

CONTENT AREAS OF THE STUDENT VERSION

PART ONE: ETHICAL DECISION MAKING

STEPS IN THE ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

HOW TO THINK ABOUT ETHICS

What steps would you take in making a decision involving an ethical dilemma?

In the first segment of this self-study video, there are three role-plays, each of which can be applied to the various steps you might take in thinking through an ethical concern.

Refer to the *Issues and Ethics* book, Chapter 1 (pp. 15–17); also to *Becoming a Helper*, Chapter 5 (pp. 118–120) for a discussion of this topic.

KEY POINTS

Here are a few key points that we make in this segment of the program.

- Responsible practice requires that you:
 - base your actions on informed, sound, and responsible judgment
 - consult with colleagues or seek supervision
 - keep your knowledge and skills current
 - engage in a continual process of self-examination
 - remain open
- In making ethical decisions, as much as possible and when appropriate, include your client in this ethical decision-making process.
- Clients need enough information about the therapeutic process to be able to make informed choices.
 - The informed consent process begins with the intake interview and continues for the duration of the therapeutic relationship.
 - The aim is to involve clients in a collaborative partnership.
- The key is to make ethical decisions *with* clients, not simply *for* them. Get clients actively involved in the process to the extent possible and appropriate. Respecting the autonomy of your clients implies that you do not decide for clients, nor do you foster dependent attitudes and behaviors.

For a good discussion of including the client as a partner in ethical practice, see Walden (1997).

EIGHT STEPS IN MAKING ETHICAL DECISIONS

Ethical decision making should be a collaborative process between client and counselor, rather than a counselor making decisions for the client.

Refer to *Becoming a Helper* (pp. 119–120) and *Issues and Ethics* (pp. 15–17) for the specific details on these steps.

To get a better understanding of the ethical decision-making process, you might also make use of an ethics casebook, such as the ones listed in the references. [See Brock (1994); Canter, Bennett, Jones, & Nagy (1994); and Herlihy & Corey (1996).]

This is one of several decision-making models which can be utilized. Below are the steps, with suggested questions, to assist you in thinking through an ethical dilemma. The steps taken may not always follow the same order shown and steps may be repeated several times in the process.

1. Identify the problem or dilemma.
 - Does a problem or dilemma actually exist?
 - Is this an ethical, legal, moral, professional, or clinical problem?
 - Is it a combination of more than one of these?
 - How can you know the nature of the problem?

- Would you consult at this early stage as you are identifying the problem?
 - How might you begin the process of consultation with your client about the nature of the problem?
2. Identify the potential issues involved.
 - How might you best evaluate the rights, responsibilities, and welfare of all those involved and those who are affected by the decision, including your own welfare as a practitioner?
 - How can you best promote your client's independence and self-determination?
 - What actions have the least chance of bringing harm to your client?
 - What decision will best safeguard the client's welfare?
 - How can you create a trusting and collaborative climate where your clients can find their own answers?
 - What principles can you use in prioritizing the potential issues involved in this situation?
 - Are there any ways to encourage the client to participate in identifying and determining potential ethical issues?
 3. Review the relevant ethical codes.
 - What guidance can you find on the specific problem under review by consulting with the professional codes?
 - Are your values in agreement with the specific ethical code in question?
 - How clear and specific are the codes on the specific area under consideration?
 - Are the codes consistent with applicable state laws?
 4. Know the applicable laws and regulations.
 - Are there any laws or regulations that have a bearing on the situation under consideration?
 - What are the specific and relevant state and federal laws that apply to the ethical dilemma?
 - What are the rules, regulations, and policies of the agency or institution where you work?
 5. Obtain consultation.
 - Do you know where to go to obtain consultation with professionals who are knowledgeable about ethical issues?
 - Assuming that you will consult with a colleague or a supervisor, what would you expect from this consultation?
 - What kinds of questions do you want to ask of those with whom you consult?
 - With whom do you seek consultation? Do you consult only with those who share your orientation, or do you look for consultants with different perspectives?
 - How can you use the consultation process as an opportunity to test the justification of a course of action you are inclined to take?
 - What kinds of information do you document when you consult?
 - When you do make use of a consultation process, do you inform your client about this? Are there any ways you might include the client in this consultation process?
 6. Consider possible and probable courses of action.
 - What are some ways that you can brainstorm many possible courses of action?
 - Do you have a systematic method for analyzing ethical obligations and possible courses of action?
 - Are you willing to involve your client in the discussion of the various courses of action?
 - What might you document pertaining to discussions with your client about probable courses of action?
 7. Enumerate the consequences of various decisions.
 - How can you best evaluate the potential consequences of each course of action, before implementing a particular action plan?
 - Are you willing to involve your client in the discussion of the implications of each course of action for the client?
 - What ethical principles can you use as a framework for evaluating the consequences of a given course of action?
 - Examine the consequences of various decisions for your client, for you as counselor, and for the profession in general.
 8. Decide on what appears to be the best course of action.
 - After carefully considering all the information you have gathered, how do you know what seems to be the best action to take?
 - Do you solicit the input of your client in making this decision at this phase?
 - Once you have formulated a plan of action, do you ask for feedback from a colleague or supervisor?

- Once the course of action has been implemented, what are some ways that you might evaluate the course of action?
- Are you willing to follow up to determine the outcomes and see if further action is necessary?

THE ROLE OF CODES OF ETHICS IN MAKING DECISIONS

It is important for you to become familiar with the ethics codes of your professional organization. In this Student Workbook, we have summarized the relevant ethical standards that apply to specific role-play situations. However, it will be useful to review the complete text of at least one of the codes of ethics. In the Appendix of *Issues and Ethics* (pp. 443–507) the following ethics codes are given in their entire versions:

- Codes of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, American Counseling Association (ACA, 1995)
- Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct*, American Psychological Association (APA, 1995)
- Code of Ethics*, National Association of Social Workers (NASW, 1996)
- AAMFT Code of Ethics*, American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT, 1991)
- Ethical Standards of Human Service Professionals*, National Organization for Human Service Education (NOHSE, 1995)

Toward the end of this workbook we have listed the addresses and phone numbers of the professional organizations mentioned above. Now would be a good time to consider the advantages of student membership in one of these organizations. By being a member in a national professional organization, you will have access to codes of ethics, articles, books, journals, and newsletters—all of which are useful in keeping you up-to-date in ethical practice. Most of these organizations provide some consultation on matters of ethics and the law as applied to clinical practice.

Key Question. The question can be raised—Do the codes provide answers to dilemmas? While it is certainly important to know what the codes state when it comes to a particular ethical dilemma, realize that the codes are merely the starting point of the deliberation process. Codes provide guidance and outline some procedures in working through ethical problem situations. Codes serve useful purposes, three of which are listed below:

- • Codes educate counseling professionals and the general public about our responsibilities.
- • Codes provide a mechanism for professional accountability, and, through their enforcement, protect clients from unethical practices.
- • Codes can serve as a basis for self-monitoring and improving practice.

For a more detailed discussion of the role of ethics codes as catalysts for improving practice, see Herlihy and Corey (1997b).

Refer to *Issues and Ethics*, Chapter 1 (pp. 6–8) on the discussion of role of professional codes. See *Becoming a Helper* (pp. 118–119) on role of codes in ethical decision making.

Below are a few key points for you to consider with respect to the limitations of the role that professional codes play in resolving ethical dilemmas.

- Most codes of the various professions are broad and general, rather than precise and specific.
- Some issues cannot be handled as simply as consulting the codes.
- At times, codes may conflict with the law, or with institutional policies and practices.
- Ethical codes need to be interpreted in light of cultural perspectives.
- Codes provide guidance, but they are not a blueprint that removes all need for using judgment and ethical reasoning.
- The majority of unethical behavior is difficult to detect. Ethics codes are, therefore, difficult to enforce. This places primary responsibility on the self-monitoring process of the counselor.

