

## Written Response to Ethical Dilemma

### Psy 445

In class, we discussed *eight* steps in making ethical decisions. Select two of the attached scenarios to analyze, and follow the steps to decide upon a course of action. We will omit two steps (know the applicable laws and regulations and obtain consultation) from the paper. (You can still obtain consultation from classmates if you wish; just do not write it up.) **Type your responses using the outline of the six remaining steps that are listed below to organize your paper. Make sure you answer or address all questions. Use the headings below to organize your paper. You should use the headings twice—once for each dilemma you choose.** Use the modified APA style listed on the website to write the paper. **Remember, you should always write in paragraphs, not lists.**

For all vignettes, assume that therapists, unless otherwise explicitly stated, are licensed doctoral-level psychologists and members of the American Psychological Association.

### Outline for Paper: Steps in Making Ethical Decisions

#### **Provide the name of the vignette.**

The first thing you must do is tell me which vignette you are discussing.

#### **Identify the problem or dilemma.**

You only have the scenario to give you information. Briefly describe the problem or dilemma. Then identify which bin (legal, ethical, clinical, risk management, moral) into which the dilemma falls. Give a brief rationale (one or two sentences) as to why the conflict is each of the issues you identified.

#### **Identify the potential issues involved.**

Evaluate the rights, responsibilities, and welfare of all those affected. What are the critical issues?

#### **Review the relevant ethics code.**

List all specific APA ethics code general principles and ethical standards that apply. Specify which standard is the **primary** ethical standard that applies to the problem and which standards are **relevant** to the problem. Discuss how each of the standards applies to the problem.

#### **Consider possible and probable courses of action.**

Brainstorm at least three (3) possibilities and list them. When considering courses of action, you must begin with the fact that events have happened. Thus, based on the information provided, what can the therapist do to solve or correct the problem. Describe how you used the ethical standards listed in step 3 to create these possibilities.

**Enumerate the consequences.**

Describe the implications and consequences of each possible choice listed in the above step.

**Decide on the best course of action.**

After carefully considering all the information, describe what you believe to be the best course of action. (DO NOT simply write that the person in the scenario should not have done so and so. What is the best course of action now, based on what has already happened in the scenario?)

**This assignment will be due on Friday, October 16, 2020, at the beginning of class. It will be worth 30 points.**

### **Poisoned Relationships**

A psychologist has been working with a 12-year-old boy for about five weeks. The child, Jay Walker, is an only child, his parents are divorced, and he lives with his mother. He was referred for counseling because of acting-out behaviors that are of recent onset (within the last three months). The psychologist has developed a good therapeutic relationship with Jay, and counseling is progressing nicely. During the sixth session, Jay expresses anger toward his mother and says at times he thinks about killing her. He admitted that he even tried to poison her last year by putting Clorox in her Coke at dinnertime. He said that he did this about ten times across one month. He acknowledges that was wrong and states that he does not do that any more. Though he is angry, he expresses no current desire to harm his mother. The psychologist tries to decide what to do with such information.

### **Religion as an Answer**

The client (Rita Lynn) discusses various personal problems she has been having. Rita thinks that prayer should be the answer to her personal problems. She thinks that she is not hearing God clearly and wants assistance in “forming a better relationship with my Lord and Savior.” Her counselor (Marge Inovera) is an agnostic. Because of this, Marge has a great deal of difficulty understanding what her client’s religion means to her or how to work with Rita’s religious framework within the context of counseling. Instead, Marge comments that she feels that she is in competition with God and the client’s religion. Marge wants Rita to put more faith in the counseling process as a way to find an answer to her problems.

### **Abortion**

The therapist (Lucy Yalater) has been seeing the client (Ima Nutt) for several months for bouts of depression. Ima is unmarried. One day Ima announces to Lucy that she found out she is pregnant and is considering an abortion. Ima is very confused about what to do. She doesn’t want an abortion but believes she has no choice due to her life circumstances. Lucy expresses her own discomfort because of her personal and religious beliefs that life begins at conception, abortion is a sin, and mothers who abort their children are going to go to Hell. Lucy tells Ima that she (Lucy) will have to get some consultation so that she can sort out her own thinking. Ima is anxious and wants to talk about what she might do and is taken aback by her counselor’s response.

