

## Ethics and Boundaries

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### What are the defining characteristics of a profession?

- A body of knowledge
- A special group of skills
- Addresses a special problem
- Testing for admission
- Lifelong learning
- Reflection on practice
- A code of ethics
- Accountability
- Specific roles, duties, and expectations

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### Why do professionals need a formal statement of ethics?

- Everyone knows the expectations
- Corrective influence on personal bias/problems
- Common understanding and obligation among members of the profession
- Responsibility and accountability
- Protect the client and the professional by setting boundaries
- Gives the profession an "anchor"

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**What are the unique characteristics of addiction counseling?**

- Directive
- Directly exposed to the effects of a debilitating disease
- Must take a holistic approach with the clients
- Have to address denial

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**What are the unique characteristics of our clients?**

- Usually unwilling to accept treatment and change
- Vulnerability (but appear "tough")
- Used to manipulating and being manipulated
- Denial is always present
- Dual diagnosis issues
- Family issues
- Projection/Projective Identification
- Poor/No boundaries

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**What makes clarity about ethics challenging?**

- The vulnerability of the clients
- If we focus only on one methodology
- If we fall into the disease patterns/thinking
- If we reenact their F.O.O. dynamics
- If we identify with their projections
- If we fail to recognize their poor boundaries

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What is the difference between

**RIGHT**

**WRONG**

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**Values Clarification**

A value is something that a person thinks is worth

**Doing**

**Having**

**Being**

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**Values Clarification**

Terminal values

These are ideas/concepts about ultimate goals or end states that are worth doing, having or being

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Values Clarification

Instrumental Values

These are ideas/concepts about desirable modes of behavior that are instrumental in the attainment of Terminal Values

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Values clarification

How do we know something is a value?

We must:

Be able to choose from alternatives

Be happy with our choice and affirm it publicly

Act on our choice consistently

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Values Clarification

Terminal values

Instrumental Values

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### Approaches to Ethics

#### Deontological

Ethical behavior should rest on established rules and rights. Permanently defined principles do not change merely as a result in the change of circumstances. There is a right way to act and that applies to all similar situations.

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### Approaches to Ethics

#### Consequential/Utilitarian

This approach is concerned with the greatest possible balance of good over evil. Acting ethically from a Consequential Approach means that the person would, in each situation, ask what effect their behavior/decision would have in terms of maximizing good.

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### Approaches to Ethics

#### Situational

Ethical actions are practiced by applying a principle to each situation that arises. The interplay between the situation and the principle determines the ethical decision and action

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**Approaches to Ethics**

Deontological

Consequential/Utilitarian

Situational

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**Ethical Decision-Making**

Thinking ethically is about changing our mindset.  
We work with clients who are in denial and thinking only of the present

Following ethical principles helps us to look beyond the present to the results of behaviors/decisions

Also, following ethical principles provide a check against denial

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**Ethical Decision-Making**

- Get the facts
  - Get all the information you can
  - Get as much input from others as possible
- Which ethical standards apply?
  - Which principle/standard is the priority?
  - What other principles/standards apply?

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**Ethical Decision-Making**

- Decide what is important
  - Having consistency of rules
  - Maximizing good for the community
  - Maximizing good for the individual
  - Assuring that a principle guides decisions
  
- Are your issues or feelings influencing the decision?  
Is there a boundary issue?

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**Ethical Decision-Making**

- Evaluate possible outcomes
  - Again, get input from others
  - Evaluate possible ramifications of the decision (e.g. legal, personal, professional)
  - Every decision/action carries the potential for benefit or harm
  
- Make your decision

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**NAADAC Code of ethics**

Introduction

We have the power to do great good or great harm

The well-being of each is intimately bound to the well-being of all

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**NAADAC Code of Ethics**

The Counseling Relationship

- *Standard 1: Client Welfare*
- *Standard 2: Client Self-Determination\**
- *Standard 3: Dual Relationships*
- *Standard 4: Group Standards*
- *Standard 5: Preventing Harm*

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**Telemental Health**

- Applies to licensed clinicians (Composite Board)
- In the future for Addiction Counselors as well
- Some general items:
  - Client information and ROI's
  - Be sure to include all forms of communication that you will use in your ROI
  - Be sure to describe types of electronic communication that may take place and that it maintains the same level of confidentiality
  - Admission and D/C packets and Client Handbook
  - You have to be licensed in the State where the client is  
TAKE A TRAINING!!!!

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**NAADAC Code of Ethics**

Evaluation, Assessment and Interpretation of Client Data

- *Standard 1: Scope of Competency*
- *Standard 2: Informed Consent*
- *Standard 3: Screening*
- *Standard 4: Basis for Assessment*
- *Standard 5: Release of Assessment Results*
- *Standard 6: Release of Data to Qualified Professionals*

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**NAADAC Code of Ethics**

Evaluation, Assessment and Interpretation of Client Data

- *Standard 7: Diagnosis of Mental Health Disorders*
- *Standard 8: Unsupervised Assessments*
- *Standard 9: Assessment Security*
- *Standard 10: Outdated Assessment Results*
- *Standard 11: Cultural Sensitivity Diagnosis*
- *Standard 12: Social Prejudice*

