

**HANDOUT #4****MEDICAL CONDITIONS THAT INFLUENCE DECISION-MAKING ABILITY AND CAPACITY**

*Adapted from APSWI Screening for Decision-Making Ability with APS Clients eLearning and Appendix G. Medical Conditions Affecting Capacity-Assessment of Older Adults with Diminished Capacity*

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Symptoms/ Source</b>
Urinary Tract Infection (UTI)	One of the most common infections in older adults. Can present as acute change in cognitive status and may result in confusion or delirium
Chronic Pain	May inhibit the ability to receive and evaluate information due to lack of concentration or attention. Research suggests a relationship between untreated pain and increased depression among older adults.
Dehydration	Can cause altered mental status, agitation or lethargy, lightheadedness, and confusion. Speech difficulty, sunken eyes, weakness, and lethargy are often attributed to other conditions. Chronic and acute-medical conditions, malnutrition, and severe hot and humid weather can all cause dehydration.
Disease (e.g. Thyroid, diabetes, cancer, Parkinson's, heart disease, and AIDS)	Certain diseases may cause diminished capacity as the diseases progress.
Low Blood Pressure	Dizziness, weakness and falling, which could result in head injury. Can be due to medication error.
Physical Illness	Confusion and prevent rational decision-making. May result in electrolyte imbalances
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	Falls are the most common injury in older adults due to difficulties with ambulation, environmental hazards, dizziness, alcohol, medications, or stroke. A patient with sudden changes in mental status after a fall may have subdural hematoma. Physical Abuse can also cause a TBI.
Sensory Deficits (e.g. hearing/vision loss)	Can mimic or exacerbate cognitive impairment. Communication difficulties due to sensory or physical impairments are often mistaken for confusion.
Substance Use Disorders	Illegal, prescription, or recreational substance use in the APS population can be as much a factor as in the rest of the population.
Neurocognitive Disorders (dementias)	Usually marked by cognitive impairment and loss of functioning from a baseline level of performance.
Serious Mental Illness	A mental health disorder that results in serious functional limitations that impact one or more major life activities.