

Workshop Exercise Handout

Ethical Vignettes in Training

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1 Use of Proprietary Materials

Jamie attends a workshop on dual diagnosis to prepare himself for a workshop on this same subject that he is scheduled to give in two months. The workshop he attends is an excellent one that includes a wealth of information and handouts. Provide examples of both ethical and unethical ways that Jamie could utilize information and materials from this workshop in his own delivery of this subject.

2 Marketing/Delivery

A brochure marketing a workshop on family counseling clearly outlines learning objectives and notes that the learning methodologies used in the workshop will include lecture and discussion of videotaped vignettes from family counseling sessions. During the workshop, the trainer alters the agenda and learning methodologies without negotiation with the trainees. Workshop participants find themselves suddenly “volunteered” to play key roles in psychodramatic recapitulations of their own families of origin. Discuss the ethical issues involved in this situation? What universal values would apply to this situation?

3. Confidentiality

Disclosures in treatment are protected by such mechanisms as informed consent and confidentiality requirements. Is there an assumed contract of confidentiality in the training environment?

Robert, an addictions counselor for the past four years, disclosed in a workshop on staff burnout that he had relapsed and had been secretly drinking for the past two months. Following this brief disclosure, he refused to discuss the issue and left the training early. One of the training staff felt ethically obligated to contact Robert’s supervisor to notify her of Robert’s disclosure and the trainer’s fear of what Robert’s relapse may mean for Robert, his clients and his agency. Robert later filed a complaint with the agency sponsoring the training alleging that his confidentiality had been violated--that information he shared in training had been disclosed outside. Discuss your thoughts on the ethical issues involved in this situation.

4. Self-Disclosure

Betty, a recovering alcoholic who works for a substance abuse prevention training institute, spends the majority of her time speaking to professional audiences about various dimensions related to the assessment and treatment of addiction. Under what conditions would it be

appropriate or inappropriate for Betty to self-disclose her status as a recovering person? What factors should be considered in this decision? Betty is an active member of a 12 step program such as Alcoholics Anonymous, how can she speak to professional groups about AA without inadvertently violating AA's tradition of anonymity? What standards should guide the professional trainer (recovering and non-recovering) to avoid the appearance that they represent or speak for a 12 Step Program or other mutual aid society?

5. Duty to Intervene: The Impaired Trainee

You are facilitating process-oriented training on adolescent substance abuse to 25 professional participants, all of whom are involved in addiction treatment except one who, does DUI evaluations. The behavior of this latter person over the first 90 minutes includes the following: inability to follow the conceptual material, incoherent speech-making, excessive and inappropriate self-disclosure, anger toward group member challenges to her comments, and threats to leave if the group won't listen to her ideas. The participant in question appears to be in her late sixties or early seventies and also exhibits clearly observable tremors in both hands. You have deduced from various disclosures that the participant works in an independent practice that consists almost entirely of conducted DUI evaluations. Describe your potential responses to this situation.

6: Relationship Boundaries

Mark is a part-time counselor in an addiction treatment program who spends the remainder of his professional time working contractually as a trainer on addiction-related topics. Most of his training activities involve 3-5 day residential training experiences that bring together trainees from throughout his state. Mark has developed over the past two years a fairly consistent pattern of sexual involvement with trainees during these training retreats. Do the ethical boundaries that preclude counselor-client sexual involvement extend to the trainer-trainee relationship? If a fundamental difference in the therapist-client and trainer-trainee relationship is the duration of power inequity and the duration of vulnerability, could a trainer get involved with a trainee *after* a training event without being suspected of a breach in ethical conduct? Would a trainer who was attracted to a trainee be ethically prohibited from pursuing that relationship after the training event was over? Where the prohibition against a therapist-client sexual relationship might last forever, might any prohibition against a trainer-trainee sexual relationship be relatively time-limited? Discuss ethical issues and standards related to this situation.