

**Crossing the Line: An
Exploration of Ethics in
Canada and the U.S.**

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“In any moment of decision, the best thing you
can do is the right thing, the next best thing is
the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can
do is nothing.”

Theodore Roosevelt



Learning Objectives

- Understand ethical terminology
- Compare and contrast the code of ethics of key vocational associations in Canada and the U.S.
- Identify the principles of ethical behaviour that are the basis of all codes of ethics.
- Utilize an Ethical decision making process to assist in the process of choosing the action that is most consistent with an organizations ethical principles.



Why Ethics?

- ▶ Adherence to an ethical code of practice signifies that one is involved in a “profession” rather than “doing a job”

Semantics – Ethics

- ▶ **Ethics** generally refers to theories about what is accepted behaviour
- ▶ **Philosophical ethics** implies a discussion of theory. What is described as “good” and “right” in one theory might be completely different for that of another (Nietzsche/Kant)

Semantics – Morality

- ▶ Relates to the application of ethical principles than to actual specified actions
- *Philosophers have generally, for purposes of clarity, confirmed the usage of the terms morals and morality to the realm of practice. When they say that someone is morally good, they mean that the actions of the person are praiseworthy. Ethics is a term that refers not directly to practice but rather to theory. (Johnson, 1999 cited in Cottone & Tarvydas, 2007).*

Semantics – Professional Ethics

- ▶ A practitioner acting according to *standards of practice* defined as being acceptable by the profession
- ▶ Many organizations Codes of Ethics and Standards of Practice co-exist within the same document
- ▶ Typically the goal is to promote excellence in their practice.

Ethical Standards

- ▶ The rules
- ▶ Do not rise in a vacuum
- ▶ Established by professional associations (i.e. ABVE, CCM, CDMS, CCRC or VRAC)
- ▶ Much like the guilds of old

Professional Organizations Role

- ▶ Facilitate interactions (among practitioners, educators and researchers)
- ▶ Advocacy
- ▶ Communication. These organizations must communicate to many audiences that the represented professionals are competent, needed, and guided by standards (i.e. ethical codes) that act to minimize or to prevent harm to the individuals they serve

Professionalism

- › Connotes and embodies a willingness of its members to honestly and openly assist a fellow professional in the maintenance of ethical conduct

(Martin & Sinsabaugh, 2006)

Basic Principles of Ethical Behavior

- › **Autonomy** – To honor the right to make individual decisions
- › **Beneficence** – To do good to others
- › **Fidelity** – To be loyal, honest & keep promises
- › **Justice** – To be fair & to give equally to others
- › **Non-maleficence** – To do no harm to others
- › **Veracity** – Truthfulness

VRAC Ethical Principles

- › Respect for the Dignity and Autonomy of Persons
- › Responsible Caring for the Best Interests of Persons
- › Integrity in Professional Relationships
- › Responsibility to Society

Key components of CRCC Ethics

- ▶ The Counseling Relationship
- ▶ Confidentiality, Privileged Communication, and Privacy
- ▶ Advocacy and Accessibility
- ▶ Professional Responsibility
- ▶ Relationships with Other Professionals
- ▶ Forensic and Indirect Services
- ▶ Evaluation, Assessment, and Interpretation
- ▶ Teaching, Supervision, and Training
- ▶ Research and Publication
- ▶ Technology and Distance Counseling
- ▶ Business Practices
- ▶ Resolving Ethical Issues

CDMS Ethics

- ▶ Rules of professional conduct (RPCs) are divided into three sections:
 - Section I: Relationship with all parties
 - Section II: Provision of Services to Individual Clients
 - Section III: Provision of Services to Organizational Clients
- CDMS code is based upon five principles of ethical behavior

VRA Canada Code

- ▶ Four ethical principles
- ▶ Modeled after Code of Ethics for Canadian psychologists
- ▶ Some parallel to the principles in the CRCC
Autonomy, Beneficence, Non-maleficence, Justice and Fidelity

ABVE take on ethics

- ▶ The primary obligation of a Vocational Expert is to present a fair and reasonable vocational assessment of the individual they have evaluated.
- ▶ Honesty in relationships is the hallmark of an ethical practitioner (Martin & Sinsabaugh, 2006)
- ▶ Relationships with referral source, evaluatee, other professionals

ABVE Code

- ▶ Objective is to promote the public welfare & serve as a guide by specifying and enforcing ethical behavior expected of Vocational Experts
- ▶ Two types of standards Canons and Rules of Professional Conduct

Canons

- ▶ General standards
- ▶ Aspirational and inspirational in nature
- ▶ Reflecting the fundamental spirit of respect which professionals share
- ▶ Maxims that serve as models of exemplary professional conduct
- ▶ Express general concepts and principles from which more specific rules are derived

Rules of Professional Conduct

- ▶ Are more exacting standards governing the behavior of certified members of ABVE
- ▶ A rule violation is interpreted as a violation of the applicable Canon, and the general principle embodied thereof

#1 Behave In A Legal, Ethical & Moral Manner

- ▶ Vocational Experts shall behave in a legal, ethical and moral manner in the conduct of their profession, maintaining the integrity of the Code and avoiding any behaviour that would dishonour the profession.

