

Ethical Considerations in Relation to Substance Abuse

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Ethical Considerations

- Introduction: Who is this possible imaginary construct in a reality that is questionable based on my perspectives of reality, religious beliefs, and my understanding of quantum physics?
- What am I doing here?
- Why am I re-learning this?
- How is this happening in 2023?

Ethical Considerations

- Expectations:
 - Interaction: Your feedback is essential for learning!
 - Fun: If you're not laughing you're not learning.
 - Contemplative Thought: Growth comes from challenging discussions.

Ethical Considerations

- Objectives:

1. Discuss Ethical Dynamics in the therapeutic environment
2. Processing new ethical issues related to Marijuana for Medicinal use, Social Media.
3. Learning to deal with Ethical Obstacles through Scenarios.

Ethical Considerations: Understanding Ethical Dynamics

- Ethical Dynamics refers to the synergy, or lack thereof, of relationship commitments and qualities per se or with their associated ethical principles and norms, or with their overarching core values or ethical aspirations, especially as they serve to bring about social qualities and social goods.
- How does this definition fit into a therapeutic environment?
- The importance of synergy with our practice is crucial to the therapeutic environment.
- As Therapists our ethical dynamics are guided by our code of ethics.
- These rules determine what is appropriate and inappropriate conduct while we practice.
- Does our code of ethics protect us and our clients completely?

Ethical Considerations: Understanding Ethical Dynamics

- LADC Code of Ethics:
- C. I shall maintain at all times an objective, non-possessive, professional relationship with all clients.
- D. I shall be willing to recognize when it is in the best interest of the client to release them or refer them to another program or individual.
- E. I shall adhere to all the professional rules of confidentiality of all maintenance and distributions of records, material, and knowledge concerning the client and respect the integrity and protect the welfare of the person or group with whom I am working. (Do Lawyers/Probation officers follow this rule?)
- F. I shall not in any way discriminate between clients, families or fellow professionals based on race, religion, age, sex, handicap, national ancestry, sexual orientation or economic conditions.
- K. I have an individual responsibility to espouse objectivity and integrity; responsibility to report acts of moral turpitude and uphold ethical professional codes, responsibility for my own conduct in all areas. Including, but not limited to , personal behavioral, the use of mood altering substances.
- M. I have a responsibility to myself, my clients, the community, and associates to maintain my physical and mental health and well being and shall adopt a personal and professional stance, which promotes the well-being of all human beings. (If we are not engaging in adequate self-care are we being unethical?)

Ethical Considerations: Issues stemming Medical Marijuana and Social Media

- What are the challenges facing all Therapists related to Medical Marijuana?
- Dr.'s can prescribe Marijuana to address issues like Anxiety, Depression, and Pain.
- A fundamental axiom is “ To Do No Harm”, how does this apply in dealing with a Medical Marijuana Prescription?

Ethical Considerations: Issues Stemming from Medical Marijuana and Social Media

- Ethical Challenges with Social Media: Having an online presence can be a benefit to business, however, any clinician must have a framework that allows them to work online ethically.
- Examples of a minimum Ethical Framework
 - Confidentiality: Clinicians understand that it is their primary obligation to protect client confidentiality.
 - Multiple Relationships: Clinicians refrain from entering into multiple relationships that could impair their objectivity, competency, or clinical effectiveness.
 - Testimonials: Clinicians do not solicit testimonials from current clients or others who may be vulnerable to influence.
 - Friend and Follow Requests: Clinicians are mindful of the ways that connecting with clients on social networks may potentially compromise client confidentiality. How do you address friend requests from current/past clients?

Ethical Considerations: Issues Stemming from Medical Marijuana and Social Media cont.

- To avoid future challenges Clinicians an implement a social media policy. This policy could contain the following points:
 - 1) Rationale for the document(to inform client of social media policy)
 - 2) Personal vs. Professional
 - 3) Friend Request/ Follow policy
 - 4) Public Conversations

Ethical Considerations: Issues Stemming from Medical Marijuana and Social Media

- Should a Clinician use Social Media? Social Media can be a valuable marketing tool, that can communicate your therapeutic philosophy and engage new clients. However, boundaries for Clinicians are especially important. Be sure you are clear on how you interact with the public via your Social Media Platforms.

