VCU School of Allied Health Professions

Rehabilitation Counseling

Resolving Ethical Issues

AVAVRP Rehabilitation Professionals Appreciation Day 3/22/23

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Today

Learning Objectives: Session participants will . . .

- **Understand the importance of using an ethical decision making model;**
- **Identify at least one example of an ethical decision-making model they can apply to their own professional practice;**
- **Apply elements of a decision-making model to a case study relevant to vocational rehabilitation.**

Have you looked at the new CRCC Code of Ethics yet?

- Available through https://crccertification.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2023-Code-of-Ethics-1.pdf
- It became effective **1/1/2023**
- Some new terms emphasized in Section A: "**multiculturally competent**", "**client-centered**", and "**respecting client's informed decision-making**" (Ahonle et al., 2023)

Multicultural Considerations

- CRCC added a new section (now section D, with other subsequent sections relabeled) on "**Multicultural Considerations**" (Landon et al., 2023)

- SECTION D: MULTICULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS INTRODUCTION

"The Code incorporates an advanced exploration of professional multicultural considerations for CRCs/CCRCs. These standards seek to **reduce bias, minimize discrimination, and prevent harm** . . ."

Applying Ethical Decision-Making Models

- Re-emphasized the importance of **using** (and documenting use of) an **ethical decision-making model** (Froehlich et al., 2023).

- The Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors (CRCs) directs CRCs to ". . . apply appropriate decision-making models and skills to **resolve dilemmas and act ethically**" (Section M—Introduction).

Ethical lapse/violation versus an ethical dilemma

- **Ethical lapse or violation:** Clearly ethically wrong.
- **Examples:** sleeping with clients, stealing from clients, etc.
- **We can all agree . . .** It's unethical, right?
- **Versus** an ethical dilemma . . .

Ethical Dilemma

- On the one hand (from one perspective), one action seems to be most ethically appropriate, but on the other hand (from another perspective), a different approach seems more ethical.

- These dilemmas can often be framed in terms of conflicting ethical principles. For example, according to the principle of *Beneficence* (wanting what is best for people) might conflict with the principle of *Autonomy* (allowing people to decide for themselves what to do).

- No quick right or wrong answers about what is the most ethical approach.

Ethical Principles

- ***Autonomy*:** To respect the rights of clients to be self governing within their social and cultural framework.
- ***Beneficence*:** To do good to others; to promote the well-being of clients.
- ***Fidelity*:** To be faithful; to keep promises and honor the trust placed in rehabilitation counselors.
- ***Justice*:** To be fair in the treatment of all clients; to provide appropriate services to all.
- ***Nonmaleficence*:** To do no harm to others.
- ***Veracity*:** To be honest.

From Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (2022). Code of Professional Ethics for Certified Rehabilitation Counselors. https://crccertification.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2023-Code-of-Ethics-1.pdf

Ethical Challenges/Dilemmas in Practice

What kinds of ethical challenges might rehabilitation practitioners working with people who have disabilities face?

Examples where Autonomy might conflict with Beneficence?

Examples related to the COVID-19 pandemic? Others?

As we go along, please type other examples in the Chat.

Resolving these dilemmas . . .

- How can practitioners ethically resolve such dilemmas or problems?
- What kinds of resources are available to assist us with this process?

Examples of national resources

- **CRC (Certified Rehabilitation Counselor) Code of Ethics:**

https://crccertification.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2023-Code-of-Ethics-1.pdf

- **ACA (American Counseling Association) Code of Ethics:**

https://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/ethics

- **APA (American Psychological Association) Ethical Principles/Code of Conduct:**

https://www.apa.org/ethics/code

- **IARP (International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals):**

https://cdn.ymaws.com/rehabpro.org/resource/resmgr/IARP_Code_of_Ethics.pdf

Ethical Decision-Making Processes

Importance of identifying and using a defensible model

Examples from https://crccertification.com/code-of-ethics-4/decision-making-models/

Corey, G., Corey, M. S., & Callanan, P. (2014). *Issues and ethics in the helping professions* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Learning, Inc.

Cottone, R. R. (2001). A social constructivism model of ethical decision-making in counseling. *Journal of Counseling Development, 79,* 39-45.

Garcia, J., Cartwright, B., Winston, S., & Borchukowska, B. (2003). A transcultural integrative ethical decision-making model in counseling. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 81,* 268-276.

Herlihy, B. & Watson, Z. E. (2007). Social justice and counseling ethics. In C.C. Lee (Ed.), *Counseling for social justice* (2nd ed., pp. 181-199). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Tarvydas, V.M. (1998). Ethical decision-making processes. In R.R. Cottone & V.M. Tarvydas (Eds.), *Ethical and Professional Issues in Counseling* (pp. 144-154). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Corey, Corey, & Callanan (2018) Model

- Identify the problem or dilemma
- Identify the potential issues involved (framing them in terms of ethical principles may help)
- Review the relevant ethical codes
- Know the applicable laws and regulations
- Obtain consultation
- Consider possible and probable causes of action
- Predict the consequences of various decisions
- Decide on what appears to be the best course of action

Let's take an example . . .

- **What is the ethical problem or dilemma in this situation?**
- **What are the potential issues involved? What ethical principles (Autonomy, Beneficence, Nonmaleficence, Justice, Fidelity, or Veracity) might be in conflict in this situation?**
- **How might elements of relevant codes of ethics apply to this situation?**
- **What laws or regulations might apply to this situation?**

Our example continued . . .

- **Who can you consult about this? Why is such consultation important in this situation?**
- **What are the possible causes of action (brainstorming)? What are the most probable options from among the possible?**
- **What are the likely consequences, from a variety of stakeholder perspectives, of the probable options?**
- **Given consideration of all these elements, what appears to be the best course of action?**

More examples – in small groups

Select an ethical dilemma identified in the chat; discuss:

- **What is the ethical dilemma involved here? What seems to be in conflict?**
- **Which ethical code(s) might be relevant?**
- **Who could you pull in to consult with you about this?**
- **Resist the temptation to immediately decide what is the "right answer"!**

Application to Practice

- How do you plan to apply what we've discussed here today?
- What are some concrete things you can do in your workplace to help create a culture that supports ethical decision-making processes when providing services with people who have disabilities?

REFERENCES CITED:

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Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (2022). Contemporary ethical decision making models. https://crccertification.com/code-of-ethics-4/decision-making-models/

Froehlich, R.J., Hicks, S., Hill, J.C., Tichy, N., & Riedy-Rush, C. (2023). Using the revised CRCC Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors as a tool in resolving ethical issues. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*. https://doi.org/10.1177/00343552221148200

Landon, T.J., Levine, A., Sabella, S.A., Hill, J.C., Khan, U., & Kulesza, E.T. (2023). Supervision and Ethics: Updates to the CRCC Code of Professional Ethics. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*. https://doi.org/10.1177/00343552221146163

THANKyou!