BASIC MORAL PRINCIPLES IN MAKING ETHICAL DECISIONS

In addition to discussing the specific steps in the ethical decision-making process, you will find it useful to consider a few basic moral principles that provide a foundation for making ethical decisions. Refer to *Issues and Ethics* (pp. 12–14) for a discussion of the following six moral principles underlying the process of making ethical decisions.

- **Autonomy:** the promotion of self-determination, or the freedom of clients to choose their own direction.

- **Nonmaleficence:** avoiding doing harm, which includes refraining from actions that risk hurting clients, either intentionally or unintentionally.
- **Beneficence:** doing good for others.
- **Justice:** fairness, or providing equal treatment to all people.
- **Fidelity:** making honest promises and honoring these commitments to clients.
- **Veracity:** truthfulness.

For a more detailed discussion of the basic principles underlying ethical decision making, see Kitchener (1984).

In addition to applying the steps in the ethical decision-making model, it will be useful to consider the implications of the role-play situations in this video from the perspective of the basic moral principles.

SELF-INVENTORY TO COMPLETE BEFORE VIEWING SEGMENT ONE OF THE VIDEO

Directions: This is *not* a traditional multiple-choice test in which you must select the “one right answer.” Instead, it is a survey of *your* basic beliefs and attitudes pertaining to a host of ethical issues in counseling practice. Circle the letter beside the response that most closely reflects *your viewpoint* at this time. *You may circle more than one response* for each item. Notice that a blank line (“e”) is included in each item. If none of the options provided seems appropriate or if you have what you consider a better answer, write your response (or responses) on the line. After you have viewed the various segments in the video and completed the exercises in this Student Workbook, look back over these self-inventories to see if you are inclined to change any of your answers. It would be of interest to take the inventory again at the end of the course to see whether, or to what degree, any of your beliefs, attitudes, and values have changed.

1. If I were faced with an ethical dilemma, the first step I would take would be to
 - a. check with the code of ethics of my professional organization.
 - b. ask the client for his or her views on the situation.
 - c. quickly decide on what course of action to pursue.
 - d. seek supervision from a supervisor or a colleague.
 - e. _____
2. For me, being an ethical practitioner *mainly* entails
 - a. knowing and following the law.
 - b. doing what is required to stay out of trouble.
 - c. avoiding obvious violations of my profession’s ethical code.
 - d. constantly thinking of what is in the best interests of my client.
 - e. _____
3. I believe that, for those wishing to become therapists, undergoing therapy
 - a. is a necessity for ethical practice.
 - b. is not an important factor in a therapist’s capacity to work with others.
 - c. is necessary only when a therapist has severe personal problems.
 - d. should be encouraged strongly but not required.
 - e. _____
4. If I were faced with a counseling situation where it appeared that there was a conflict between an ethical and legal course to follow, I would
 - a. ask my client to identify issues that seemed important.
 - b. immediately consult with an attorney.
 - c. tend to choose the legal path before the ethical one.
 - d. strive to do what I thought was ethical, even if it meant challenging the law.
 - e. _____
5. In order to be an effective and ethical counselor, I believe that it is essential that I
 - a. am free from any personal conflicts in the area in which the client is exploring.
 - b. need to have experienced the same problem as the client.

- c. am willing to reflect on what I am doing and why.
 - d. need to have experienced feelings similar to those of my client.
 - e. _____
6. I should be open and honest with my clients
 - a. only when I intuitively feel like it is the appropriate thing to do.
 - b. only when keeping my reactions to myself is likely to interfere with the client/counselor relationship.
 - c. when I like and value them.
 - d. rarely, if ever, so that I will avoid negatively influencing the therapeutic relationship.
 - e. _____
 7. In thinking about practicing counseling in a multicultural society, I think that it is essential
 - a. to treat all clients the same and focus on how people are alike.
 - b. to have a detailed knowledge of all of my clients' cultural backgrounds.
 - c. to come to terms with my own culture.
 - d. to develop skills in working with culturally different clients.
 - e. _____
 8. I think that specific knowledge about cultural differences is
 - a. essential for effective counseling.
 - b. dangerous because of the tendency to stereotype.
 - c. impossible to acquire because of the number of cultures.
 - d. essential if one hopes to be an ethical practitioner.
 - e. _____
 9. Practitioners who counsel clients whose sex, race, age, social class, or sexual orientation are different from their own
 - a. are almost certain to be unable to understand these clients.
 - b. can practice unethically if they do not take into consideration how these differences may influence the counseling relationship.
 - c. are most likely not going to be effective with such clients because of these differences.
 - d. will most often need to refer clients who are different from themselves.
 - e. _____
 10. Of the following, I consider the most unethical form of counselor behavior to be
 - a. practicing beyond my level of competence.
 - b. pushing my values on a client when the client is undecided.
 - c. fostering a sexual attraction between a client and a counselor.
 - d. continuing to see a client professionally when it becomes clear that he or she is not benefiting from therapy.
 - e. _____

ETHICAL DECISION MAKING _____

#1 "Teen Pregnancy" (4:00—Suzanne/Charlae)

(Times given are approximate running times from the beginning of the Brooks/Cole logo to the start of the role-play.)

Summary of role-play: The client (Suzanne) is a 13-year-old who just found out she is pregnant and feels she cannot tell her parents. She does not want the counselor (Charlae) to tell her parents because she believes they will be mad. Charlae tells Suzanne that it is up to her to tell her parents, but suggests that they at least let the parents know that she has sought counseling. Suzanne begs the counselor not to tell her parents and says she doesn't have anybody she can talk to who will not tell her parents. Suzanne concludes, "I don't know what to do."

After this role-play on "Teen Pregnancy," and after each of the following role-plays, stop at the pause in the video and assess your own thinking about what you have just seen. Do this before going ahead and listening to the students and our discussion of the situation that was just role-played.

YOUR IMMEDIATE REACTIONS TO THE ROLE-PLAY YOU JUST VIEWED

1. What do you imagine it would be like to be the client in this situation?

2. What key reactions do you have to how Charlae dealt with Suzanne?

3. What main ethical issue(s) do you think this role-play illustrates?

4. What is your stance on this ethical issue (or these ethical issues)?

5. What are the legal issues involved in this case?

6. How might you begin to work with the client in this situation?

NEXT, WATCH THE FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION OF THE ROLE-PLAY

After viewing the discussion that follows this role-play situation, complete the exercises below as a way to refine your thinking as it applies to this case.

Questions to Consider

1. In this situation, if you were Suzanne's counselor, what would you say to her when she asks? "Do you have to tell my parents?"

2. What are some of the things you are likely to do if you were counseling this young woman? Check all that apply.

- ☐ I would encourage Suzanne to talk to me more about her concerns over being pregnant.
- ☐ I would ask her how she came to know that she is pregnant.
- ☐ I would encourage her to seek medical attention.
- ☐ I would explain to her the relevant laws pertaining to minors in this situation, including the limitations of confidentiality.
- ☐ I would inform her parents or legal guardians, either with or without her permission.
- ☐ I would encourage her to bring her parents to some further counseling sessions.
- ☐ I would insist on having her parents be involved in her counseling sessions.
- ☐ I would honor her request and promise not to tell her parents.
- ☐ Before the session ended, I would hope to provide her with some hope that together we could work toward the best resolution of this situation.
- ☐ I would ask her what her thoughts are about what she might do if she is indeed pregnant.
- ☐ I would consult with my supervisor.
- ☐ I would document our discussion.

Other things you might do:

3. In assisting your client in resolving the problem she is facing, consider each of the following basic moral principles, applying each of them to this case.

- **Autonomy:** the promotion of self-determination, or the freedom of clients to choose their own direction.

Given the fact that Suzanne is 13 years old, do you see her as capable of choosing her own direction?

- **Nonmaleficence:** avoiding doing harm, which includes refraining from actions that risk hurting clients, either intentionally or unintentionally.

Since Suzanne makes it clear that she does not want her parents to know that she is pregnant, would you be harming her if you informed her parents against her wishes?

