

PERSONAL VALUES AND THE COUNSELING RELATIONSHIP

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OBJECTIVES

- ◉ Verbalize personal values and beliefs and how they affect the counseling relationship
- ◉ Define the importance of self-awareness in making the decision to self-disclose with clients
- ◉ Describe counseling situations where personal biases may be triggered.

ETHICS, BELIEFS AND VALUES

Self awareness helps
to keep us ethical

THE DINNER PARTY

Who will you invite
to dinner?

- Mom of two with drug addiction
- Homeless man with alcohol dependence
- Person with schizophrenia, not on meds
- Man charged with Felony Domestic Abuse
- Famous Politician
- Person who makes racial slurs in public on camera

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

Moral/Values Dilemma

You have been seeing a client for a couple of months who, you are aware, makes her money as a prostitute and also deals drugs. You feel you have developed a therapeutic connection with this client. One day, after the session, as she is handing you payment for the session she asks, "How does it feel taking the devil's money? You know. Drug and "John" money."

- ◉ How would you respond to the client?
- ◉ Would you continue to take her payment?
- ◉ Identify personal values that may make this situation difficult for **you**.

RELIGIOUS CLIENT

A deeply religious woman has come to you for therapy. On her first visit with you she discusses her religious beliefs and asks if it would be OK if you begin each session with a prayer.

- ◉ How do you respond to this client?
- ◉ Would it make a difference as to which religion the client is affiliated?
- ◉ Identify any personal values or beliefs that you hold that would influence your decision.

OTHER TOUGH TOPICS

- ◉ Abortion - Pro choice or pro life
- ◉ Right to die - including assisted suicide
- ◉ Gay marriage - legalization
- ◉ Divorce - is it always a poor decision?
- ◉ Capital punishment - for or against

- ◉ Do you have values or beliefs that may be difficult to keep out of client sessions?

POPE AND VASQUEZ PAGE 152-3

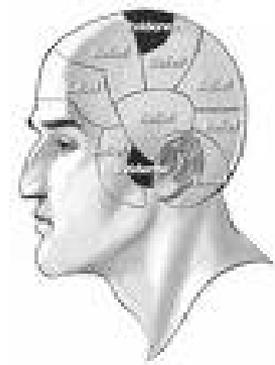
“Awareness of the ethics codes is crucial to competence in the area of ethics, but the formal standards are not a substitute for an active, deliberative, and creative approach to fulfilling our ethical responsibilities...Perhaps the most difficult deliberations involve conflicts between the law and the therapist’s deepest values.”

ETHICS AND VALUES

Principle ethics:

“What should I do?”

Virtue ethics: “Who should I be?”



CORE BELIEFS

- ◉ Effect how we view the world
- ◉ Personal/professional philosophies and choices
- ◉ Personal biases and values
- ◉ Chosen freely
- ◉ Act on beliefs: pattern of consistency and repetition
- ◉ **View of how people change**

OUR BEHAVIORS

- ◉ Determined by our beliefs
- ◉ A result of our self perception
 - Clients may be conflicted in this area
- ◉ Outward indication of values

- ◉ Give an example of a behavior you could observe and have an **INDICATION** of what one might believe or value.

OBTAINING VALUES

- ◉ Parents/family
- ◉ Peers/friends
- ◉ Teachers/schools/education
- ◉ Politicians/government
- ◉ Church/religious beliefs
- ◉ Media
- ◉ Literature
- ◉ Personal experience

VALUES AND BELIEFS OF CULTURE NOT READILY APPARENT

- ◉ Family/child rearing practices
- ◉ Social customs/community/work
- ◉ Religion/spirituality/life/death
- ◉ Eye contact/body language/physical contact
- ◉ Food/rituals
- ◉ Healthcare
- ◉ **Mental health**



MOST OF CULTURE IS BELOW THE WATERLINE

- What is below the surface ebbs and flows
- We have to dive below the surface to find deepest values and beliefs
- What is below your waterline?

MOST OF CULTURE IS BELOW THE SURFACE

“Actually, the most important part of culture...is that which is **hidden and internal...**the most significant part, however, is **unconscious or below the...level of awareness** and includes **values and thought patterns.**”

Michael Paige (1993), Cross Cultural Health Care Program

VALUES AND BELIEFS INFLUENCE:

Where and if outside help is sought

People differ:

- How they experience pain
- How they label symptoms
- How they communicate the symptoms
- Beliefs about cause of symptoms
- Attitudes/expectations toward therapy/treatment

WHEN PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL VALUES DANCE:

Values determine:

- ◉ Why we chose our profession
- ◉ Choice of therapeutic modalities
 - View of how people change
- ◉ Populations with whom we choose to work
 - Belief or personal experience?
- ◉ Interactions with clients and other professionals
 - Attitudes and actions

