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by K Kam

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Ethics and Legal Issues in Counseling

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Ethics and Legal Issues in Counseling

Areas in Which the APA, ACA, AAMFT, ASCA, and ASGW are Similar

All these codes of ethics strive to ensure there is a public trust, advocate for the commitment of counselors to service, and encourage public participation and advocacy. The codes also encourage counselors to seek consultation from their supervisors in case they need to. The code encourages counselors to always make ethical decisions in their counseling services. As such the therapists must be professional in all their conduct and must strictly adhere to the code of conduct. The therapists are also expected to report any unethical conduct that they come across in their line of duty. As these therapists resolve conflicts and issues among their different clients they should do so in ways that support the underlying code of ethics. These codes of ethics also give its members some binding expectations.

The members are bound to understand their association's code of ethics and adhere to it. Failure to act ethically, a misunderstanding, and a lack of awareness of the associations' codes of conduct predispose the counselors to serious charges (O'Donohue, 2016). In resolving conflicts, the associations' codes of ethics clearly illustrate how filing, investigation, and resolution of complaints of unethical conduct should be adhered to. The accused persons should therefore only be considered guilty after it has been proved that they are indeed guilty. The associations' codes of ethics additionally outline some core values that are aspirational in nature. The association's therapists are required to embody values like acceptance, the inclusion of diverse membership, and appreciation.

The counselors are also required to be distinct and excellent in the face of the people these counselors supervise or train. Therapists and counselors are required to be very responsive and excellent as they offer services to their clients. Equity, excellence, and diversity must also be

adhered to both in research, in clinical practice, in administration, and in education. The counselors are as well encouraged to accept changes like technology. All the codes of ethics of the above associations advocate that therapists and counselors must act responsibly towards their clients by ensuring there is no discrimination. The counselors should offer their services without discrimination on the basis of sex, age, socioeconomic status, religious basis, gender identity, and relationship status (O'Donohue, 2016).

Informed consent is also a key feature outlined by all the codes of ethics. The clients counseled by therapists need to be informed of all the activities that they should. The counselors and therapists should ensure their clients are in a position to consent, have adequate information regarding the treatment processes, have an awareness of all the potential risks and consequences of treatments ahead of them must freely consent to their treatments without being influenced and that their consent is documented before any therapy is offered. Confidentiality is also guaranteed by all five codes of ethics. Therapists and counselors are required to disclose limits of confidentiality in case any confidential information is required for legal purposes. Clients must also consent to the sharing of their confidential information through written authorization.

Confidentiality of clients must also be guaranteed in non-clinical activities like research, education, writing, consultations, and public presentations. The records of all clients must be protected. All five codes of ethics require psychologists to enhance fidelity and responsibility. They must therefore act in accountability to their clients and build trust in clients. Conflicts of interests also cut across all the five codes of ethics. The psychologists are thus expected to engage in activities that are beneficial to clients but may not harm the counselors in any way. Integrity is also a key-value encouraged by all five codes of ethics. All the services to clients

must be offered in an honest and transparent manner. Justice must also prevail in all the services that clients are offered and any biased treatments should be resolved by law.

The respect for the dignity and rights of people are also common values in the five codes of ethics. As such all the clients must be treated equally irrespective of where they come from. Values like competence and human relations are also advocated for by all the codes of ethics. The codes also advocate the rules that counselors should adhere to while engaging in a counseling relationship (Kaplan et al., 2017). In this case, consent, honesty, privacy, and acceptance of cultural diversity must be protected. All the codes of ethics also encourage professional counseling. The counselors are thus to be professionally responsible to their clients. All five codes of ethics also have some outlines to assessments. The counselors must thus assess their knowledge of the services they offer their clients as well as assess the knowledge and attitudes of their clients to the counseling. This is essential for future improvements and learning in different counseling areas.

All five codes of ethics also encourage referrals when the clients need more information and knowledge on the services they are being offered. All the counselors are also required to avoid dual relationships that might affect the relationships between the clients and the counselors. The five codes of ethics also discourage any form of harassment in counseling. The clients and the counselors are protected from any form of harassment including sexual harassment. The codes of ethics also allow for virtual counseling provided it is done in adherence to the set codes of conduct (Kaplan et al., 2017). Ethical decision making is also a key feature in all the codes of ethics. The counselors are required to execute ethical decisions as well as challenge their clients to make ethical decisions.

**All Areas in Which the APA, ACA, AAMFT, ASCA, and ASGW Disagree and My Opinion
on the Disagreements**

The ASGW puts a lot of emphasis on groups. As such, the association counselors are required to identify the specific groups which need to be given specific counseling (Woods & Ruzek, 2018). The assessments in these criteria are also based on group attitudes and attitudes of individual members of a group. The association also encourages counselors to undertake group evaluation and monitor the progress of a group towards the attainment of the group's goals and plans. I believe this code is different because individual clients and group clients have different and unique problems and unique attitudes which should be handled differently.

The ASCA further places a lot of emphasis on counselors being responsible to students, supervision of interns, school counseling interns, student peer-support programs, at-risk and underserved populations, and student records. I believe this code of ethics is unique from others because of the unique group of people who are the students it targets; students have challenges that are unique to them and require unique therapies.

The ASCA encourages students to be responsible to self by ensuring they complete the required counselor education programs, look for opportunities relevant for their professional development and monitor the adherence of their schools to the set codes of ethics by the association (Marino et al., 2016). This is relevant to the general professional development of the students and teaches the students to become responsible professional counselors in the future. The AAMFT also advocates for the separation of custody evaluation from therapy (GAHAGAN, 2018). This is because the services are specific to people from a family and marriage set up.

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