- **Beneficence:** doing good for others.

What is it that you could do that would be good for your client in this case? What do you think would be in her best long-term interests?

- **Justice:** fairness, or providing equal treatment to all people.

Would you be treating your client with fairness if you compromised confidentiality because of her being a minor?

- **Fidelity:** making honest promises and honoring these commitments to clients.

If you had not specifically told your client about this particular limitation of confidentiality, would you be breaking your promise to her regarding the confidentiality of her disclosures to you?

- **Veracity:** truthfulness.

What might you say to the parents if they inquired about Suzanne's progress with you? If they told you that they were concerned about her because she seemed extremely depressed lately, what might you tell them?

Having considered the above moral principles as they apply to the case of counseling a pregnant teen, what principle do you think would most influence your thinking and decision in this case?

KEY POINTS

- This case illustrates the importance of informed consent and a thorough discussion regarding the limits of confidentiality, prior to establishing a counseling relationship.
- The laws differ from state to state regarding legal issues pertaining to counseling of minors. Thus, it behooves you to be aware of the laws of your state, and also to be clear about the policies and procedures of your agency.
- It is important to provide support to the client during a time of crisis, and at the same time not put aside your legal and ethical obligations.
- What is paramount is that your client gets the best help available, and not that she necessarily approves of your actions.
- Since a medical condition is a major part of the picture, you should encourage and assist the client in seeking medical treatment as the laws permit.
- There may be a conflict between your legal and ethical obligations in this case. If so, you'll need to weigh all relevant factors in making a decision.

ETHICS CODES ON PROFESSIONAL'S RESPONSIBILITY

The codes inform professionals of their responsibility to seek appropriate consultation and supervision to assist them in making ethical decisions when they encounter ethical or legal dilemmas.

The primary responsibility of professional counselors is to respect the dignity and to promote the welfare of clients. In making ethical decisions, helping professionals must also take into consideration their responsibilities to the institution where they work, the community, the profession, and to themselves. Ethical decision making involves weighing of all of these factors, while keeping the primacy of the client clearly in focus.

SELF-AWARENESS

#2 "Big Brother" (7:45—Nadine/Richard)

Summary of role-play: The client (Richard) reports that his sister is dating an Asian man. It makes him "pissed off," and he says that he is not going to let that happen. He adds that she's not going to mess with his family like that. He doesn't think his sister has the right to do this and he will do

what he can to stop it. Nadine asks Richard if he thinks his sister should live to make him happy. He says, "My sister is going to do what I say she does and that's just it!"

After viewing the role-play, stop at the pause point and answer the questions below. Then, play the part of the video that involves a discussion of this situation.

Questions to Consider

1. What did you think of the way that Nadine dealt with Richard?
2. If you were the client in this situation, what do you think you would have wanted from your counselor?
3. Assume Richard were your client and said to you: "My sister is dating some Asian guy, and that ain't gonna happen. I'm not going to let it happen. I'll do what I can to stop it." Circle the letter below indicating what comes closest to what you might say to him?
 - a. "You really sound upset. Could you tell me more?"
 - b. "What do you mean when you say that you are not going to let this happen?"
 - c. "I'm really feeling uncomfortable with the anger that I'm sensing from you now."
 - d. "Do you think you're being fair to your sister by deciding for her whom she can or cannot date?"
 - e. "I really pick up your deep caring for your sister and I sense that you want the best for her."
 - f. "I think you ought to calm down. Let's talk more about you and less about your sister."
 - g. "You sound like a racist. How about talking more about how you are judging people who are not of your own kind?"
 - h. "It will be necessary for me to tell your sister what you are telling me because I have concerns about her at this point."
 - i. Another response:

After selecting the one response above as a starting point, what would you most want to say to him or get him to do?

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4. What are the cultural issues to consider in this case?

 5. The counselor in this role-play raised the question of what might you do if you were a counselor who had been the victim of a batterer? What if the client reminded the counselor of her own situation of being abused? What are the ethical considerations here?

 6. If Richard were to tell you as his counselor that he intends to physically harm one of the guys that she is dating, what steps would you take? Circle the letter below indicating what comes closest to what you might say to him?
 - a. I'd ask him to tell me more about his plan to determine if he is serious or if he is simply angry.
 - b. I would tell his sister about my concern that he might do harm to one of her boyfriends.
 - c. I would work with the client to get him to make a "no violence" contract.

- d. I would seek consultation.
- e. I would document what he told me and also document my concerns that he might harm another person.
- f. Another response:

7. The client in this situation is expressing his anger over the fact that his sister is dating someone of another race. How might you acknowledge to him that you sense his anger and begin to work with his anger in the counseling session?

8. If you were intimidated by Richard's anger, how do you think this would influence your ability to effectively work with him?

9. Are you more likely to pay more attention to Richard's concern and responsibility for his sister or are you more likely to focus on his anger? Explain.

10. How might you attempt to include Richard in the process of deciding what is the ethical course for you to follow in this situation?

KEY POINTS

- Pay attention to ethnic, cultural, and racial stereotypes that you may project onto a client such as Richard.
- It is essential that you accurately assess a client's potential to harm another person and know what the laws and ethics codes require you to do about that.
- Be aware of the cultural dimensions of how clients express themselves.
- Recognize your own countertransference and how some of your feelings might either help or hinder your ability to understand and work with your client.

KNOWING YOURSELF AS A PERSON

1. **Be aware of your needs and unresolved personal issues.** It is a must that you acquire awareness of your personal needs and your own unresolved personal conflicts. For example, if you are intimidated by a client's anger because of your unresolved feelings concerning anger, it will be most difficult for you to facilitate an exploration of anger on the client's part. Some of your clients may respond to you through their transference. Some of them will make unrealistic demands

on you. Others will be unable to accept boundaries. Some clients will displace anger onto you. And some may easily fall in love with you. A key ethical area is recognizing how your needs or personal conflicts may get in the way of dealing with a client. Below is a list of personal needs of counselors that may be based on unresolved personal conflicts. Check any of the following that could apply to you.

- ☐ a need to tell people what to do or to provide them with answers
- ☐ a desire to take away pain from clients
- ☐ a desire to calm down a client who is angry
- ☐ a need to have all the answers and to be perfect
- ☐ a need to be recognized, appreciated, and needed
- ☐ a tendency to assume too much responsibility for the changes of clients

List other areas of unresolved personal conflicts or personal problems that could interfere with your ability to counsel others.

2. This case, and many others in this video, illustrate how the counselor's countertransference (the counselor's reaction to the client's transference response) can interfere with the progress of clients. A first step in being able to deal effectively with your countertransference reactions is to recognize them in yourself. Below is a list of examples. Check all of the items that may represent your potential areas of countertransference.

- ☐ seeing yourself in your clients
- ☐ needing constant reinforcement and approval from clients
- ☐ giving advice and solutions to clients
- ☐ developing a strong sexual attraction to a client
- ☐ desiring a social relationship with clients
- ☐ attempting to get clients to do what you think they should do
- ☐ being overprotective with a client

List other potential areas of countertransference.

3. Below are some ways to effectively deal with transference or client reactions to you. Check as many of these as you would be willing to do.

- ☐ be willing to examine your own reactions to clients
- ☐ monitor your own countertransference
- ☐ seek supervision or consultation with difficult cases
- ☐ avoid blaming, labeling, or judging the client
- ☐ demonstrate understanding and respect

List other ways you would deal with difficult reactions of your clients toward you.

ETHICS CODES ON MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS AND COMPETENCE

Most of the codes of ethics state that practitioners are expected to be knowledgeable about the cultures and communities within which they practice. Professionals are aware of their own values, beliefs, and cultural backgrounds, recognizing the potential for influence on their relationships with clients.

The ethics codes state that practitioners should have knowledge of their clients' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in providing culturally sensitive services to diverse client populations.

To become multiculturally competent practitioners, they seek the education, training, experience, and supervision necessary to ensure their effectiveness in working with culturally diverse client populations.

