



Newsletter

# Ethics *in* Practice

A podcast exploring what it means to be 'ethical' in healthcare and research beyond checklists, and textbooks

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# Foreword from Jantina & Sharon

We live in a time when the very experience of living often feels like a series of violent encounters that is deeply damaging to our inner selves and to our ability to hope for a brighter future. Yet, alongside this reality, there is a vital counter-narrative: there are countless people driven by a passion for justice, equity, and sustainability. This podcast series captures that spirit.

In it, Matimba Swana and Nyioshi Shah engage with people who have placed this passion at the very heart of their work, exploring what becomes possible when we expect—and demand—better from one another. In doing so, they have created not only a remarkable resource for people working in bioethics, but also a powerful reminder: that each of us can, and must, show up differently to help shape a more just and sustainable world.



We hope you will enjoy the series as much as we have and will encourage them to continue building spaces where ethical reflection and bold conversations can flourish. As Arundhati Roy says “Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.”



Jantina de Vries  
ADVISOR  
EthicsLab  
University of Cape Town



Sharon Kaur  
ADVISOR  
University of Malaysia

# Advancing Bioethics

## Discourse: A Podcast Series

It can be spirit-bending to work for health and research as our systems suffer from severe inequity and abjection. **A global survey by Wellcome in 2020 also revealed that 78% of researchers felt that their work culture has become more competitive and unkind.**

This deterioration is often felt most acutely by the youngest members of the hierarchy because they are relatively powerless to stand up against the interpersonal, institutional and systemic distortions they may witness or experience.

**These questions of uncertainty, silence, complicity, and resistance are foundational:** they determine our capacity to do right by others and ourselves on a day-to-day basis and yet they are not adequately covered in our discourse on bioethics.

This podcast was therefore conceived as a space for health and research professionals to reflect on their experience of working by their values, and challenging the status quo through their scholarship and action.

We hope our listeners will find a language to understand their own moral journeys better and feel both, comforted and inspired by **Ethics in Practice**.

 **Soundbites** [CLICK TO LISTEN](#)

Why did we name the podcast **Ethics in Practice**?

Why a podcast?



Matimba Swana  
HOST & PRODUCER



Niyoshi Shah  
HOST & PRODUCER

# Our Process

The design process was governed by the central concepts of voice and practice from the project's inception. Researchers circulated a survey through their professional networks to identify challenges faced by early career researchers in their efforts to practice ethics. These survey responses informed the development of the podcast's thematic focus and episode content.

***We study opioids addiction, substance use, and mental health (MH). These spaces are always fraught but one of the recurring questions is: why do doctors and nurses routinely stigmatise folks dealing with a MH disorder? And related, why do our healthcare systems make it harder for folks experiencing a disorder to ask, get or maintain their services?***

***How can I be a whistleblower when I am so low on the totem pole?***

***Vulnerable communities (across LMICs) are over-researched to understand problems and test interventions. Researchers both, global and local, pitch this as "co-developing solutions" with the community to "empower" them. However, in most cases, this is untrue and misleading and ends up being a matter of lip-service... The community's needs are rarely met in terms of sustained implementation and scale up. In many cases it is the researchers' needs that are met instead.***



## Development and methodology

The content plan for Ethics in Practice was developed through the research team's tacit understanding of bioethics rather than relying solely on desk research. The proposed episodes underwent multiple rounds of feedback from project advisors before researchers finalized the list of five episodes. The podcast reflects the international composition of the research team, covering diverse topics ranging from the need for epistemic pluralism in academia to the ethics of apologizing.

bioethics. Guests were selected based on complementary expertise and varying levels of seniority, both within individual episodes and across the complete series.

### Soundbite

“These conversations were designed for our guests even before they were designed for our listeners.”



Niyoshi Shah  
HOST & PRODUCER

[CLICK TO LISTEN](#)

### Soundbite

Should we even do research?



