



Ethics, Professionalism and Dual Relationships

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The Addiction Profession

- The addiction profession workforce is estimated at more than 100,000 individuals that include counselors, educators, and other addiction-focused professionals who specialize in addiction prevention, intervention, treatment, recovery support, and education.
- In brief, individuals who wish to become an addiction professional must possess a certain level of education, experience and supervision of skills and knowledge related to the recovery process.
- There are many opportunities for individuals of all ages and levels of experience.

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Being professional

The key elements of on-the-job professionalism include

- time management
- effective communication
- enthusiasm
- assignment delivery
- ethics

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Professional expectations

- Client-centered
- Collaborative, timely, integrative, holistic
- Culturally-sensitive
- Trauma-informed Do no harm to client
- Practice not focused on counselor agenda
- Empathetic and empowering versus enabling & rescuing

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SKA!

- **Skills:** What skills are needed to be an Addiction Professional?
- **Knowledge:** What does the Addiction Professional need to know?
- **Attitude:** What attitude must an addiction professional have?

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Ethics

The **principles** that govern the conduct of a **profession**.

- Ethics are **guidelines for individuals, which clearly state the dos and don'ts**.
- Ethics can be understood as guidelines that are imposed on a particular set of individuals.
- An ethical code assists the employee to work transparently and according to the rules.
- Professionalism is summed up in day-to-day actions and behaviors.

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Ethics: What does it mean?

- There are many judgments that others can make about what you as an addictions professionals do or fail to do.
- A single act could be judged by others to be immoral, illegal, professionally inappropriate, or unethical.

At its most basic level, it is about preventing harm to:

your clients/families
yourself
your agency
your profession
your community

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Ethical or Legal

The relationship between ethics and law is complex.

There are situations in which:

- a) what is ethical is illegal
- b) what is unethical is legal

The best models of ethical decision-making integrate questions of ethics and law within the decision-making process.

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Definition of Client

- Helping professionals are bound by all kinds of regulations and standards defining what they should and should not do in their relationships with clients, but many of these regulations and standards fail to define client.

cli·ent | \ 'kli-ənt

- 1:** one that is under the protection of another
- 2:** a person who engages the professional advice or services of another

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Who needs Ethics training?

EVERYBODY

- As for the application of ethical codes to non-clinical staff, a growing number of agencies are developing codes of professional practice that apply to all board members, all staff, consultants and volunteers.
- Non-clinical staff fall under the heading of professional in the field.

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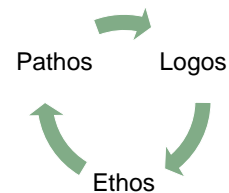
iatrogenic

- A medical term that means physician-caused, or treatment-caused, harm or injury. The term suggests that actions you initiate as an addictions professional with the most noble of intentions could have unintended and harmful effects.

What are examples of unintended harm to clients?

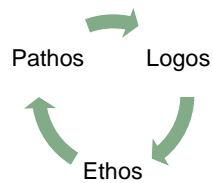
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Ethics do not stand alone



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A story about Ethics



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Four Cornerstones of ethical care

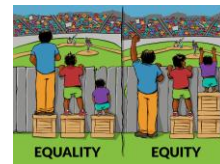
- **Autonomy:** The principle that addresses respect for independence, and self-determination. The essence of this principle is allowing an individual the freedom of choice and action.
- **Justice:** Using resources equitable (not necessarily equally)
- **Beneficence:** Reflects the professional's responsibility to contribute to the welfare of the client. Simply stated, it means to do good, to be proactive, and also to prevent harm when possible (Forester-Miller & Rubenstein, 1992).
- **Nonmaleficence:** The concept of not causing harm to others. Often explained as "above all, do no harm," this principle is considered by some to be the most critical of all the principles.

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Justice

- The principle of justice assumes impartiality and equality.
- It means that a clinician will treat all clients equally and give everyone their due portion of services.
- Can it be honestly said that a clinician does not have "favorite" clients? Are there clients with whom a clinician instinctively wants to limit contact?

