

# Ethics

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# What is Ethics?

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- **Definition of *ethic***
- *1* : the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation
- *2* : a set of moral principles; a theory or system of moral values; the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group



# What is Ethics?

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- “Ethics is a branch of philosophy that describes values related to human conduct and explores what is right and wrong about certain actions and decisions.” (Geppert & Roberts, 2013)

# What Ethics is *not*

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- Ethics is not feelings
- Ethics is not the same as law
- Ethics is not following cultural norms
- Ethics is not science

# Two Fundamental Problems We Face:

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- On what do we base our ethical standards?
- How do these standards get applied to specific situations?



# Medical Ethics

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- The basis of medical ethics is the Hippocratic School of 200 B.C.

# Four Basic Principles of Healthcare Ethics

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- 1. **Autonomy:** In medicine, autonomy refers to the right of the patient to retain control over his or her body. A health care professional can suggest or advise, but any actions that attempt to persuade or coerce the patient into making a choice are violations of this principle. In the end, the patient must be allowed to make his or her own decisions – whether the medical provider believes these choices are in that patient’s best interests – independently and according to his or her personal values and beliefs.

# Four Principles of Healthcare Ethics

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- 2. Beneficence: This principle states that health care providers must do all they can to benefit the patient in each situation. All procedures and treatments recommended must be with the intention to do the most good for the patient. To ensure beneficence, medical practitioners must develop and maintain a high level of skill and knowledge, make sure that they are trained in the most current and best medical practices, and must take their patients' individual circumstances into account: what is good for one patient will not necessarily benefit another.



# Four Principles of Healthcare Ethics

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- 3. Non-Maleficence: Non-maleficence is probably the best known of the four principles. In short, it means, “to do no harm.” This principle is intended to be the end goal for all of a practitioner’s decisions, and means that medical providers must consider whether other people or society could be harmed by a decision made, even if it is made for the benefit of an individual patient.

# Four Principles of Healthcare Ethics

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- 4. Justice: The principle of justice states that there should be an element of fairness in all medical decisions: fairness in decisions that burden and benefit, as well as equal distribution of scarce resources and new treatments, and for medical practitioners to uphold applicable laws and legislation when making choices.
  - Justice does not mean treating everyone the same; the formal meaning of Justice is to treat equals as equals and unequals as unequals but in proportion to their relative differences. If an individual is to be treated differently, the counselor needs to be able to offer a rationale that explains the necessity and appropriateness of treating the individual differently.  
(Forester-Miller & Davis, 1996)

# ACA Ethical Foundational Principles

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- Autonomy
- Nonmaleficence
- Beneficence
- Justice
- Fidelity
- Veracity



# APA Ethical Foundational Principles

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- A: Beneficence and Nonmaleficence
- B: Fidelity and Responsibility
- C: Integrity
- D: Justice
- E: Respect for People's Rights and Dignity

# NASW Ethical Principles

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- Service
- Social Justice
- Dignity and Worth of the Person
- Importance of Human Relationships
- Integrity
- Competence

# Other Ethics Principles

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- Compassion
- Confidentiality
- Privacy



# Ethics according to the PCB

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- A standard of behavior by which certified professionals must abide.

# PCB Ethical Violations

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- 10 violations listed for 2023 (as 10/23/23)
- 14 violations listed for 2022
- 22 violations listed in 2021
  - 4 for dual relationships violation with two specifically for sexual misconduct
- 24 violations listed for 2020
- 9 violations listed for 2019
- 4 violations in 2017, 2018

# Some Ethical Quandaries For Today...

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- Dual Relationships
- Self Disclosure
- Touch
- Technology
- How to make an ethical decision
- Vignettes



# Dual Relationships

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- What is a dual relationship?
  - Acquaintance/Social/Romantic/Sexual
  - Bartering
  - Business/colleagues
  - Gifts

# Language as a Boundary Issue

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- Jargon
- Cursing
- Unintended Overtures
- Verbal abuse used as modality or treatment intervention

# Self Disclosure

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- What is self disclosure?



# Self Disclosure

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- 4 Type of disclosure
  - Deliberate
  - Unavoidable
  - Accidental
  - Client initiated

- (Zur, 2016)

# Disclosure

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- Deliberate: intentional , verbal or non-verbal, disclosure of personal information.
  - Verbal: articulation
  - Non-verbal: photos, décor, dress, physical action, jewelry
  - Self-revealing: disclosure of information of therapists about themselves
  - Self-involving: therapist reactions to clients and occurrences in session

# Disclosure

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- Unavoidable
  - Gender, age, skin tone, visible tattoos, visible forms of disability, location of office



# Disclosure

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- Accidental: incidental unplanned encounter outside of the office, spontaneous verbal or non-verbal reaction, or other planned or unplanned occurrences that reveal information.

# Disclosure

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- Client initiated: information searches about the therapist on the part of the client.

# Self Disclosure

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- Disclosure about recovery status?



# Problems with Self Disclosure

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- Immediacy (experience of counselor before there's a chance to appropriately process that experience)
- Inappropriate timing
- Inappropriate levels (client has diminished feelings of safety)
- Lost focus (focus on therapist instead of client)
- Duration

# Advantages of Self Disclosure

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- Builds therapeutic alliance for some modalities
- Can reduce power differential in therapy
- Can aid in modeling, reinforcing, and normalizing in therapy

# Ethics of Touch

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- What's your “rule of thumb”?
  - Handshake
  - Hug
  - Pat on the back/knee
  - “Hug and Pray” at the end of group



# Ethics of Touch

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- Touch in therapy is not inherently unethical
- None of the professional organizations code of ethics view touch as unethical.

- (Zur & Nordmarken, 2016)

# Ethics and Technology

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- “The internet has redefined the process of self-disclosure.”

(Lehavot, et al, 2010)

# Ethics and Technology

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- What are some of the potential ethical problems we face today?
  - Email
  - Text
  - Social media
  - Googling



# Ethics and Technology

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- What is your meaning of transparency?
- Evaluate policy about investigating clients on internet/social media

(Brew, et al, 2013)

# Personal vs. Professional Ethics

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- Have your personal ethics ever clashed with your professional ethics?

# Ethical Decision Making

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- Identify the Problem
- Apply a code of ethics
- Determine the nature and dimensions of the dilemma
- Generate potential courses of action
- Consider potential consequences of all options
- Choose a course of action
- Evaluate that course of action
- Implement the course of action



# Ethical Decision Making

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- Let's practice...

# Ethical Decision Making

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- Vignette: a patient leaves treatment but ends up coming to your home group and becoming part of the fabric of the group.

# Ethical Decision Making

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- Vignette: A former patient comes back to your facility and is now a co-worker.



# Ethical Decision Making

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- Vignette: someone you know in a social realm comes into your treatment setting as a patient.

# Ethical Decision Making

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- Vignette: A former patient is the manager of the restaurant you are eating at with friends. When the check arrives, there is an obvious discount applied.

# Ethical Decision Making

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- Vignette: Your client is crying. Do you hand him/her a tissue?



# Ethical Decision Making

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- Vignette: A client with a terminal illness decides not to take life saving medications and comes to you for counseling on end-of-life issues.

# Ethical Decision Making

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- What are some of your ethical dilemmas?

# Ethics

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- Questions, thoughts, reactions?



# Thank you for being here

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