DEVELOPING AWARENESS OF CULTURAL VALUES

- ◉ Be sensitive to, acknowledge and confront differences directly
- ◉ Ask questions
- ◉ Talk with colleagues of different race, sex, age, sexual orientation, religion, regional origins, etc.
- ◉ **Examine your own biases...and fears**
 - We are NEVER a blank slate

ASSUMPTIONS BY THERAPIST

Aaron is a 27 year old, African American who is beginning his first job after receiving his masters degree in social work. He has experience through his internship during his graduate work. He is going to be conducting psychosocial assessments and some individual sessions. His clients are randomly assigned to him. He is told his first client is a Caucasian man who is self referred due to depression. The intake coordinator goes on to tell him that he has a shaved head and a tattoo of a swastika on the back of his neck. Prior to seeing the client for the first time, Aaron rearranges his office to make sure he has an escape route and reviews the agency safety plan. He reviews the client's history which includes being raised by a father who was a member of an Aryan Nations white supremacist group. On first meeting the client, Aaron feels frightened and apprehensive. He does not address any of these issues with the client.

- ◉ What assumptions has Aaron made about this client?
- ◉ What personal beliefs may be challenged for Aaron in this situation?
- ◉ What steps could he have taken to ensure the best care for the client?

THE CLIENT'S VIEW

The client, Marc, never felt he “fit in” with his father’s beliefs and values. When Marc met his current girlfriend she had a positive influence on him in exploring his own values. He attempts to be unbiased and open in his approach to all people.

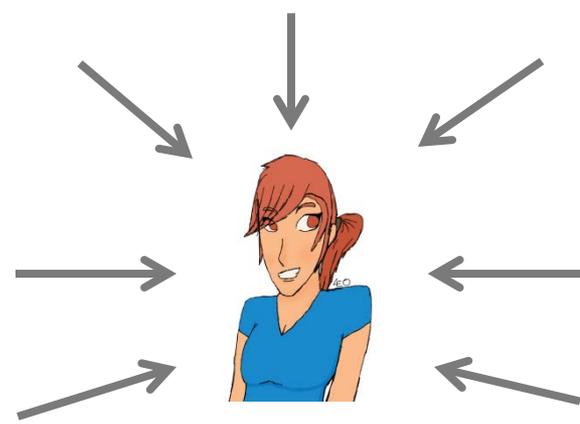
Marc detects Aaron’s discomfort and during the third session he confronts Aaron about his apparent fear and lack of discussing with Marc what his actual values might be. He continues telling Aaron that he does not believe he can help him due to his inability to explore these issues and the assumptions that Aaron has made about Marc.

Has there been any ethical violations on Aaron’s part?
Has he possibly harmed the client? How?

STEPS FOR AARON:

- ◉ Seek supervision prior to seeing client
- ◉ Discuss his own fears and biases in supervision
- ◉ Discuss client's background and values with client from the beginning
- ◉ Inquire about client's comfort level in working with Aaron

THE BIAS SHELF



- ✓ Focus on client
- ✓ Explore conflict - behaviors, values and beliefs
- ✓ Professional addresses their own personal values outside the session
- ✓ Values and beliefs can create biases

You know they are there but are they in the box on the shelf?

PAYING ATTENTION TO NON-VERBALS

- ◉ Eye contact
- ◉ Hand shaking
- ◉ Not sharing information
- ◉ Not giving direct answers
- ◉ Gestures such as crossing legs, pointing
- ◉ Touching the top of someone's head

UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL VALUES AND DIFFERENCES IN THE COUNSELING ENVIRONMENT

- ❑ Child rearing practices
- ❑ Perception of time and promptness
- ❑ View of racial differences
- ❑ Variations in spiritual beliefs
- ❑ Gender roles
- ❑ Value of education
- ❑ Perception of family unit - who is included
- ❑ View of modesty
- ❑ View of authority
- ❑ View of respect and how children interact with parents

SELF DISCLOSURE IN THE CULTURE OF THERAPY

- What is appropriate self-disclosure?
- Inappropriate self-disclosure?
 - “I know the basics of your religion.”
- What do you have in your office?
 - E.g. Pictures, cultural wall hangings, signs



- Self-disclose without self-disclosing
- Are there cultural implications present?
 - E.g. “chatting” prior to doing business



WHAT IS APPROPRIATE?

- ⦿ “Are you in recovery?”
- ⦿ “Do you have kids?”
- ⦿ “Are you married?”
- ⦿ “Where are you going?”

(when you are going to be out of office)

What do you say?

How much is too much?