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Autonomy

- The principle of autonomy assumes that individuals have the right to decide how to live their own lives, as long as their actions do not interfere with the welfare of others.
- This principle respects the unconditional worth of the individual and promotes the concepts of self-governance, self-determination, and self-rule.

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Beneficence

- Beneficence assumes a responsibility to improve and enhance the welfare of others, or more simply put, to "do good" for others.
- But what does "doing good" really mean? What may be doing good in the eyes of the substance abuse treatment counselor may be seen as doing harm in the eyes of the client?

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Nonmaleficence

- Similar to beneficence, nonmaleficence means "to do no harm."
- This principle often has been highlighted when discussing client exploitation, such as sexual contact or financial exploitation. Both of these examples are active means of doing harm to a client.
- However, doing harm also can be more subtle.

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The integrated approach

- the client's worldview is honored
- the client is seen as the "expert" in their life
- the emphasis is on cooperation with the client rather than confrontation
- the client's strengths are emphasized and amplified
- clients are seen as capable and motivated to move to wellness
- there is a belief in the client's ability to change and find solutions to the issues that brought them into therapy
- the task is to meet the client where they are
- the emphasis is on the client's freedom of choice

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An Integrated Relational Model (Three pieces)

¹ **Person-Centered:** Carl Rogers' person-centered approach to therapy is built on a foundation that all people move toward self-actualization given the conditions of unconditional positive regard. Person-centered therapy rests on the belief that if the necessary and sufficient conditions to bring about change exist, the client will move toward health and well-being (Prochaska & Norcross, 2007).

² **Motivational Interviewing:** MI has been described by Miller and Rollnick (2013) as a style and a way of being with clients rather than a set of techniques or a specific theory. Motivational interviewing is an approach that emphasizes collaboration with clients and stresses empathy as the central relationship building component rather than confronting the client's resistance to change.

³ **Solution-Focused:** Being solution-focused means the client's worldview is honored and clients are assumed to have the strengths and the resources to make the necessary changes to improve the "complaint" that brought them into therapy.

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Integrity

- The connection between what you believe, what you say and what you do
- Integrity forms the core of our professionalism
- Values drift occurs when there is a gap in the three aspects of integrity

Integrity is telling myself the truth. And honesty is telling the truth to other people.
Spencer Johnson



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"It is neither possible or desirable for counselors to be completely neutral. Although it is not the counselor's function to persuade clients to accept a particular value system, counselors need to understand how their own values influence their work with clients, perhaps even unconsciously."

Issues and Ethics in the Helping profession. Corey, Corey and Callanan. Pg78.

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Professional responsibilities

Providing services to clients carries with it a variety of roles, rules and responsibilities designed to protect the client and support their recovery.

1.Scope of Practice:

Addiction professional must possess a certain level of education, experience and supervision of skills and knowledge related to addiction counseling, prevention and intervention.

2.Boundaries:

Boundaries are set at the very beginning and are maintained during and beyond treatment.

It is the professional's responsibility to make sure they are adhered to.

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Boundaries

Finding the balance



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YELLOW LIGHTS: WARNING SIGNS FOR BOUNDARY CROSSINGS

Some behaviors are 'yellow lights' because they may blur the professional boundaries that are in place to protect the client.

1. Time spent with a client beyond what is professionally needed
2. Responding to personal overtures by the client
3. Sharing personal problems with a client
4. Dressing differently when seeing a particular client
5. Providing the client with a home phone number or email address
6. Accepting or giving personal gifts/ money from a client

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Has a boundary been crossed?

Ask yourself

- Would I tell a colleague about this activity or behavior?
- Would another professional find my behavior acceptable?
- Would I tell my spouse/partner or significant other about this behavior?
- Is this behavior in the client's best interests?
- Could my actions with the client be misunderstood?