Matimba Swana  
HOST & PRODUCER

[CLICK TO LISTEN](#)

## Additional content curation

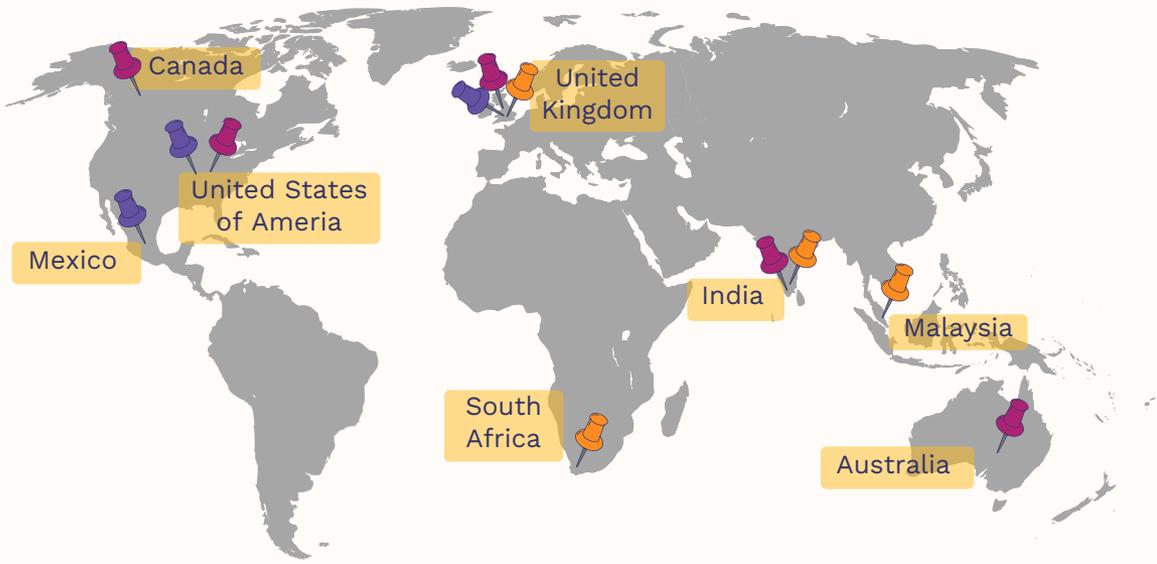
The project team has implemented a live curation of audio sketches designed to incorporate research approaches and language-cultures not covered in the original podcast episodes. This ongoing curation aims to broaden the scope of voices and methodologies represented in the series.

## Guest Selection Process

Researchers invited two guests for each episode to provide heterogeneous perspectives on



# Ethics in Practice by the Numbers



## Legend

Guests Co-hosts & Advisors Other Contributors

Most of our team members, guests and contributors work in several contexts including to the ones where they are based.





[Listen to the full episode](#)

Episode 1

## An Invitation to Re-imagine Health Research, and Bioethics

In this episode we asked Nicole and Christina: How do you resist hierarchies and create space for alternative ways of thinking in academia? We need epistemic pluralism to end the stubborn cycles of exclusion, poor problem-solving, and loss. They take us through Buddhist philosophy, feminism, crip theory, and indigenous law in the sub-Arctic region to close with a provocation that is relevant for our whole series: What if bioethics as governance is not rooted in prevention of harm but reciprocity? Where we recognise how our wellbeing is squarely dependent on that of others including Nature itself.

### EPISODE GUESTS:

**Nicole Redvers:** Associate Professor, Western Research Chair, and Director of Indigenous Planetary Health, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, Western University, Canada

**Christina Lee:** Research Associate - Knowledge Exchange, Disability Matters Programme, University of Sheffield, UK



### Soundbite

Integrated or Indigenous Ethics

[CLICK TO LISTEN](#)



Nicole Redvers  
GUEST



### Soundbite

Buddhist notions of dis-ease

[CLICK TO LISTEN](#)



Christina Lee  
GUEST

 [Listen to the full episode](#)

## Episode 2

# The Ethics of Being There: Fieldwork, Doubt and Meaning

Fieldwork is often seen as a source of rich data but it's also a deeply emotional undertaking particularly when we are faced with stories of violence, injustice, and dehumanisation. In this episode Supriya and Anna talk about all this and more. They reflect on what it means to sit with discomfort – both their own, and that of the people they learn from.

