CO790 Professional Standards
Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays July 20, 22, 24, 27, 29 9am-12pm; 1pm-4pm
Instructor: Karen Mason, Ph.D.
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Office hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays: lunch and 4-5pm

In any moment of decision the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing you can do is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing.

Theodore Roosevelt

When you have to make a choice and don’t make it, that is in itself a choice.

William James

Always do right. This will gratify some people and astonish the rest.

Mark Twain

Course Description:
This course is designed as a review of the professional standards of counseling/therapy including ethical standards and legal responsibilities. The course also includes discussion of several models of ethical decision-making within the context of ethical dilemmas.

Course Objectives
As a result of this course students will be able to:
1. List ethical decision making models
2. Know their profession’s ethics code
3. Know Massachusetts law as it refers to the practice of counseling
4. Apply critical thinking to ethical dilemmas

Required Text:

Recommended Text:

Resources


American Psychological Association Ethics Code (Effective June 1, 2003) http://www.apa.org/ethics/

Board of Registration of Allied Mental Health and Human Services Professionals:
Mental Health Counselors, Marriage and Family Therapists, Rehabilitation Counselors and
Educational Psychologists
http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=ocasubtopic&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Licensee&L2=Division
+of+Professional+Licensure+Boards&L3=Board+of+Registration+of+Allied+Mental+Heal
th+and+Human+Services+Professionals&sid=Eoca

Massachusetts General Laws (MGL):
Chapter 13, Sections 88-90—Creation of Board of Registration of Allied Mental Health
and Human Services Professionals
Chapter 19A—Elder abuse and protection
Chapter 19C—Disabled persons abuse and protection
Chapter 119—Protection of children (section 51A—reports)
Chapter 112 Section 12CC—Inspection of records
Chapter 112, Sections 61-65, 163-172—Licensing provisions for registration of Allied
Mental Health and Human Services Professionals
Chapter 123—Mental Health
Chapter 123A—Care, treatment, and rehabilitation of sexually dangerous persons

Code of Massachusetts Regulations
262 CMR 1.00 – 9.00—Rules and regulations governing Allied Mental health and
Human Services Professionals

Requirements
Students are expected to attend all classes and to participate actively. Students will discuss all
absences with the instructor. Students will complete all reading and other assignments ON
TIME. Discuss all late assignments with the instructor. One point will be deducted from all late
assignments per day late (including the weekend) and will not be accepted more than 1 week
late.

Assignments
1. Keep ongoing reflective journal entries for each chapter of the text, capturing your
reactions such as new knowledge or realizations, rethinking a past case, thinking about a
current case, or developing a plan for how to incorporate the principles of the chapter in
your practice, etc. Each entry should be between 150 and 250 words single spaced. (36
points: 2 points per chapter)
2. Written ethical case study (24 points; see rubric below)
3. Open code final test on HIPAA, either the AAMFT or ACA Code of Ethics and
Massachusetts Law (40 points)

The Ethical case study will describe an actual ethical dilemma you experienced in your clinical
experience:
The ethical dilemma (4 points)
The model(s) and the application of the model(s) you are choosing to use including possible courses of action regarding the dilemma and the one(s) you should have selected including consequences of choice(s) (20 points)

Course Outline with Assignments
Assignments are due on day listed.

July 20 Review of syllabus; codes, laws, and HIPAA; when spiritual beliefs and professional ethics and laws clash; ethics versus law versus best practice; models of ethical decision making, thinking critically about ethical and legal issues
Assignments:
Read:
1. Pope & Vasquez: (Chapter 1) Helping Without Hurting: Personal Responsibility, Constant Questioning, and Basic Assumptions and (Chapter 2) Ethics and Critical Thinking

July 22 Competence; referral; professional development and professional identity development; self-care.
Assignments:
Read:
1. Pope & Vasquez: (Chapter 3) Trust, Power, and Caring and (Chapter 4) Competence and the Human Therapist
2. Pope & Vasquez: (Chapter 5) Creating Strategies for Self-Care and (Chapter 6) Creating a Professional Will

July 24 Responding to complaints / suits; keeping records (SOAP notes); informed consent; accessibility
Assignments:
Read:
1. Pope & Vasquez: (Chapter 7) Codes and Complaints in Context: Historical, Empirical, and Actuarial, Foundations and (Chapter 8) Responding to Ethics, Licensing, or Malpractice Complaints
2. Pope & Vasquez: (Chapter 9) Steps in Ethical Decision Making and (Chapter 10) Beginnings and Endings, Absences and Accessibility

July 27 Assessment, testing, diagnosis; dual relationships
Assignments:
Read:
1. Pope & Vasquez: (Chapter 11) Informed Consent and Informed Refusal and (Chapter 12) Assessment, Testing, and Diagnosis
2. Pope & Vasquez: (Chapter 13) Sexual Relationships with Clients and (Chapter 14) Nonsexual Multiple Relationships and Other Boundary Issues
July 29 Maintaining and breaking confidentiality: reporting suspicion of abuse/neglect; suicide risk; homicide risk; supervision; test

Assignments:
Read:
1. Pope & Vasquez: (Chapter 15) Culture, Context, and Individual Differences and (Chapter 16) Confidentiality
2. Read Pope & Vasquez: (Chapter 17) Responding to Suicidal Risk and (Chapter 18) The Supervisory Relationship
3. Open code final test on HIPAA, either the AAMFT or ACA Code of Ethics and Massachusetts Law

August 14 4pm
Last day to apply to Registrar (not to instructor) for extension if needed. Let the instructor know if you are applying for an extension.
1. Turn in a written copy of your ethical case study
2. Turn in Reflective Journal

Additional Resources
American Association of Christian Counselors Code of Ethics
http://aacc.net/about-us/code-of-ethics

American Association of Pastoral Counselor Code of Ethics
http://www.aapc.org/ethics.cfm


