

Developing Sound Professional Ethics

KIN 161
Dr. Masucci

Professional and Personal Standards of Behavior

- Many professional “codes of conduct” in Kinesiology-related professions:
 - AMA (American Medical Association)
 - ACSM (American College of Sports Medicine)
 - AAHE (American Association of Health Education)
 - NATA (National Athletic Trainers’ Association)
 - NASSM (North American Society for Sport Management)
 - AASP (Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology)

Conduct and Ethics are Complex Issues

- No “code” can insure good conduct on its own
- Multiple factors influence behavior and actions
 - Role models, teachers, upbringing (social forces)
- Since we have “free will” we are free to make our own decisions
- Personal moral habits tend to drive our actions for better or worse
- In any case we are more often than not held accountable for our estimable or problematic actions and behaviors

Conduct and Ethics are Complex Issues

- Most people, despite anecdotal and media accounts to the contrary, do not want to act immorally
- Surveys show that people regularly regard integrity as more valuable than success (Josephson Institute, 2002)
- Ethics are deeply important for people, whether in practice or in appearance yet...
- There are still no shortage of problematic ethical dilemmas in our society today and in sport in particular

Ethics and Professions

- Ethics have to do with making decisions about “right” and “wrong”
- Most humans have ethics and morals but not all of us have “good” ethics or morals!
- Good ethics involves at least two things according to Frankena (1973)
 - Identifying what is worthwhile or valuable
 - Finding ways to distribute that good fairly
 - Often this distribution has taken a rule or law form of distribution

Ethics and Professions

- Determining ethical guidelines is not a clean business!
- Lots of trial and error
- Is it more an individual pursuit – a matter of personal choice or is it grounded in theology, or our social consensus? (remember the Moral Orientation lecture here)
- At some level, however, we do seem to strive for *some degree of ethical consistency* even if it is contextual.

Developing Moral Confidence

- Kretchmar (2005) believes that most of us try to be fair, help our neighbors, and “leave the world better at the end of the day than we found it” (p. 187).
- When we slip up, we notice it
- This is evidence, that we *do* have some basic sense of what is acceptable or not – or ability to contemplate moral decisions or at least recognize that a moral conundrum exists
- How do we develop a more robust moral compass?
 - We make three crucial errors according to Kretchmar...

Three Problems that Undermine Or Moral Compass

1. Looking for the wrong kinds of answers
2. Looking for simple answers
3. Ignoring points of consensus

1) Looking for the wrong kinds of answers

- No clear cut answers
- Moral dilemmas are messy!
- Use the old athletes adage to “try your hardest”
- That we recognize a moral dilemma shows that our compass is working a little bit
- We will not be disappointed if we do not expect black and white answers

2) Looking for simple answers

- We *will* be disappointed if we expect simple answers to complex moral questions
- What constitutes “good” can have complex underpinnings
- We, unfortunately perhaps, are suckers for the “easy way out”
- That there can be many ways to address an issue can be construed as there can be ANY way to resolve an ethical dilemma – thus leading to relativism
- The existence of more than one sound answer to complex moral questions need not shake our moral confidence. We must choose and prioritize

3) Ignoring points of consensus

- If we dwell on differences, we miss important similarities.
- There are many common points of agreement that cut across seemingly significant differences in race, class, religion, politics, gender, and age.
- While there is not one “best” version of the good life, there are often many overlapping characteristics
- Kidder (1994) found eight common values that folks from “radically different walks of life around the world” agreed on:

Ignoring points of consensus

1. Love
2. Truthfulness
3. Fairness
4. Freedom
5. Unity
6. Tolerance
7. Responsibility
8. Respect for life

Philosophical Exercise:

- Do you agree with Kidder that people can come to a rough consensus on good living?

A quick test (in groups): "Sportsmanship"

- How should we treat opponents, officials, fans and coaches?
- What obligations do we have regarding game rules?
- How should we deal with winning and losing?
- Can the class come up with a rough consensus on this issue? Let's try and negotiate an acceptable set of basic principles for good sportsmanship...