What emerges is a powerful reflection on why we do research in the first place. Who do we write for? And how can we stay present to both rigour and care, even when the academic process feels painfully slow in the face of real-world injustice?

## EPISODE GUESTS:

**Supriya Subramani:** Lecturer (Assistant Professor), Sydney Health Ethics, School of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine and Health, University of Sydney, Australia

**Anna Dowrick:** Senior Researcher, Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences, University of Oxford, UK

Supriya Subramani  
GUEST

## Soundbite

“[We need to] allow ourselves to make mistakes”



“It is all part of the oppression, the violence of these systems”



Anna Dowrick  
GUEST

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 [Listen to the full episode](#)

Episode 3

## The Quiet Optimism of Teaching Bioethics

In this episode Mario Vaz and Jordan Parsons share their experience of teaching bioethics in India and the UK respectively. We chose this topic to satiate our own curiosity: how can you teach someone to be good? How can you be sure they will follow your teachings when their actions count, and the pressures mount? We all know from our student years how moral education can feel dry and irrelevant – and that is exactly what Mario and Jordan share too. But they also share how they work through the structural challenges of their job to focus on reflexivity as the kernel of bioethics. They also cover how these subjects are taught in medical law and humanities for comparison. Now, over to the conversation.

### EPISODE GUESTS:

**Mario Vaz:** Retired Professor and Former Head of Physiology, St John's Medical College, India

**Jordan Parsons:** Assistant Professor, Medical Ethics and Law, Birmingham Medical School, UK

Mario Vaz  
GUEST

### Soundbite

“There are no easy solutions for some of these things”



“Sometimes, you can feel jaded... but I try and start each academic year afresh”



Jordan Parsons  
GUEST

[CLICK TO LISTEN](#)



 [Listen to the full episode](#)

Episode 4

## Building, Challenging and Transforming Systems in Bioethics

In this episode, Amar and Joseph explore the real-world work of building ethical systems in healthcare and research, everything from institutions to national health policies. They unpack the complexities of top-down vs. bottom-up approaches, the tensions between internal reform and external pressure, and how bioethics evolves through debate, resistance, and persistence. You can also find stories from the history of bioethics in UK, USA and other countries. Amar and Joseph share how the earliest opposition to universal healthcare came from doctors themselves, and end with a powerful discussion on civic participation and the quiet strength of small victories in driving change.

### EPISODE GUESTS:

**Amar Jesani:** Independent Consultant, Researcher and Teacher, Bioethics and Public Health, India

**Joseph Ali:** Associate Professor, Associate Director for Global Programmes, Johns Hopkins Berman Institute of Bioethics, USA

Amar Jesani  
GUEST

### **Soundbite**

“The most important driving force are patients and people”

[CLICK TO LISTEN](#)



Joseph Ali  
GUEST

### **Soundbite**

“Ethics is about setting a positive vision for the future”

[CLICK TO LISTEN](#)



 [Listen to the full episode](#)

Episode 5

## Apologise, Remember and Show Up

This episode grew from the observation that our conversations on right-doing are incomplete if we don't explore wrong-doing too. We put some emphasis on the act of apologising because it does not receive enough attention in bioethics. Our guests not only spoke to this provocation but elevated it by adding their own: Is an apology enough? Is bioethics complicit in perpetuating the injustice we are seeking an apology for? What do we do when our leaders and institutions fail us – without apology?

This episode is also a call for solidarity as Vanessa and Jantina reflect on the erasure of histories, and the recent upheavals in global health.