NEXT, WATCH THE FOLLOW UP DISCUSSION OF THE ROLE-PLAY

MULTICULTURAL ISSUES _____

#3 "Culture Clash" (11:55—Sally/Richard)

Summary of role-play: The client (Sally) says she did not expect a counselor (Richard) so young and asks him how old he is and what is his background. Richard answers that he is a student. Sally presses on asking how much experience he has had and whether he knows anything about Chinese culture. He says he can learn, but Sally responds that she is coming for help and not to be teaching somebody.

YOUR IMMEDIATE REACTIONS TO THE ROLE-PLAY YOU JUST VIEWED

1. What do you imagine it would be like to be the client in this situation?

2. What key reactions do you have to how the therapist dealt with the client?

3. What main ethical issue(s) do you think this role-play illustrates?

4. What is your stance on this ethical issue (or these ethical issues)?

5. How might you begin to work with the client in this situation?

NEXT, WATCH THE FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION OF THE ROLE-PLAY

After viewing the discussion that follows this role-play situation, complete the exercises below as a way to refine your thinking as it applies to this case.

Questions to Consider

1. If, during an intake session, you were to meet a client (like Sally) who challenged you because of your age or your being of a different cultural background, how do you expect you might react? Circle the letter below indicating what comes closest to your response.
 - a. I would probably get defensive.
 - b. I would try to convince the client that my age and cultural background have little to do with my understanding her.
 - c. I would openly explore what the differences in age and cultural background mean to her.
 - d. I would ask her if she wanted a referral.
 - e. I would work very hard to prove to her that I can help her.
 - f. I would acknowledge my limitation, yet I'd do what is required to be helpful to her.

What do you think would be the impact of your response on your client?

2. How able are you to respond when a client challenges you on your age, gender, or culture, implying that because of your differences, you will not be able to be helpful.

3. Do you think that effective counseling demands an ideal match between you and your client?

4. In this case, Sally wondered if her counselor would be able to be helpful to her, partly because of her concern about cultural differences and age. How do you think the counselor (Richard) dealt with her challenges to him?

5. If you were to work with Sally, might you be concerned about making a mistake if you did not know enough about the Chinese culture? If so, how might you deal with a "mistake" if you made one?

6. What do you think you'd need to know about her culture to develop a trusting relationship with her?

KEY POINTS

- As a counselor, you need to recognize how working with clients who differ from you in the ways listed below may affect you and your ability to counsel them effectively and ethically.
 - gender
 - age
 - race
 - culture
 - socioeconomic background
 - physical ability
 - sexual orientation
- It is not essential that there be a perfect match between client and counselor on all variables.
- As a student intern, you do not have to know everything about a client's culture in order to be effective.
- In working effectively with differences between you and your clients, you need to:
 - acquire academic and experiential multicultural training
 - develop working therapeutic relationships
 - be flexible in applying theories
 - be open to being challenged and tested
 - be aware of your own value systems, potential stereotyping, and any traces of prejudice
- Be able to deal with a client's challenge over some difference between the two of you.
- Avoid becoming defensive when clients confront you with questions pertaining to your level of competence.
- It is more helpful to acknowledge your limitations than it is to pretend you are more experienced than you really are.
- Mistakes do not have to be fatal, either to you or to your client. What is significant is how you deal with "mistakes" or how you recover from them.
- It is burdensome to expect perfect interventions in dealing with differences between you and your client.
- Rely on your clients to teach you what they think you need to know about their culture.
- If you were to ever be involved in a malpractice action, it is not necessary to demonstrate that you made the perfect intervention. What is necessary is that you used good professional judgment in dealing with a case and that you demonstrate that you had carefully thought about the relevant issues in the case and had taken appropriate action and documented the course of action.

BECOMING AN EFFECTIVE MULTICULTURAL PRACTITIONER

As many of the role-plays in this video will illustrate, working with culturally diverse client populations requires that you possess the awareness, knowledge, and skills to effectively deal with the concerns of people with whom you work. We have emphasized that it is unrealistic to expect you to have an in-depth knowledge of all cultural backgrounds; it is feasible for you to have a comprehensive grasp of general principles for working ethically and sensitively with clients who differ from you. This would be a good time to take an inventory of your current level of awareness, knowledge, and skills. You can use the following checklist to identify areas of competence you now possess as well as areas in which you need to acquire awareness, knowledge, or skills.

1. Assessment of Beliefs and Attitudes of Culturally Effective Practitioners

Place a check mark in the space before each of the beliefs and attitudes in this section that you think you already hold or an area of awareness that you already possess.

- ☐ familiarity with your own culture
- ☐ being able to identify your basic assumptions
- ☐ recognizing and understanding your own stereotypes and preconceived notions that you may hold toward other racial and ethnic groups
- ☐ not allowing your bias, values, or problems to interfere with working with culturally different clients
- ☐ welcoming diverse value orientations
- ☐ examining and understanding the world from the vantage point of your clients
- ☐ monitoring your functioning through consultation and supervision
- ☐ recognizing the limits of your multicultural competence and expertise
- ☐ respecting clients' religious and spiritual beliefs and values
- ☐ recognizing that traditional approaches to healing may not be appropriate for all clients or for all problems

What steps can you take to increase your awareness or to explore certain beliefs and attitudes?

2. Assessment of Knowledge of Culturally Effective Practitioners

Place a check mark in the space before each of the knowledges in this section that you think you already possess.

- ☐ knowing about your own racial and cultural heritage and how it affects you personally and in your work
- ☐ understanding worldview of clients with different cultural backgrounds
- ☐ having specific knowledge of particular individuals with whom you are working
- ☐ acknowledging your own racist attitudes, beliefs, and feelings
- ☐ viewing diversity in a positive light
- ☐ knowing how to help clients make use of indigenous support systems
- ☐ avoiding the imposition of your values and expectations on your clients from differing cultural backgrounds
- ☐ becoming aware of the values, life experiences, cultural heritage, and historical background of your culturally different clients
- ☐ understanding the basic values underlying the therapeutic process, and knowing how these values may clash with the cultural values of various ethnic and cultural groups
- ☐ becoming aware of the institutional barriers that prevent culturally diverse clients from utilizing the mental-health services available in their community

What steps can you take to acquire knowledge in some of the areas above where you are now limited?

3. Skills and Intervention Strategies of Culturally Effective Practitioners

Place a check mark in the space before each of the skill areas in this section that you think you already possess.

- ☐ seeking out consultation to help develop necessary skills

- ___ using methods to define goals consistent with the life experiences of culturally diverse client populations
- ___ being willing to go beyond the office and into the community
- ___ educating clients about the therapeutic process
- ___ seeking consultation with traditional healers or religious and spiritual leaders to better serve culturally diverse clients, when appropriate
- ___ not limiting myself to one therapeutic approach, but recognizing that therapeutic strategies may be culture bound
- ___ exercising institutional intervention skills on behalf of my clients
- ___ becoming involved in the community to the extent possible
- ___ committing myself to understanding myself as a racial and cultural being, and actively seeking a nonracist identity
- ___ actively pursuing and engaging in professional and personal growth activities to address my limitations in the area of multicultural counseling

What steps can you take to acquire or refine those skills above where you are currently limited?

MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING COMPETENCIES: A SELF EXAMINATION

Now that you have completed the checklist, complete the following self examination of multicultural counseling competencies.

MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING COMPETENCIES: A SELF EXAMINATION

The following is a self-examination on how well you are able to demonstrate multicultural counseling competencies based on standards proposed by Sue, Arrendondo, and McDavis (1992). It is for your own use in evaluating how well you are doing in becoming competent as a counselor of clients whose cultural background differs from yours.

This self-assessment is not intended as a research instrument and is certainly not intended to compete with other excellent research protocols.

Give yourself a grade for each question based on the following criteria.

A = always B = often C = sometimes D = seldom F = never

If you wish to use numbers to calculate an average to arrive at a grade, use the following scores: A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0.