- ⦿ Who’s agenda is in the self disclosure?
- ⦿ Who’s need is being met?
- ⦿ Do your biases come out in self disclosure?



Is it necessary to “make the client comfortable” to have them “relate” to you?

PERSONAL BELIEFS AND VALUES



**INFLUENCE OUR PROFESSIONAL
DECISIONS**



**WHICH AFFECTS THE CLIENT
RELATIONSHIP**

INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL VALUES:

KNOWING OURSELVES

- ◉ Are you aware of how your personal values influence the professional choices you currently make?
- ◉ Consider how your values influence your decisions in case examples
- ◉ Challenge yourself for self exploration

CHALLENGING TOPICS, VALUES & CLIENT CARE

- ✱ List the 3 most difficult topics for you to be objective about with a client
- ✱ What personal values or beliefs are challenged with each topic
- ✱ List at least one type of client that you find challenging.
- ✱ Think of one situation when you had one of these clients or topics. How did you handle it?
- ✱ What personal value or belief was challenged as part of your struggle?
- ✱ Were you able to continue to work with this client?
- ✱ Did you seek supervision or talk to a colleague?
- ✱ Did you seek personal therapy?

WHEN REALITIES COLLIDE

You are meeting a client for the first time for a mental health and substance use evaluation. He has been referred by child protective services. He is reportedly actively abusing alcohol and possibly other drugs. He has also been accused of molesting his pre-teen daughter while he was drunk. He is a farmer and presents dressed in denim overalls, plaid shirt and work boots. You invite him to take a seat. He sits, crosses his arms defensively across his chest and states without preamble, "She's my daughter and I'll screw her if I want to."

QUESTIONS:

1. What is your first reaction? Would you possibly give the client powerful, non-verbal messages?
2. Would you be able to work with this client? Or would your judgment/objectivity be impaired to the point that you could not?
3. Do your values have to be congruent with that of the client to work with him effectively?
4. Do you have someone with whom you can consult?

COULD I WORK WITH THIS PERSON?

Take a minute to answer the
Questionnaire

(Source: Corey, Corey and Callahan p83-84)

1. Would anyone like to share some of the clients that challenged you personally?
2. What value or belief is challenged?

VALUES AND HONESTY

- ⦿ How honest should we be?
- ⦿ Sometimes we have to interfere when clients are making poor, harmful or destructive decisions

Then:

- ⦿ “We need to be honest and open about our views, collaborate with the client in setting goals that fit his or her needs then step aside and allow the person to exercise autonomy and face consequences.” (Corey, Corey and Callahan, p79)
- ⦿ For example: working in addictions, domestic violence, high risk behaviors, marriage counseling, etc.

IMPOSING VS. EXPOSING VALUES

- Imposing values
 - ⊙ Forcing counselor values on client

- Exposing values
 - ⊙ Helping client to recognize his/her own values and discuss

- Encouraging different perspectives
 - ⊙ Offering a bouquet of flowers

- Knowing when to discuss values conflict between therapist and client
 - ⊙ Use of professional judgment

IMPOSING VALUES

Victor is a counselor in a drug court program. He is active in the community in charitable events. He keeps fliers about fund raisers on his desk in his office. He encourages clients to give to charities as part of their "growth process". He requires that clients participate in fund raising rallies as part of the program and community service work. He had a Christmas party for a group session during the holidays and asked clients to bring canned goods for food baskets. Despite objections from co-workers, Victor does not see any ethical or legal problems with what he is doing.

- ◉ Ethical Issues?
- ◉ Legal Issues?
- ◉ "...counselors directly attempting to influence a client to adopt their counselors' values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors... actively or passively." (Haynes, Haynes and Callahan, page 80)

EXPOSING VALUES

Marvin is a marriage and family therapist working with a couple from very different cultural backgrounds. The husband is Native American who was raised on a Reservation in the Southwest. The wife is African American raised in an upper income home in the South. They met while in college. They have two children and have come to therapy due to disagreements concerning child rearing practices.

Marvin was raised in a home where there was strict discipline with children while expression of love and independence were displayed. Marvin has adopted this with his children also and believes it is a successful method of raising children.

The husband believes that children should be “seen and not heard”, respect their elders and do as they are told. The wife has a very liberal view of parenting and believes in free expression of children with very little discipline. Marvin does not agree with either approach.

During sessions, Marvin encourages each client to discuss their parenting values and explores with them possible compromises and options that would be acceptable to both parents without revealing his own views of parenting.

WHAT'S OUR JOB ??