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Dual or Multiple Relationships

APA 2002

"A multiple relationship is one in which a practitioner is in a professional role with a person in addition to another role with that same individual or with another person who is close to that person."

Issues and Ethics in the Helping Professions

Professional relationships are complex with many levels of interaction. However, a covenant protects the space that must exist between the professional and the client.

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"Two-hatters"

A common term, to wear one hat as a person in recovery and another as addiction professional. It makes you especially vulnerable.

- Addiction counselors may have to abstain from personal sharing when a client is present at a Twelve Step meeting
- This sacrifice to professional standards can be difficult especially in more rural areas as fewer options for meetings
- Attendance at same meetings creates issues of „client's right to confidentiality & counselor's anonymity is at risk (Doyle, 1977) (Washington & Demask, 2008)

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Use of Self

- The addictions field is the source of the very concept of "wounded healer"-the idea that experiencing and overcoming an affliction bestows certain powers to understand and heal others similarly afflicted (White, 2000).
- The profession of addiction counseling has not made the experience of addiction and recovery a required ticket of entrance, but it has called for a greater level of experiential authenticity than that found in other behavioral health fields.
- Providing hope is a crucial dimension of all helping professions, but unique among these professions is the offering yourself as "living proof" of such hope.

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Use of Self: self-disclosure

Does it harm the client, you or your organization?

- In general, self-disclosure should be used sparingly, selectively, and strategically.
- When used, self-disclosures should be brief, appropriate to needs of the client.
- Involve only material over which the counselor has achieved distance and emotional control.
- Confidentiality is not reciprocal. Clients are under no obligation to hold secret what you share with them, and the re-disclosure (and frequent misinterpretation) of this information could result in unanticipated harm to your reputation and the reputation of your agency.

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Ethical Principles of Self-Care

It is unethical not to attend to your self-care as a practitioner, because sufficient self-care prevents harming those we serve.

Standards of self-care guidelines:

- Respect for the dignity and worth of self. A violation lowers your integrity and trust.
- Responsibility of self-care. Ultimately it is your responsibility to take care of yourself- and no situation or person can justify neglecting this duty.
- Self-care and duty to perform. There must be a recognition that the duty to perform as a helper cannot be fulfilled if there is not, at the same time, a duty to self-care.

"Self care is an ethical imperative."

Jeffrey E. Barnett, Psy.D., ABPP

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Self-Protection

- The high mortality rate of alcoholics and addicts means that addiction professionals experience many losses, some of them quite horrific.
- To sustain oneself in the face of such losses requires the ability to use these experiences to deepen one's understanding of the nature of addiction and to recommit oneself to finding new ways to reach those who have not yet achieved stable recovery.
- To fail to master this ability is to open oneself up to emotional injury and the protective detachment or over-involvement that such injury can spawn. (William White)

*One must be careful in carrying light to the community
to not leave one's own home in darkness. -*

Always have a way before us to which we desire to pursue a career in addiction counseling

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Sources of sustenance

- 1) centering rituals (acts of prayer, meditation, self-reflection)
- 2) mirroring rituals (reaching out to kindred spirits for support and inspiration)
- 3) acts of self-care (taking care of oneself and one's intimate circle physically, emotionally and spiritually)
- 4) unpaid acts of service (reaching out to others outside the context of our professional duties in ways that elevate our spirits)

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A Model for Ethical Decision Making

1. Obtain relevant information
2. Identify ethical and moral issues involved
3. Consult guidelines or applicable codes of conduct
4. Identify interests of all parties
 1. Who has something to gain?
5. Investigate your intentions
 1. Would you be tell spouse/kids/mom about your choice?
6. Generate alternatives
7. Choose a course of action
8. Document, document, document

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Five simple questions to ask yourself daily

- Did I practice virtues today?
- Did I do more good than harm?
- Did I treat people with dignity and respect?
- Was I fair and just today?
- Was my community better because I was in it today?

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Resources

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