#2 Respect For Referral Sources, Parties, Evaluatees

- ▶ Vocational Experts shall respect the integrity of people with whom they work; namely, individuals or organizations designated as Referral Sources. The primary obligation of a Vocational Expert is to provide a fair and honest assessment of an individual's vocational capacity.

3 Professional Relationships

- ▶ Vocational Experts will act with honesty and integrity in their relationships with colleagues, other organizations, agencies, institutions, Referral Sources, other professions and the individual being evaluated

4 Public Statements/Fees

- ▶ Vocational Experts shall adhere to fair and reasonable standards in establishing fees and promoting their services.

5 Confidentiality

- ▶ Vocational Experts shall maintain the confidentiality of information obtained from Referral Sources, understanding that much of the information received may be discoverable through the normal legal process. The confidentiality issue should be discussed with the individual being evaluated upon initial meeting.

6 Assessment

- ▶ Vocational Experts shall ensure that the selection, administration and interpretation of assessment measures is done in accordance with the standardization attributed to each test instrument.

7 Research Activities

- ▶ Vocational Experts will attempt to assist in efforts to expand the knowledge and processes in determining an individual's vocational capacity.

8 Competence

- ▶ Vocational Experts shall establish and maintain their professional competencies so that the evaluatees receive the benefit of the highest quality of services that the Vocational Expert is capable of offering.

Comparison – General

	Focus	Influences	Date	Counseling Relationship
ABVE	Forensics	Legal system Medical system	Aug 2007	No
CRCC	Rehabilitation Counseling	Psychology ADA	Jan 2010	Yes
CDMS	Disability Management	Psychology ADA	May 2009	Yes
VRAC	Vocational Rehabilitation	Psychology CRCC	Dec 2009	Yes

Comparison – Principles

	Autonomy	Beneficence	Fidelity	Justice	Non-maleficence	Veracity
ABVE			✓	✓	?	✓
CRCC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CDMS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
VRAC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Ethical Dilemmas

- ▶ Most ethical dilemmas are first recognized when workers experience “serious uncertainty”

(Lougheed, 2003)

Ethical Decision Making Steps

1. Identify individuals/groups affected
2. Identify the ethically troubling issues, including the interests of persons who will be affected by the decisions, and the circumstances in which the dilemmas arose
3. Consider how your personal biases, stresses, or self interest may influence the development of choices of action
4. Develop alternative courses of action (you do not have to do this alone)
5. Analyze the likely risks and benefits of each course of action on the persons likely to be affected
6. Choose a course of action, individually or collectively as deemed appropriate to the situation, after conscientious application of existing principles, values and standards
7. Act, with an individual or collective commitment, to assume responsibility for the consequences of the action
8. Establish a plan to evaluate the results of the course of action
9. Evaluate the organizational systems in which the issue arose in order to identify and remedy the circumstances, which may facilitate and reward unethical practices

An Ethical Dilemma is...

- ▶ A circumstance that stymies or confuses the counselor because:
 - There are competing or conflicting ethical standards that apply
 - There is a conflict between what is ethical and what is moral
 - The situation is such that complexities make application of ethical standards unclear
 - Some other circumstance prevents a clear application of standards (Cottone & Tarvydas, 2007)

Break Out Exercise

- ▶ Working in small groups attendees will discuss a hypothetical situation using a particular organization's code of ethics (ABVE, CDMS, CRCC, VRAC) and a prescribed ethical decision making model

References

- ▶ American Board of Vocational Experts (2007) Code of Ethics, Retrieved March 13, 2013 from http://www.abve.net/Assets/ABVE_Code_of_Ethics_2007_cover.pdf
- ▶ Martin, E.D., & Sinsabaugh, L. (2006). Editorial Ethics *Journal of Forensic Vocational Analysis*, Vol. 9, pp. 5-6
- ▶ Cottone, R. R., & Tarvydas, V.M. (2007). *Counselling Ethics and Decision Making*. (3rd Edition) New Jersey: Pearson.
- ▶ Lougheed, V., (2003). *Keeping Ethical Practices Alive and Well in Rehabilitation Organizations. Guidelines for using the Canadian Code of Ethics for Rehabilitation Professionals*. Kingston: VRAC.

Hyperlinks

- ▶ ABVE Code of Ethics
<http://www.abve.net/ethics.htm>
- ▶ CCRC Code of Ethics
<http://www.crcrcertification.com/filebin/pdf/CRCCodeOfEthics.pdf>
- ▶ CDMS Code of Ethics
<http://www.cdmsbeta.org/docs/Code-of-Professional-Conduct-Revised-10152010.pdf>
- ▶ VRAC Code of Ethics
<http://vraCanada.com/ethics.php>

Values without action is merely a dream

Action without values just passes the time

Values with action can change the world