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**NAADAC Code of Ethics**

Confidentiality/Privileged Communication and Privacy

- *Confidentiality*
- *Informed Consent*
- *Limits of Confidentiality*

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**NAADAC Code of Ethics**

Professional Responsibility

- *Standard 1: Counselor Attributes*
- *Standard 2: Legal and Ethical Standards*
- *Standard 3: Records and Data*
- *Standard 4: Interprofessional Relationships*

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**NAADAC Code of Ethics**

Working in a Culturally Diverse World

- *Ethnicity and Culture*
- *Disabilities*
- *Discrimination*
- *Accommodation*

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**NAADAC Code of Ethics**

Workplace Standards

- *Ongoing Education*
- *Competencies*
- *Impairment*

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**NAADAC Code of Ethics**

Supervision and Consultation

- *Power Differential*
- *Responsibilities to Supervisees*
- *Conduct and Relationships*
- *Identifying Issues*

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**NAADAC Code of Ethics**

Resolving Ethical Issues

- *Ethics and Law*
- *Knowledge of Ethical Violations*
- *Informal Resolutions*
- *Cooperation with Investigations*

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**NAADAC Code of Ethics**

Communication and Published Works

- *Copyright Laws*
- *Knowledge and Opinion*
- *Contributions and Cooperation*
- *Proprietary Rights*

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**NAADAC Code of Ethics**

Policy and Political Involvement

- *Standard 1: Societal Obligations*
- *Standard 2: Public Participation*
- *Standard 3: Social and Political Action*

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### Developing Appropriate Boundaries

What are boundaries?

A boundary is the emotional or physical space *you allow* between yourself and another person

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### What are Professional Boundaries?

Professional boundaries are not only the space between you and the client, but also what defines and differentiates our roles as counselor and client

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### Professional Boundaries

- Define who we are as a counselor
- Protect the client and ourselves
- Help us take care of ourselves

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**Define Who We are as a Counselor**

Why are you in this field?

Unresolved issues will lead to poor boundaries  
and poor choices

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**Define Who We are as a Counselor**

Effective practice depends upon a clear identity  
as a counselor and

A clear delineation of our professional roles

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**Protect the Client and Ourselves**

The counselor is always in a position to  
subordinate the client's interests to his/her own  
interests

Why?

There is ALWAYS a power differential between  
the client and the counselor

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**Protect the Client and Ourselves**

The counselor's influence and the client's vulnerability will ALWAYS be present!

Boundary confusion and boundary violations will reinforce destructive beliefs and behavior patterns and negatively impact the therapeutic relationship

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**Taking Care of Ourselves**

Boundaries help us to:

- Clarify our roles
- Endure the stress
- Let go
- Increase positive outcomes

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**Myths About Boundaries**

- I will hurt the client
- It will lead to conflict
- I will be accused of a power trip
- I will get rejected
- It will be seen as a threat
- I have to get angry to set a boundary
- The client may retaliate

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### Signs of Weak Boundaries

Thinking:

- No one else can help this client
- The program will fall apart without me
- I really like/hate this client
- This client has got to get recovery
- My way is the only way
- What I want is what the client needs
- Disclosing personal needs or problems

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### More Signs of Weak Boundaries

- Practicing outside your competence
- Feeling like you must protect a client
  - Bending the rules for a client
  - Overinvolvement with clients
- Overwork and not caring for self
  - Burnout
- Taking a different role with the client
  - Believing the flattery

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### Even More Signs of Weak Boundaries

- Touching the client
- Feeling overwhelmed by client issues
- Arguing with other staff over clients
  - Staff acting out family roles
  - Acting out client issues
- Acting out your issues with client
  - Becoming their drug
  - Loss of perspective

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### Strengthening Professional Boundaries

- Any practice or decision concerning a professional boundary can be assessed based on ethical principles
  - Will the boundary benefit the client?
  - Will the boundary foster client autonomy?
  - Will the boundary promote trust and the attainment of therapeutic goals?

It is ALWAYS the counselors responsibility to maintain appropriate boundaries!

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### Strengthening Professional Boundaries

Do Not:

- Be their drug
- Take responsibility for their issues
- Work harder than they do
- Act out their anxiety
- Break the rules/structure for them
- Practice outside the scope of your competency

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### Strengthening Professional Boundaries

Do:

- Let the program structure work
- Separate the urgent vs. the necessary
- Be clear about your own issues
- Be realistic about outcomes
- Be very aware of your physical space
- Work closely with the treatment team

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**Strengthening Professional Boundaries**

Learn your triggers

What type of client triggers you, both positively and negatively

Increase your awareness of your feelings towards the client

Remember:

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**Strengthening Professional Boundaries**

A good counselor knows what's going on with the client, a great counselor knows what's going on inside themselves!

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**Resources**

- NAADAC, *Ethical Standards of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors*
- 42 CFR Part 2
- 45 CFR Parts 160 and 164 (HIPAA)
- OCGA 24-9-47 Disclosure of AIDS Confidential Information
- SAMHSA, *The Confidentiality of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Patient Records Regulation and the HIPAA Privacy Rule: Implications for alcohol and Substance Abuse Programs*

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### Resources

- Homeland Security Act
- Patriot Act
- Notifiable Disease/Condition Report Form. GA Department of Human Resources O.C.G.A. 31-12-2, 31-22-7 DHR Rules and Regulations, Notification of Disease, Chapter 290-5-3 and Chapter 290-9-8
- Rules and Regulations for Drug Abuse Treatment and Education Programs. OCGA 290-4-2

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