3: “Anticipate and Communicate”

1. Why is it important that clinicians engage in shared decision making with their patients about incidental and secondary findings?
2. What is your reaction to the Commission's view that clinicians should respect a patient's preference not to know about incidental findings if that preference is consistent with the clinician's fiduciary duties? ¹

Episode 4: “Privacy and Progress”

1. What should people take into account when making the choice to have their genome sequenced?
2. Commission member Anita Allen described how the diverse backgrounds of the Bioethics Commission members shaped their considerations of ethical issues related to privacy and data protection in whole genome sequencing. What ethical issues related to privacy and whole genome sequencing are important to you? Why?

¹ A clinician's fiduciary duty, as used in *Anticipate and Communicate: Incidental and Secondary Findings in Clinical, Research, and Direct-to-Consumer Contexts*, entails “[a] duty of utmost good faith, trust, confidence...; a duty to act with the highest degree of honesty and loyalty toward another person and in the best interests of the other person.” Garner, B.A. (Ed.). (2004). *Black's Law Dictionary*. St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Co.



Episode 5: “Gray Matters”

1. What are some potential risks of using neuroscience in legal proceedings? Why are these important, ethically speaking?
2. Commission member Steven Hauser talks about several ethical considerations, including equitable access, in relation to neural modification aimed at enhancing normal human capabilities. What are some of the ethical implications you think are important of inequitable access to an intervention to enhance human intelligence?

Episode 6: “New Directions”

1. What are some of the ethical reasons to include the “do-it-yourself” scientific community in discussions about ethical issues in synthetic biology?
2. Why are democratic deliberation and community engagement particularly important with new technologies such as synthetic biology? Who would you include in an ethical deliberation about a new technology? Why?

Episode 7: “Moral Science”

1. What are some reasons it is ethically important to have transparency about federally-supported human subjects research?
2. How does the Bioethics Commission’s work apply to new methods of conducting research, such as research conducted through social media? How are the research ethics issues different when engaging research participants over the internet?

Episode 8: “Ethically Impossible”

1. What lessons did the Bioethics Commission draw about contemporary research from their ethical analysis of the Guatemala STD studies?
2. Why is it important to have regulations and policies to protect vulnerable groups that might participate in human subjects research? What ethical issues beyond the regulations might come up when conducting research with vulnerable participants?

Episode 9: “Every Generation”

1. Why is it important for everyone to know how to approach morally complex topics?
2. Why is it important for scientists to be able to articulate what we *should* do in addition to what we *can* do?

Episode 10: “Charting a Path Forward”

1. Why is it important for bioethics advisory bodies to include and hear from people with diverse perspectives?
2. What issues and topics should possible future bioethics advisory bodies address?