### EPISODE GUESTS:

**Vanessa Northington Gamble:**  
University Professor, Medical Humanities, George Washington University, USA

**Jantina de Vries:** Professor, Department of Medicine, University of Cape Town, South Africa

[CLICK TO LISTEN](#)

#### **Soundbite**

“And then she said bio means life”



Vanessa Northington Gamble  
GUEST

#### **Soundbite**

“How do we live well together?”



Jantina de Vries  
GUEST

[CLICK TO LISTEN](#)

# Shifting the Discourse

What started as a project on “the difficulty of being good” grew into an invitation to contemplate what practicing ethics means. Practice is not just a matter of compliance or academic debate. It is a way of being, an ongoing commitment to act with hope and integrity, and to strive for justice, even in difficult or ambiguous circumstances. This podcast shifts the discourse on bioethics to focus on:

## Relationality

Ethical decisions are shaped by the relationships we hold with patients, colleagues, institutions, communities, and the natural world. Relational ethics recognises that individuals are not isolated agents but social beings, whose identities and responsibilities are shaped through connection.

## Pluriversality

A pluriversal approach to bioethics honours diverse ways of knowing, being, and acting, as long as they promote justice and avoid harm. We seek to hold space for different voices especially those historically marginalised in global health research.

## Reflexivity

Ethical practice requires deep, ongoing reflection. We draw on reflective bioethics to think through dilemmas from both principles (top-down) and real-world experiences (bottom-up). This means engaging with complexity, acknowledging uncertainty, and remaining open to being challenged.

## Soundbites

“I think one thing that stayed with me was just holding space for diverse knowledges”

[CLICK TO LISTEN](#)



Babitha George  
CO-HOST & ADVISOR



## Credits

**Matimba Swana**  
UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL  
HOST & PRODUCER

**Babitha George**  
QUICKSAND  
CO-HOST & ADVISOR

**Jantina de Vries**  
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN  
ADVISOR

**Libin Rahman**  
QUICKSAND  
WEB DEVELOPMENT

**Reema Deshpande**  
QUICKSAND  
ILLUSTRATION & DESIGN

**Niyoshi Shah**  
QUICKSAND  
HOST & PRODUCER

**Rohit Chaturvedi**  
SUGARLINE SOUND COMPANY  
MUSIC

**Sharon Kaur**  
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA  
ADVISOR

**Varun Taneja**  
SUGARLINE SOUND COMPANY  
AUDIO MIXING

## Special Thanks

Click on the guest's name to go to their episode

[Amar Jesani](#)  
Independent Consultant, Researcher  
and Teacher, Bioethics and Public  
Health, India

[Joseph Ali](#)  
Associate Professor, Associate Director  
for Global Programmes, Johns Hopkins  
Berman Institute of Bioethics, USA

# Special Thanks (continued)

Click on the guest's name to go to their episode

## [Anna Dowrick](#)

Senior Researcher, Nuffield  
Department of Primary Care Health  
Sciences, University of Oxford, UK

## [Christina Lee](#)

Research Associate: Knowledge  
Exchange, Disability Matters  
Programme, University of Sheffield, UK

## [Jantina de Vries](#)

Professor, Department of Medicine,  
University of Cape Town, South Africa

## [Jordan Parsons](#)

Assistant Professor, Medical Ethics  
and Law, Birmingham Medical  
School, UK

## [Mario Vaz](#)

Retired Professor and Former Head  
of Physiology, St John's Medical  
College, India.

## [Nicole Redvers](#)

Associate Professor, Western  
Research Chair, and Director of  
Indigenous Planetary Health, Schulich  
School of Medicine & Dentistry,  
Western University, Canada

## [Supriya Subramani](#)

Lecturer (Assistant Professor), Sydney  
Health Ethics, School of Public Health,  
Faculty of Medicine and Health,  
University of Sydney, Australia

## [Vanessa Northington Gamble](#)

University Professor, Medical  
Humanities, George Washington  
University, USA





# Educational Resources

- [Instructions for setting up a shared listening session](#)
- [Reflection Cards for Shared Listening](#)



# Visit our website

For more information on this podcast series.

<https://ethicsinpractice.net/>

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