I. Counselor Awareness, Knowledge, and Skills

- ___ 1. I actively work on becoming more aware of my own cultural heritage.
- ___ 2. I constantly seek to become more aware of different cultural heritages.
- ___ 3. I strive to understand and value cultural heritages that differ from my own.
- ___ 4. I work at understanding how my own cultural background influences my beliefs, values, attitudes, and biases about psychological processes.
- ___ 5. I regularly evaluate the limits of my competencies and expertise in counseling persons from different cultural backgrounds.
- ___ 6. I question my comfortableness with differences that exist between me and my clients in regard to race, ethnicity, culture, and beliefs.
- ___ 7. I strive to understand how my own racial and cultural heritage affects my personal and professional definitions and biases about what is normal and abnormal.

- ___ 8. I seek to understand how oppression, racism, discrimination, and stereotyping affects me personally.
- ___ 9. I regularly question how I may have benefited or been adversely affected directly or indirectly by individual, institutional, or cultural racism.
- ___ 10. I diligently work at uncovering my own beliefs, attitudes, and feelings regarding racism.
- ___ 11. I seek to gain greater knowledge about how I socially impact others.
- ___ 12. I strive to become ever more knowledgeable about my communication style and how it may facilitate or hinder working with clients who are culturally different from me.
- ___ 13. I regularly seek out educational, consultative, and training experiences that enrich my understanding of culturally different populations.
- ___ 14. I constantly engage in the process of understanding myself as a racial and cultural being.
- ___ 15. I actively strive to achieve a non-racist identity.

II. Understanding the Worldview of the Culturally Different Client

- ___ 16. I work at becoming aware of my negative emotional reactions toward racial and ethnic groups that may prove detrimental to my clients.
- ___ 17. I willingly and regularly contrast my own beliefs and attitudes with those of culturally different clients with whom I work in a way that is nonjudgmental.
- ___ 18. I question myself constantly about any stereotypes and preconceived notions I hold toward other racial and ethnic minority groups.
- ___ 19. I study to obtain specific knowledge and information about particular culturally different groups before trying to work with them individually or collectively.
- ___ 20. I work to more thoroughly incorporate competencies that will help me in understanding the literature on minority identity developmental models.
- ___ 21. I update myself regularly (at least every three months) in understanding how race, culture, and ethnicity may affect personality formation, vocational choices, manifestations of psychological disorders, help-seeking behavior, and the appropriateness of counseling approaches.
- ___ 22. I actively engage in processes (such as reading, supervision, and discussions) that help me gain a greater awareness of how sociopolitical influences impinge upon the life of racial and ethnic minorities.
- ___ 23. I interact with people of different cultures in striving to understand how immigration issues, poverty, racism, stereotyping, and powerlessness all leave major scars that may influence the counseling process.
- ___ 24. I familiarize myself as often as possible (but at least quarterly) with relevant and up-to-date research regarding the mental health and disorders of various ethnic and racial groups.
- ___ 25. I actively seek out educational experiences that enrich my knowledge, understanding, and cross-cultural skills.
- ___ 26. I am actively involved with individuals, outside of counseling settings, whose cultural heritage differs from mine in order to more fully appreciate and understand their lives and life styles.

III. Developing Appropriate Intervention Strategies and Techniques

- ___ 27. I seek to recognize as well as respect my clients' religious and spiritual beliefs and values about physical and mental functioning.
- ___ 28. I strive to understand and respect indigenous helping practices and minority community intrinsic help-giving networks.
- ___ 29. I value and appreciate bilingualism.
- ___ 30. I do not view another language as an impediment to counseling.
- ___ 31. I seek to know and understand how generic characteristics of counseling (e.g., culture or class bound) may clash with cultural values of various minority groups.
- ___ 32. I strive to recognize institutional barriers that prevent minorities from using mental health services.
- ___ 33. I examine potential bias in assessment instruments on a regular basis.
- ___ 34. I use assessment procedures and interpret assessment findings in regard to the cultural and linguistic characteristics of my clients.
- ___ 35. I regularly study about minority family structures, hierarchies, values, and beliefs.
- ___ 36. I seek out knowledge about the community characteristics and resources where I live.
- ___ 37. I make it my business to become aware of relevant discriminatory practices at the social and community level that may be affecting the psychological welfare of my clients and minority culture populations.

- ___ 38. I work constantly at becoming skilled and able to engage in a variety of verbal and nonverbal helping responses, including the accurate and appropriate sending and receiving of verbal and nonverbal messages.
- ___ 39. I resist becoming tied down to any one method or approach to helping.
- ___ 40. When I sense that my helping style is limited and potentially inappropriate, I work at anticipating and ameliorating its negative impact.
- ___ 41. I question myself periodically as to when I should exercise institutional intervention skills on behalf of clients.
- ___ 42. I focus with clients to help them determine whether a problem stems from racism or bias in others so that they do not inappropriately blame themselves.
- ___ 43. I seek consultation from traditional healers or religious and spiritual leaders and practitioners when it is appropriate in the treatment of culturally different clients.
- ___ 44. I take responsibility for interacting in the language requested by my clients even if it means making a referral to outside resources, such as a bilingual counselor, or finding a translator with cultural knowledge and an appropriate professional background.
- ___ 45. I regularly engage in training and becoming more of an expert in the use of traditional assessment and testing instruments and in understanding their technical aspects as well as cultural limitations.
- ___ 46. I work toward eliminating biases, prejudices, and discriminatory practices.
- ___ 47. I strive to become increasingly cognizant of the sociopolitical contexts in conducting evaluations and providing interventions.
- ___ 48. I sensitize myself through various means to issues of oppression, sexism, and racism.
- ___ 49. I take responsibility in educating my clients about the processes of psychological intervention, such as goals, expectations, legal rights, and my counseling orientation.

Scores on this self-administered instrument range from "A" to "F." There are three areas in which to assess yourself:

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. Counselor Attitude, Knowledge, and Skills, Items 1–15 | My Grade _____ |
| 2. Understanding the Worldview of the Culturally Different Client, Items 16–26 | My Grade _____ |
| 3. Developing Appropriate Interventions Strategies and Techniques, Items 27–49 | My Grade _____ |
| | My Total Grade _____ |

Since all of the above three areas are related, a low grade in any one will impact the other two. Therefore, in evaluating your score, you should look at both your area grades as well as your total grade. Ways to constructively improve your grades include:

- examining your own cultural heritage and background,
- attending workshops and classes on multicultural counseling,
- obtaining supervision from a skilled multicultural counselor,
- reading books and journal articles,
- joining a group that studies multicultural issues,
- viewing videos on multicultural counseling,
- participating in interactive computer software focused on multicultural counseling,
- becoming a member of a professional group that deals with multicultural counseling issues, such as the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development,
- participating in minority culture events in your community, and working in the sociopolitical arena to bring about needed changes.

Source: Adapted from S. T. Gladding, P. Pedersen, and D. Stone, "Multicultural Counseling Competencies: A Self Examination," *ACES Spectrum Newsletter*, Winter, 1997, Vol. 58, No. 2. Reprinted with permission of authors.

REFERENCES

1. In *Issues and Ethics* (pp. 324–325) see the section on ethical codes in multicultural counseling for a summary.
 - See also the section on Matching Client and Counselor (pp. 334–336).
 - See also the chart on Multicultural Counseling Competencies (pp. 340–341).
2. In *Becoming a Helper* (pp. 190–193) see the section of Developing Multicultural Competencies and Standards.

FOLLOW-UP SELF-INVENTORY

Now that you have worked with some key ideas and situations on the process of making ethical decisions, take this inventory to determine your degree of agreement/disagreement with some attitudes about ethical thinking. Use the following code:

5 = I strongly agree with this statement.

4 = I agree, in most respects, with this statement.

3 = I am undecided in my opinion about this statement.

2 = I disagree, in most respects, with this statement.

1 = I strongly disagree with this statement.