Ethical Considerations: Scenarios

- In the following scenario's the goal will be to:
 - 1) Identify the Ethical Issue
 - 2) The errors made by the Clinician
 - 3) A solution that respects our Ethical Responsibilities.
 - 4) The following Scenario's are largely fictitious, names and places have been changed to protect the innocent. These are their stories (Cue Law & Order Sound effect.)

Ethical Considerations: Scenario 1

- Morning Star Takapu, the therapist(hereafter referred to as MSTT), has been working with 26 year old professional, Majorie Pajorie, for a year. They have been working on addressing and managing her symptoms of anxiety and depression. The client, Majorie Pajorie, smokes Marijuana regularly (No Medical Card), which is a concern for MSTT. Majorie Pajorie arrives late to her appointment, looking frazzled. Majorie Pajorie explains that her friend overdosed on Heroin the previous evening. Majorie Pajorie has been in the ER for the past 12 hours. The friend will likely survive, but they may have long term cognitive issues. Majorie Pajorie reports feeling horribly guilty because she introduced the friend to the drug dealer. Majorie Pajorie buys her strain of Marijuana (Master Blaster strain) from this drug dealer. The friend had stopped by to see Majorie Pajorie before buying Heroin from this drug dealer. The Police have gotten involved because this Heroin overdose is connected to other Heroin overdoses in the city. Majorie Pajorie does not want to be involved and is moving away to avoid any connection to this investigation. MSTT is pre-occupied with this situation, knows the drug dealers name from previous sessions, and the location where they deal. MSTT is struggling with his moral outrage and a desire to see justice done. MSTT contacts you for consultation on whether or not he should report this information to the Police.

Ethical Considerations: Scenario 2

- Hacksaw Jim Dugan, therapist, specializes in substance use disorders, and is currently working for a state funded non-profit organization. Pizza Steve enters into services for a SUD related to Alcohol, and PCP. Pizza Steve has weekly individual sessions with Hacksaw Jim Dugan for 12 weeks. Pizza Steve successfully completes the program and receives a discharge certificate from the program. Eight months have gone by and Hacksaw Jim Dugan is looking for a new car. Pizza Steve, a former patient, is a car salesman and proceeds to sell Hacksaw Jim Dugan a new Ferrari, at a discounted rate (the Ferrari had cosmetic issues), and a guarantee that Pizza Steve would detail the car weekly(this benefit is a standard at this car dealership). Has anything unethical occurred?

Ethical Considerations: Scenario 3

- Alfred Pennyworth works for a Community Mental Health Agency, and is also passionate about the plight of Neotropical Spectral Bats. On Monday Alfred Pennyworth meets with a new patient, Jason Todd, who is wearing a shirt that says “ I like Neotropical Spectral Bats like I like my hamburgers, well done!!” Jason Todd is being required by the court to have a Mental Health assessment because they were found in a local park singing Taylor Swift songs aggressively. Alfred Pennyworth does an assessment, and determines that Jason Todd will require an 30 day Inpatient Treatment for Bi-Polar I with Psychotic Features. Jason Todd is a 45 year old person, with no encounters with law enforcement, the citation they received was a misdemeanor for disturbing the peace, and had recently broken up with their romantic partner. Has anything unethical occurred?

Ethical Considerations: Scenario 4

- Faruk Balsara, therapist, has been working with patient Barbara Streisand on issues related to depression, anxiety, and relationship issues. During a session, Barbara Streisand indicated that her boyfriend, George Michael, had lost interest in sex and became more involved with pornography online. Barbara Streisand blurted out that her boyfriend said that his online pornography wasn't as bad as what his uncle does. Barbara Streisand said her boyfriend made her promise not to tell, and shared that his uncle collects and distributes child pornography but still remains faithful to his aunt. Barbara Streisand asks the therapist, Faruk Balsara, to take the information she has about the uncle and report it to the authorities because she does not want to be involved. Faruk Balsara contacts you for guidance.