### **Coming Out**

The client (Luke Bizzy) brings out his homosexual orientation in therapy with the counselor (Joe King). Luke states that this is something he has been struggling with, mainly because it is not accepted in his culture or his religion. The client admits that he trusts Joe and it feels good to be able to make this disclosure. Luke wants Joe’s help in coming out to his friends and family. Luke wants to explore his thoughts and feelings about his sexual orientation in light of his cultural and religious values. Joe is unreceptive, at best. Joe says, “Are you sure this is the best thing for you?” Then Joe discloses that he does not approve of “the homosexual life-style thing” and adds that he does not see it as “being very healthy or spiritual.” Luke has negative reactions to Joe’s judgmental attitude and lack of acceptance of who he is as a person.

### **Talk of Suicide**

The client (Otto Delupe) is HIV positive and is seriously considering suicide. The counselor (Iris N. DeMournin) tells Otto she can't believe what she is hearing from him. Iris does her best to persuade Otto not to take his life. First, she tells him that he is a coward and is taking the easy way out by choosing to end his life. She then asks him if he has a plan, and he states that he doesn't. Next, she asks him to think about his family and other options. She lets him know that he may be in a crisis state and not able to make a good decision. Otto replies, "It's my life. I should be able to do what I want. I'm going to die anyway." Iris asks Otto to sign a written contract to not commit suicide, but he refuses.

### **The Addiction**

The psychologist (Dr. Faye deWeigh-Schott) has been seeing a client, Barbie Tuate, for eight weeks regarding a difficult adjustment she was experiencing following separation and divorce from her husband. She has custody of the two children. Barbie seems to be progressing well during the course of therapy. About four weeks into therapy, she confides in Dr. deWeigh-Schott that she has been taking a drug prescribed by her family doctor for anxiety and is addicted. She also admits she has been forging these prescriptions for the past four months. Barbie is a nurse and knows she needs to withdraw from this drug but is fearful of the potential legal consequences of her actions. She is planning to refill a forged prescription immediately following the current therapy session. She says she plans to seek medical help for her withdrawal from the drug and she asks Dr. deWeigh-Schott not to tell anyone about her forgery, as this would jeopardize her keeping her job and custody of her two young children.

### **Interpretations**

Dr. B.D. Wedder has a Ph.D. in clinical psychology, is licensed in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and has been supervising the internship of Amanda Livering-Cole, an African-American psychology graduate student, for almost a year now. Although Dr. Wedder has not said anything to Amanda, Dr. Wedder has noticed a pattern where Amanda almost invariably interprets the behavior of Caucasian female clients as racist and male clients of any race as sexually motivated. Dr. Wedder suspects that these interpretations may not be accurate and that they are interfering with her ability to generate alternative hypotheses. Amanda is applying to the Grieve Institute for Crazy Folks, a prestigious mental health clinic (where Dr. Wedder personally knows many of the therapists and administrators) and she asks Dr. Wedder for a letter of recommendation.

### **Dating Game**

Dr. Jay L. Bate sees Vi C. Thym and her seven-year old son for therapy. Mother and son have bonded really closely with the therapist and good work is being done in therapy sessions. Everything is humming along until Vi matches with Dr. Jay on the online dating site, DatesRUs. Vi does not accept the match, and blocks Dr. Jay on the site. A minute later, he sends her a text telling her that he thinks it is "awesome" that they matched and that he believes she looks better in person than in her photos. Vi does not respond to the text. Therapy goes on; Dr. Jay and Vi text often in regards to therapy for her and her son. A month after the online dating match, Vi's

son asks if Dr. Jay can attend his 8<sup>th</sup> birthday party. Vi invites Dr. Jay to the party, and he comes bearing gifts. That night, Dr. Jay tries to match with Vi on DatesRUs again. Vi sends him a text asking what he is doing, to which Dr. Jay responds, “Aren’t you having fun?”