- ___ 1. If there were a conflict between the ethical and the legal course of action to follow in a case, I would always give priority to what I believe is ethical.
- ___ 2. If I am uncertain regarding how to proceed in facing an ethical dilemma, I am very willing to seek consultation.
- ___ 3. To my mind, most ethical matters are clear-cut and have either right or wrong answers.
- ___ 4. I expect to find answers to ethical challenges in the codes of ethics.
- ___ 5. If I hope to work effectively with a client, it will be essential to have an ideal match and not have any major differences.
- ___ 6. At this time, I feel well prepared to counsel culturally diverse client populations.
- ___ 7. Ethical practice demands that counselors become familiar with the value systems of diverse cultural groups.
- ___ 8. I would have no trouble working with someone from a culture very different from mine, because we would be more alike than different.
- ___ 9. Unless I have a high degree of self-awareness, there is a real possibility that I will use my clients to satisfy my own needs.
- ___ 10. I do not think it is a good idea to involve my client in the ethical decision-making process, for this could increase the chances of a malpractice suit.
- ___ 11. If I were faced with an ethical decision, the first step I would take would be to quickly decide on what appears to be the best course of action.
- ___ 12. For me, being an ethical practitioner *mainly* entails doing what it will take to avoid a malpractice suit.
- ___ 13. Being an ethical practitioner implies that I am willing to engage in continuing education in ethics.
- ___ 14. It is essential that I know the rules and regulations of the institution where I work.
- ___ 15. In addition to knowing the ethics codes, it is essential that I am familiar with the applicable state laws and federal regulations.

Go over this inventory and circle the numbers of any items where you have modified your thinking in any way. From viewing this segment of the video and from involving yourself in this self-study workbook, what are you learning about the process of dealing with an ethical dilemma? To what extent are you realizing how knowing yourself is a crucial component of ethical practice? Any learnings on what it will take for you to become an ethical multicultural counselor?

CONTENT AREAS OF THE STUDENT VERSION

PART TWO: VALUES AND THE HELPING RELATIONSHIP

SELF-INVENTORY TO COMPLETE BEFORE VIEWING SEGMENT TWO OF THE VIDEO

Directions: This is *not* a traditional multiple-choice test in which you must select the “one right answer.” Instead, it is a survey of *your* basic beliefs and attitudes pertaining to a host of ethical issues in counseling practice. Circle the letter beside the response that most closely reflects *your viewpoint* at this time. *You may circle more than one response* for each item. Notice that a blank line (“e”) is included in each item. If none of the provided options seems appropriate or if you have what you consider a better answer, write your response (or responses) on the line. After you have viewed the various segments in the video and completed the exercises in this Student Workbook, look back over these self-inventories to see if you are inclined to change any of your answers. It would be of interest to take the inventory again at the end of the course to see whether, or to what degree, any of your beliefs, attitudes, and values have changed.

1. My ethical position regarding the role of values in therapy is that, as a counselor, I should
 - a. expose my values, without imposing them on the client.
 - b. teach my values to clients if this is what they need.
 - c. always keep my values out of counseling.
 - d. never impose my values, regardless of the circumstances.
 - e. _____
2. Regarding the role that spiritual and religious values should play in counseling practice, I believe that I would be inclined to
 - a. not pay attention to these values in counseling because of my tendency to impose my beliefs on my clients.
 - b. strongly encourage my clients to think about how spirituality or religion is likely to bring meaning to their lives.
 - c. avoid bringing up the topic unless my client raises this for discussion.
 - d. regularly conduct an assessment of my client’s spiritual and religious beliefs during the intake session.
 - e. _____
3. Regarding value judgments in therapy, I believe that therapists should
 - a. remain neutral and keep their values out of the therapeutic process.
 - b. make value judgments regarding their clients’ behavior.
 - c. actively teach their values to clients.
 - d. encourage their clients to make value judgments about the quality of their own behavior.
 - e. _____
4. As a counselor I expect that my values will affect the counseling process
 - a. in those cases in which I have values strongly divergent from my client’s.
 - b. only in those cases in which I attempt to persuade my client to my way of thinking.
 - c. when I have negative reactions to certain behaviors or values of my client.
 - d. just about always, because I cannot separate my values from my professional work.
 - e. _____
5. In terms of appreciating and understanding the value systems of clients who are culturally different from me,
 - a. I think it is essential that I learn about the specific cultural values my clients hold.
 - b. I would encourage my clients to accept the values of the dominant society.
 - c. I would ask my clients if they would like a referral if I sensed they were even mildly uncomfortable with me.
 - d. I would attempt to modify my counseling procedures to fit their cultural values.
 - e. _____
6. The client I might have the most trouble in remaining objective with because of my values would probably be a client who is
 - a. currently having an affair and does not want to inform his or her spouse of this situation.

- b. having unprotected sex with multiple partners.
 - c. considering a divorce, yet who does not want to explore the issue.
 - d. expecting to find an answer to his or her problems mainly by relying on religion.
 - e. _____
7. If I became aware of a major value conflict with a client, my inclination would be to
 - a. discuss this matter with my client.
 - b. suggest a referral to my client because of the conflict in our value systems.
 - c. attempt to influence the client to my way of thinking.
 - d. seek consultation and document the matter.
 - e. _____
 8. If I were to counsel lesbian and gay clients, a major concern of mine would be
 - a. maintaining objectivity.
 - b. pushing my own values.
 - c. no concerns other than those I would have for any client, regardless of sexual orientation.
 - d. establishing a positive therapeutic relationship.
 - e. _____
 9. What is your policy on being honest with your clients about your values?
 - a. I believe that it is unethical to burden my client with my beliefs, unless they want to know my position on a given issue.
 - b. I would be extremely careful in disclosing my values to a client, even if they asked, for fear of promoting dependency.
 - c. My belief is that it is good to be completely frank and open with clients if I hold a different perspective from them.
 - d. I would generally talk to a supervisor or colleague if I were experiencing a value conflict with a client.
 - e. _____
 10. If I were counseling a couple and one of them shared with me that he or she were involved in an extramarital affair, I would
 - a. strongly encourage this person to bring this out in the open during a session with the couple.
 - b. support whatever decision this individual wanted to make.
 - c. inform the client that I could no longer work with him or her because of my moral opposition to extramarital affairs.
 - d. tell this person that I was uncomfortable having this information.
 - e. _____

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

Before viewing any of the role-plays in this segment, take the time to reflect on your immediate answers to the following questions pertaining to the role of your values in the therapeutic process. Your answers will have an impact on how you will work through the ethical dilemmas presented in the role-plays in this segment.

- What are the basic values and assumptions you hold pertaining to what makes the therapeutic process work?
- If you have definite values that you think clients should adopt, does ethical practice imply that you make these values known to potential clients through the informed consent process?
- Is the purpose of counseling to teach values to clients or to teach clients how to discover their own values?
- If clients ask you for direction, advice, or for answers, what is the best course of action to take?
- What is the difference between exposing versus imposing your values?
- Is it acceptable for you to make your values known to your clients if they do not request this information?
- Is it best not to reveal your values to your clients, lest you bias the direction they are likely to take?
- Can and should you keep your values out of the counseling process?
- How can you determine when and how to share your values with clients?
- What are some areas where you are most likely to encounter value conflicts with clients?

- How can you best deal with value conflicts when they arise?
- When might you find it necessary to refer clients because of value differences between the two of you?

As you view the following role-plays, keep in mind your position with respect to the role that your values play in your work as a counselor. Ask if your values in each case would help or hinder you in providing the best assistance possible to the client.

VALUE CONFLICTS _____

#4 "The Divorce" (15:25—Gary/Janice)

Summary of role-play: The client (Janice) has made a decision to leave her husband and get a divorce. She says she doesn't want to do this (work on her relationship) anymore. The counselor (Gary) says he hates to hear that. Janice hasn't been happy for a long time and she is tired of her husband's temper and his moods. Gary brings up the kids and asks who will be the advocate for them. Janice thinks that if she is happy, they will be happy. She says she will take care of the kids, but that she has to do something with her life. Gary concludes by asking, "Is divorce the best way to take care of them?"