- ✘ To help clients adopt “better” values?
- ✘ To know what is “best” for the client?
- ✘ To be “a robot” (rigid) so we won’t “contaminate” the therapy process?
- ✘ To indoctrinate clients?
- ✘ To teach clients proper behavior?
- ✘ To prescribe happiness?
- ✘ To be a guru and share our infinite wisdom?
- ✘ To preach, instruct, pontificate, persuade?
- ✘ To be Dr. Laura or Dr. Phil?
- ✘ To just reflect and clarify without any direction?

NEUTRALITY IN COUNSELING

Is this truly possible?

Questions:

- Express our beliefs in the work we have chosen? (Value Laden)

Domestic violence, drug use, child abuse, marriage....

- Where do you place your values in session?

non-verbal cues, body language

FURTHER QUESTIONS...

- Do therapists direct what clients choose to explore?
- If the client brings up an issue that is not in line with your beliefs, what do you do?
- Client behaviors that challenge your belief of right and wrong, how do you address it without being judgmental or shaming?
- Know issues that bring up your “stuff” . Can you keep them out of the session?

WHAT IS NOT DISCUSSED CAN BE VALUE LADEN AND LEAD TO ETHICAL MISTAKES

- ◉ Financial dealings with clients?
- ◉ Insurance ins and outs?
- ◉ Religious issues?
- ◉ Racial issues?
- ◉ GLBT populations?
- ◉ Socioeconomic class?
- ◉ Power?
- ◉ Feminism?
- ◉ Sexual feelings?

QUESTIONS

- ◉ What values or beliefs do you hold that may influence your decision of whether to accept the gift?
- ◉ What discussion do you have with the client concerning the gift?
- ◉ Is it ever appropriate to accept a gift?
- ◉ How do you refuse?
- ◉ How do you prevent the situation?

PERSONAL IMAGE

There is a therapist in the agency where you work who is single and you know often goes out dancing with friends. You suspect she may be abusing alcohol on some occasions. You are aware that she is not in recovery from alcoholism. She is open about the parties she attends on weekends. She has also alluded to “running into” some clients at places she frequents.

What are your ethical obligations?

HELPING CLIENTS?

Sandra is a counselor who works in a moderately size community with a variety of resources. She is active in her church and feels that part of her Christian work is to “spread the word”. Sandra works in a private practice with several other therapists. She often has discussions with clients about developing a healthy support system. When clients begin to talk about possibly attending a church, Sandra invites them to her church. She believes this is a good way to help clients and share her faith at the same time.

- ⦿ What are the ethical issues in this situation?
- ⦿ Is there a problem with clients attending her church?
- ⦿ Is there other ways that Sandra could accomplish her personal goals and remain ethical?
- ⦿ **Consider: Imposition of values, conflict of interest, undue influence, cultural insensitivity**

DO YOU HAVE

A Plan

To keep in touch
with you?



VALUES ENHANCEMENT PLAN (VEP)

A. Qualified Supervision

- a) Do your research
- b) You are responsible even if you follow poor advise
- c) Be proactive to develop values awareness

B. Competent Supervision

- a) Different views, culturally diverse perspectives
- b) Check credentials, training and experience
- c) Ethical, professional

C. External professional development

- a) Learn ways to integrate values and counseling practice
- b) Resources, workshops, reading from qualified resources

D. Internal professional development

- a) Self-reflection, self- analysis
- b) Holistic approach
- c) Activities that are enjoyable, stimulating reflectively
- d) Creative expression

WHAT TO CONSIDER:

⊙ Ethical issues present:

- Client welfare,
- Do no harm,
- Confidentiality,
- Professional responsibility

⊙ Seek supervision with supervisor or peer

⊙ Consider personal values

⊙ Consider ethical responsibilities

LEARNING AS PART OF CLIENT CARE

Being open to Learning from clients:



Pick a partner -

➤ Discuss questions:

Describe your most memorable client?

What made this client memorable?

What did you learn about yourself from this client?

What personal values influenced your approach with this client?



LUNATICSYNONYMOUS

12 STEPS

1. We admitted that we enjoyed our craziness and our lives were a lot of fun.
2. Came to believe that our free associations contributed to others temporary insanity.
3. Became willing to share our apparent confusion with anyone who was willing to stand still long enough to listen.
4. Took a risk to let our imaginations and our creativity run wild.
5. Admitted to our friends and other human beings that we recognize the nature of our uniqueness.
6. Were entirely ready to experience this uniqueness whenever the opportunity arose.
7. Humbly asked others to accept us as we are in our strangeness.
8. Made a list of all person's whose minds we wished to play with and became willing to share our imaginations with them all.
9. Had great fun with others, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take risks in our search for creativity.
11. Sought through existential exercise to improve our abilities to use free associations to give others the opportunity to take themselves less seriously.
12. Having had the experience of weirdness as a result these steps, we tried to encourage other lunatics to practice this fun whenever possible.

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