

Factors in the ethical codes in research



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Second Draft of Training Materials

- Tiffany Stewart

The Ethical Principles are part of the Ethics Code that psychologists follow when practicing. One area of psychology that will be discussed throughout this paper is counseling. The ethical principles will be defined as well as an example of an ethical dilemma that goes against each principle in counseling. There are five ethical principles that need to be followed when practicing professional psychology. These five ethical principles are beneficence and nonmaleficence, fidelity and responsibility, integrity, justice, and respect for people's rights and dignity.

Principle A: Beneficence and Nonmaleficence

Beneficence and nonmaleficence can be described as doing good and avoiding harm (Fisher, 2013). Doing good in counseling can be providing services to clients/patients that will benefit them. These services can be treatments that will help the individual with a disorder or deal with problems that occur in their life. Avoiding harm to clients/patients in counseling can be making sure the individuals are being diagnosed accurately, and providing treatment that will benefit them for years to come.

Principle A Ethical Dilemmas

An ethical dilemma that would go against beneficence and nonmaleficence is a treatment program that will not provide positive side effects. The program might help the client/patient in the beginning but end up with negative side effects. An example of this is a client/patient is diagnosed with depression.

The psychologist thinks it would be a good idea for the individual to talk to their doctor about getting on an antidepressant. The antidepressant is helping the individual to not be as depressed, but her sex drive drops. Now the client is feeling depressed again because, she does not have that particular bond with her spouse anymore.

Another ethical dilemma is a client (Anna) that was seeing a counselor (Dr. Smith) for depression emails her two years later. Anna states that her partner has been going through depression and is having issues with other counselors. Since Anna could trust Dr. Smith, she thinks it would be a good idea for her partner to see this counselor. Dr. Smith is not certain if she should see her partner since Anna used to be a client (Fisher, 2013, p. 358).

Principle B: Fidelity and Responsibility

The second principle fidelity and responsibility is defined as being loyal and making sure psychologists are keeping promises to their clients/patients (Brown & Newman, 1992). This means that psychologists need to build a trust with their clients or their coworkers and keep trust by being professional.

Principle B Ethical Dilemmas

An ethical dilemma that goes against fidelity and responsibility is a psychologist not being confidential with client/patient's information. An example of this is telling coworkers personal information about the client. Unless the client is harming themselves or another, the information being told to the psychologist needs to be confidential between the two. The trust

is also broken between the psychologist and the client when information is told to others that can lead to major consequences like being sued or the psychologist losing their license.

A second ethical dilemma that goes against Principle B would be a drug abuse counselor shares information with her colleagues about her son's drinking problem in college. She asks them for advice on occasion on what she should do about the problem (Fisher, 2013, p. 106).

Principle C: Integrity

The third ethical principle, integrity, helps psychologist to be honest, accurate and truthful in practicing psychology (Bodner, 2012). This can focus on a psychologist's work in not cheating or stealing other people's work and making it theirs. Psychologists also need to be aware of deception can be used in experiments. When deception is included in experiments, the researchers need to make sure that harm is avoided.

Principle C Ethical Dilemmas

An ethical dilemma that goes against integrity in counseling is a psychologist gives out information that is not accurate. This could be changing the title of their job on their business card or on their website even though that is not what they got their degree in. This gives false information to individuals that are looking for a particular counselor.

In addition to the first ethical dilemma under this principle is a psychologist finds out his patient does not have insurance but her daughter does. He

decides to help her out and bill the insurance company under the daughter's policy (Fisher, 2013, p. 193).

Principle D: Justice

The fourth principle, justice, is to treat people fair and equal. This involves using the appropriate treatments that fit the needs of clients/patients (Fisher, 2013). Psychologists also need to remember that they cannot be biased when it comes to treating patients.

Principle D Ethical Dilemmas

An ethical dilemma that goes against justice could be that psychologist decides to provide a shorter treatment for a single mother that does not make a lot of money. The psychologist has never done this before but knows the mother cannot afford the cost of the normal treatment time.

The second ethical dilemma that goes against Principle D is a school psychologist considered certain factors, including age and language to help determine where to place children in educational recommendations (Fisher, 2013, p. 92).

Principle E: Respect for People's Rights and Dignity

The fifth principle, respect for people's rights and dignity, remind psychologists to give respect to the people that they work with as well as knowing that the people that they work with have rights (Lowman, 2005). These rights involve knowing their personal information is confidential and

being informed of information to help them understand what is going on in the experiments they are involved in.

Principle E Ethical Dilemmas

An ethical dilemma that can bring problems with the fifth principle is if a psychologist has problems with a homosexual client/patient. The psychologist decides to work with a client that is homosexual. After a few sessions, the client states that he is starting to have feelings for the psychologists. The clinical psychologist no longer felt he could help the client and decides to send him to another psychologist without explanation (Lowman, 2005).

Another ethical dilemma would be a counselor informing the parents that their child has attention deficient disorder on the first session. The psychologist would base this information by just observing the child instead of appropriately diagnosing the child (Fisher, 2013, p. 268).

These five ethical principles are defined to explain why counselors should follow them when practicing psychology. Two ethical dilemmas were provided for each principle to show what can happen when they are not being followed. It is important that counselors become familiar with the terms to avoid any possible consequences that can occur.

References

Bodner, K. E. (2012). Ethical Principles and Standards That Inform Educational Gatekeeping Practices in Psychology. *Ethics & Behavior*, 22(1), 60-74. doi: 10. 1080/10508422. 2012. 638827

Brown, R. D., Newman, D. L. (1992). Ethical Principles and Evaluations Standards: Do They Match? *Evolution Review* , Vol. 16, No. 6, 650-663

Fisher, C. B. (2013). Decoding the ethics code: A practical guide for psychologists. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Lowman, R. L. (2005). Respect for People's Rights and Dignity. *Journal Of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma* , 11(1/2), 71-77. doi: 10.

1300/J146v11n0106