YOUR IMMEDIATE REACTIONS TO THE ROLE-PLAY YOU JUST VIEWED

1. What do you imagine it would be like to be the client in this situation?

2. What reactions do you have to how Gary dealt with Janice?

3. What main ethical issue(s) do you think this role-play illustrates?

4. What is your stance on this ethical issue (or these ethical issues)?

5. How might you begin to work with the client in this situation?

NEXT, WATCH THE FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION OF THE ROLE-PLAY

After viewing the discussion that follows this role-play situation, complete the exercises below as a way to refine your thinking as it applies to this case.

Questions to Consider

1. What do you think of the counselor's intervention when he asks, "Who is the advocate for your children? Is divorce the best way to take care of them?"

2. If you thought your client was acting in a very irresponsible way without sufficient consideration as to how divorce might affect her children, what would you say to her?

3. Assume that Janice asked for your advice saying, "I am very tormented over what's the best thing to do. I am miserable in my marriage and I want a divorce. Yet, my religious and cultural beliefs pull me in the direction of making the sacrifice of keeping the family together. Tell me what's the best decision." What do you imagine you'd say to her?

4. What if Janice were Chinese with a value system that put priority on preserving family unity? Assume that she informed you she is engaged in a conflict between her Chinese values and her wishes to think about doing what would make her happy. How would you respond?

5. If Janice were your client, would you feel a need to seek consultation because of the influence of your values in this situation? If so, what would you want from the person you consulted?

6. If you were counseling Janice and encouraged her to remain in her marriage for the sake of the children, might you be vulnerable to a malpractice suit at some later time? If Janice were to follow your advice, and a year later claim that you acted improperly by influencing her decision, what defense would you offer for your intervention?

7. Are you aware of any countertransference on your part that could be operating if you were counseling Janice? Do you have any unresolved conflicts in this area that might lead you to persuade Janice to get a divorce or to remain married?

8. In assisting your client in resolving the problem she is facing, consider each of the following basic moral principles, applying each of them to this case.

- **Autonomy:** the promotion of self-determination, or the freedom of clients to choose their own direction.

Given the fact that Janice is telling you that she has thought about the possible affect of her divorce on her children and that she regards this as her best choice, would you support her choice? Why or why not?

- **Nonmaleficence:** avoiding doing harm, which includes refraining from actions that risk hurting clients, either intentionally or unintentionally.

If you discouraged Janice from getting a divorce and encouraged her to stay in the situation for the sake of her children, what potential harm could this bring to Janice and her family?

- **Beneficence:** doing good for others.

What do you think would be good for both Janice and her family in this case?

- **Fidelity:** making honest promises and honoring these commitments to clients.

If you had not specifically told your client about your personal values about family life and divorce, would you be honoring your commitment to working for what is best for your client?

Having considered the above principles as they apply to this case, what principle do you think would most influence your interventions in this situation? Why?

9. **Another approach to working with Janice.** Assume that another counselor works with Janice differently. He believes that it is not his place to bring his values about family life and divorce into the sessions. He is clear about his own biases regarding marriage and divorce, but does not either impose them or expose them to his client. His primary interest is to help Janice discover what is best for her. He is also willing to see Janice and her husband to explore feelings about the divorce, or to explore alternatives to divorce, if that is what she wants. He sees it as unethical to push Janice toward a definite course of action, and he lets Janice know that it is his job to help her be honest with herself. He does have an expectation that she give the divorce considerable thought, however. He tells her that he thinks that because of the effect a divorce will have on all concerned in her family, that her decision is one that should be carefully thought through.

What are your reactions to this counselor's approach? What aspects of this approach might you incorporate if you were counseling Janice?

10. **Another approach.** This counselor has been married and divorced several times. Although he believes in marriage, he informs Janice that he sees far too many people who stay in miserable marriages for the sake of keeping a family together. In his view, doing this often hurts not only the wife and the husband, but also the children, who often feel the burden of being the reason the couple remains together. His interventions with Janice are leading in the direction of her initiating a divorce. He enthusiastically recommends that Janice thinks about herself for a change and not let anything stop her in pursuing what will make her happy.

What are your reactions to this counselor's approach? What aspects of this approach might you incorporate if you were counseling Janice?

11. What did you learn from this exercise?

ETHICS CODES ON VALUES IN COUNSELING

The codes of ethics state that helping professionals are aware of their own values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. They respect the rights of clients to hold values, attitudes, and beliefs that differ from their own. Because of this respect for client autonomy, practitioners avoid imposing their values on clients.

Helping professionals foster self-awareness and personal growth in themselves. They recognize that when they are aware of their own personal needs, values, attitudes, and cultural background, the process of helping others is less likely to be hindered by such factors.

COMMENTARY

In this role-play situation Gary basically used guilt as a way to motivate Janice to consider her children as the primary factor in deciding about divorce. Gary's line of questioning was not following Janice's lead, but was furthering his own value agenda of what he thought she should do. He wanted Janice to consider certain issues that she had not brought up herself. His questions tended to increase her defensiveness.

We don't think it is the counselor's job to make the decision for the client, but to help her sort out her values and make the best decision possible for herself and for others involved. We raise the following questions:

- Is it ethical for the counselor to lead the client in a particular direction?
- If Janice is not concerned about the welfare of her children, does the counselor have an ethical right and obligation to focus on the impact of divorce on the client's children?
- Would Gary talk to a male client who is considering a divorce in the same way as he did to his female client?
- If Gary were coming to us for supervision in this case, we would ask him to keep in the forefront the reasons Janice is coming to see him. We would hope that he would ask questions such as: What difficulties does she struggle with? Where is she unclear or stuck? How can he help her make a decision that is congruent with her own value system? What is his need to put his own agenda before his client's agenda?
- In a supervision session with Gary, we would raise what might be going on with him besides his interest in being an advocate for the children. Could it be that he was experiencing some countertransference? Might it be possible that Gary could have come from a divorced home or may have gone through a divorce himself? Is it appropriate to use his experiences as a basis for influencing Janice to move in a definite direction?
- It is also possible that Gary has a gender bias that women should stay in the marriage, regardless of their personal happiness. We would at least ask Gary to think about his beliefs about gender roles in family life to see how these beliefs could be operating in his work with Janice.
- We would also encourage him to work with Janice in such a way that she would feel invited to explore any feelings or concerns about her decision. By following her lead, the counselor will increase the chance of practicing ethically by working within the parameters of Janice's value system.

VALUE CONFLICTS _____

#5 "Doing It My Way" (21:00—Charlae/Sally)

Summary of role-play: The client (Charlae) is seeking increased independence and wants to break away from her parents and be "free." Her Dad wants her to stay at home, but she wants to live at college in the dorms. The counselor (Sally) suggests that Charlae talk with her parents about this, but she just wants to move out, without any discussion with her parents. Sally is concerned about what her parents' reaction might be if she moves out without involving her parents in this decision. Charlae says, "I could really care less what they think." Sally wants Charlae to think about the consequences and the effect on her parents and the fact that they have made sacrifices for her.

YOUR IMMEDIATE REACTIONS TO THE ROLE-PLAY YOU JUST VIEWED

1. What do you imagine it would be like to be the client in this situation?

2. What key reactions do you have to how Sally dealt with Charlae?

3. What main ethical issue(s) do you think this role-play illustrates?

4. What is your stance on this ethical issue (or these ethical issues)?

5. How might you begin to work with the client in this situation?

NEXT, WATCH THE FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION OF THE ROLE-PLAY

After viewing the discussion that follows this role-play situation, complete the exercises below as a way to refine your thinking as it applies to this case.

Questions to Consider

1. Consider Charlae's reactions: "I want to break away from my parents and not be under their thumb. They tell me what to do. I want to move out of home and into the dorms. I could care less what they think." How would you respond to her?

