

When Values Collide

Everyday Ethics in Employment Services



Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation
Presented by Laurie Ford



Ethics Today...



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What are Ethics?

- Practically speaking, ethics are rules of conduct that are derived from our values.
- Professionally - the principles of conduct governing an individual or group.

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Two Levels of Ethics

Mandatory Ethics:
compliance with the law and with professional codes.

Sometimes called
"Standards"

Aspirational Ethics:
considers the effects that interventions have on the welfare of clients.

Sometimes called
"Principles"

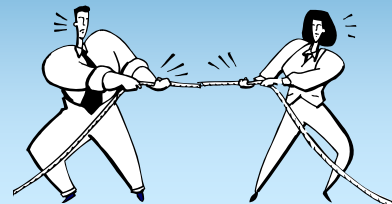
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Being Aware of Your Personal Values

- What do I value?
- What is my position on this issue?
- Where did I develop my views?
- Are my values open to modification?
 - Have I challenged my views?
 - Am I open to being challenged?

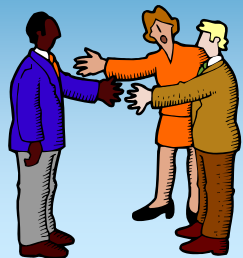
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Ethical Dilemmas Result from Conflicting Values



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It's easy to impose your values on the people you serve, even if you don't mean to.



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5 Ethical Principles in Counseling

(Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification)

- Beneficence
- Autonomy
- Non-Maleficence
- Fidelity
- Justice



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Beneficence

"To do good to others"

Acting in a manner that promotes the welfare of the client



Autonomy

"To honor the right to make individual decisions"

Acting in a manner that respects a person's freedom to control his or her own life.

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Non-Maleficence

"To do no harm to others"

Acting in a manner that does not cause harm or prevents harm to clients

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Fidelity

"To be loyal and honest"

Keeping promises or commitments, both stated and implied.

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Justice

“To be fair and give equally to others”

Treating people fairly, especially in allocation of resources

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Allocating Scarce Resources

- Equal shares – everyone gets the same
- Needs – each according to his/her needs
- Effort – people who put forth more get more resources
- Contribution
 - ◆ Payback (before or after services)
 - ◆ Free market
 - ◆ Cost effectiveness

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Ethical Dilemmas

- Choice between two courses of action – neither of which is all right or all wrong
- Significant potential consequences for taking either course of action
- Both courses can be supported by ethical principles
- Choosing either course will compromise an ethical principle



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Remember – not every dilemma can be resolved solely through ethical considerations...



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Working through Dilemmas

- Form a small group to address the situation circled on your handout
- Decide: Is this an **Ethical Dilemma?**
- If so, which Ethical Principles are involved?
- What is the best course of action?

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Common Rationalizations When Making Ethical Decisions

“If It’s Necessary, It’s Ethical”

Agency policy forbids you to transport customers in your own vehicle, but John has no other way to get to the job interview



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Common Rationalizations When Making Ethical Decisions



“If It’s Legal and Permissible, It’s Proper”

You encourage Bill and his parents to take that landscaping job, even though you know it isn’t really what he wants

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Common Rationalizations When Making Ethical Decisions

“I Was Just Doing It For You”

Although you know that John blew the interview due to his poor grooming, you tell him the employer didn’t have any openings

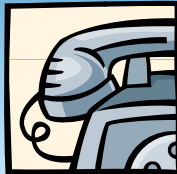


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Common Rationalizations When Making Ethical Decisions

“I’m Just Fighting Fire With Fire”

Damian misses appointments and doesn’t return phone calls; when he does call, you put off calling him back for a few days

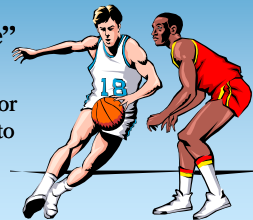


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Common Rationalizations When Making Ethical Decisions

“It Doesn’t Hurt Anyone”

Your customer’s dad works for the Sonics and has offered to get you free tickets



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Common Rationalizations When Making Ethical Decisions

“Everyone’s Doing It”

Ray is the classic “problem customer” who has been passed from one staff person to another – you put out just enough effort to stay out of trouble



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Common Rationalizations When Making Ethical Decisions

“It’s OK If I Don’t Gain Personally”

I know my customer is cheating Social Security – but it doesn’t have anything to do with me



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Common Rationalizations When Making Ethical Decisions

“I’ve Got It Coming”

Susie takes a half hour in between follow up visits to do her grocery shopping on company time



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Common Rationalizations When Making Ethical Decisions

“I Can Still Be Objective”

Your new customer is the daughter of your day care provider – the only one in town



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Steps in Making Ethical Decisions

- Identify the problem or dilemma
- Identify the potential issues involved
- Review the relevant ethical guidelines
- Obtain consultation
- Consider possible and probable courses of action
- Enumerate the consequences
- Decide on the best course of action

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A More Informal Approach...

(From Lockheed Martin, cited in CARF Ethics Manual)

- Are my actions legal?
- Am I being fair and honest?
- Will my action stand the test of time?
- How will I feel about myself afterward?
- How will it look in the newspaper?
- Will I sleep soundly tonight?
- What would I tell my child to do?
- If you're still not sure, ask...and keep asking until you are certain you are doing the right thing.

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Lucy

Sees homosexuality as sinful, uncomfortable with gay people

She's the only one available to work with Carla, a gay person

Tells boss she can't work with Carla.

Do you agree or disagree with Lucy's decision?

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Mary

Mary is helping Andre' look for a job.

Mary needs some yardwork done, so she hires Andre' to come over and mow her lawn.

Do you agree or disagree with Mary's decision?

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Fred

The parents of one of the people Fred supports sends him a card and \$50 bill.

Fred decides to keep it and not tell anyone.

Do you agree or disagree with Fred's decision?

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Conrad

Found his own job without your help, but you know the employer.

Doesn't want to tell employer about seizures.

Employer will probably assume you're working with Conrad.

You decide to tell employer that Conrad's not associated with your program any more.

Ethical, or unethical?

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Geri

One of the people Geri's supposed to be finding a job for is Anthony.

He's creepy! No one else likes him either.

Somehow other people keep getting jobs first.

Ethical, or unethical?

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Rachel

Providing attendant care to John.

John asks her to buy him some marijuana.

She decides it would be ok if she buys it after work on her own time.

Do you agree or disagree with Rachel's decision?

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Ramon

Ramon is friends with the local VR counselor.

He is confident that his friendship won't affect their professional relationship.

Do you agree or disagree with Ramon's decision?

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