2. Do you have any biases, values, or life experiences that would make it difficult for you to counsel Charlae? If you realize that any of these factors would interfere with your ability to work with Charlae, how would you go about making a referral in a sensitive manner?

3. In assisting Charlae in accomplishing her own goals, consider each of the following basic principles, applying each of them to this case.

- **Autonomy:** the promotion of self-determination, or the freedom of clients to choose their own direction.

Charlae is clearly striving for autonomy; she wants the freedom to make choices for her life. As her counselor, how could you lend your support to her quest for self-determination?

- **Nonmaleficence:** avoiding doing harm, which includes refraining from actions that risk hurting clients, either intentionally or unintentionally.

If you discouraged Charlae from moving away from her parents, could this be harmful to her in the long range? Explain.

- **Beneficence:** doing good for others.

In this case, would you be thinking of what is good for Charlae? for her parents? for both Charlae and her parents? Explain.

Having considered the above principles as they apply to this case, what principle do you think would most influence your interventions in this situation? Why?

4. If you were a colleague of Sally's and she sought consultation from you, which of the following options might you suggest to her? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Support Charlae in her efforts to establish her independence
- ☐ Encourage Charlae to bring her parents into a counseling session with her
- ☐ Ask Charlae to write a letter to her parents telling them why she wants to live away from home
- ☐ Persuade Charlae to think of how her actions might hurt her parents
- ☐ Challenge Sally on her philosophy of counseling
- ☐ Encourage Sally to explore her own possible countertransference
- ☐ Suggest to Sally that there is not a good match between counselor and client
- ☐ Encourage Sally to refer Charlae because of a value conflict

Other options you'd want to discuss with Sally:

5. As Sally is consulting with you, what would you most want to say to her?

6. As Sally's colleague, do you think she should attempt to adopt the client's individualistic values and work within this framework, or should she influence Charlae to consider the values and wishes of her parents? Explain.

COMMENTARY

This vignette represents another illustration of an obvious clash of cultural values. From Sally's Chinese background and her own life experiences, Sally places a premium on values (Eastern orientation) such as: consulting parents in major life decisions; showing respect and obedience for parents; showing appreciation for the sacrifices parents made; living life in accordance with what parents think is best; putting aside personal desires if they conflict with those of parents.

In this case, Charlae has a different set of basic values (ones that tend to be Western in orientation). She values independence, doing what she believes is right for her, striving for autonomy, and indifference to parental wants and desires.

Just because Sally disagrees with Charlae's choice in this matter does not mean that she cannot work effectively with her. What is necessary is that Sally is able to remain objective by working within the client's frame of reference, rather than expecting her client to adopt a different set of values.

If we were Sally's supervisor, here are some issues we would want to explore with her.

- How does she view the counselor's role? Is it her job to persuade her client or to support her client's choices?
- There might be a potential countertransference issue operating in this situation. Sally may have feelings about not following what her parents wanted of her, which could make it difficult to achieve objectivity in this situation.
- We would work with Sally to consider the impact of working with a Euro-American client with different values from her Chinese values. What would be essential is for Sally to respect her client's values, even if they differ from hers.

Sally is approaching counseling by using an Eastern orientation with a Western client. This case illustrates a differing value orientation between the counselor and the client. We would hope the counselor would consider the following list of values that are associated with Western and Eastern orientations to determine how these values are likely to operate in the counseling process.

Some core Western values

primacy of the individual
democratic orientation
nuclear family structure
emphasis on youth
independence
assertiveness
nonconformity
competition
conflict
freedom

Some core Eastern values

primacy of the relationship
authoritarian orientation
extended family structure
emphasis on maturity
interdependence
compliance
conformity
cooperation
harmony
security

It is always a good idea to look to the ethics codes for general guidance when confronted with a value conflict. Below are some standards pertaining to respecting diversity and nondiscrimination.

ETHICS CODES ON RESPECTING DIVERSITY

Professionals actively attempt to understand the diverse cultural backgrounds of the clients with whom they work.

Professionals do not practice or condone any form of discrimination on the basis of age, sex, race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sexual orientation, marital status, political belief, or disability.

SEXUAL ISSUES

#6 "The Promiscuous One" (25:20—Richard/Suzanne)

Summary of role-play: The counselor (Richard) expresses concern for the client (Suzanne) who reports meeting a guy in a bar and having sex with him, which she says is the best she has had in a week. He asks if she is protecting herself from pregnancy and/or HIV. She claims she has the greatest life as it is. Suzanne says, "I'm not going to get HIV. People are blowing it totally out of proportion." She says she doesn't know why he is so worried about it, for after all, it's her life.

Richard then focuses on how Suzanne's behavior plays out the recurring theme of abandonment by her father. She thinks there is no connection.

YOUR IMMEDIATE REACTIONS TO THE ROLE-PLAY YOU JUST VIEWED

1. What do you imagine it would be like to be the client in this situation?

2. What key reactions do you have to how Richard dealt with Suzanne?

3. What main ethical issue(s) do you think this role-play illustrates?

4. What is your stance on this ethical issue (or these ethical issues)?

5. How might you begin to work with the client in this situation?

NEXT, WATCH THE FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION OF THE ROLE-PLAY

After viewing the discussion that follows this role-play situation, complete the exercises below as a way to refine your thinking as it applies to this case.

Questions to Consider

1. Assume that Suzanne is your client. What are some interventions that you think you'd make in this situation? Check all that apply.

- ☐ I would let her know how disappointed I was in what she was doing to herself.
- ☐ I would tell her that I am unable to work with her because of her irresponsible attitude and behavior.
- ☐ My response would be to support her in what she is doing if she is enjoying her life.
- ☐ I would wonder why she is bringing this information into her therapy session, and I'd ask what she wants from me.
- ☐ My response would be to ask her to explore what she is getting from behaving in self-destructive ways.

- ___ I would strive to educate her about the dangers of what she is doing and encourage her to protect herself, both physically and emotionally.
- ___ Without imposing my values on her, I'd let Suzanne know what my values are in this case and ask her to explore other ways of having fun.

What else might you do or say?

2. Do you think it is ever appropriate to convince a client (such as Suzanne) that her behavior is harmful? Is it ethically acceptable for the counselor to use persuasion? Explain.

3. Under what circumstances might you try to convince or persuade this client to change a particular behavior?

4. Is it appropriate for Richard to educate Suzanne about safer sex, even if she did not request this? Explain.

5. If Suzanne were your client, would you attempt to educate her? If so, how would you go about this so that she might be open to being educated?

6. What are your values pertaining to casual sex? How might your values influence your interventions with Suzanne?

7. If Suzanne told the counselor that she just found out that she was HIV-positive, is there any obligation in this case regarding the duty to warn her partners? If so, how would you handle this with her?

COMMENTARY

Here is a client who is practicing unsafe sex and putting herself at risk for an unwanted pregnancy and contracting of a sexually-transmitted disease. The counselor is very concerned about her welfare and would like to persuade her to think about her actions and to protect herself.

In the discussion following the role-play, one of the students made an excellent comment on making education a part of the therapy process. What is crucial is getting the client ready to hear and accept this information and by asking her if it is okay to provide some education.

This is a case where two principles are most likely in conflict. Indeed, Suzanne has a right to make her own decisions (self-determination and autonomy), yet if her choices are self-destructive (nonmaleficence), is it ethical for the counselor to support her in these choices? We think the counselor needs to do whatever possible to encourage Suzanne to think about what will lead to her welfare over time. The counselor's interventions need to be seen in the context about what he already knows about this client. What has she already told Richard about herself? What are the pressing concerns that she has already addressed? What are the themes in her life that she has been exploring in therapy? Why is she in counseling in the first place?

A key question we'd explore with Suzanne would be, "Why are you telling me about this? Why are you bringing this into the session?" Depending on her response, we are likely to explore the clinical issues involved, such as how she might be sabotaging herself. In this way, we are allowing Suzanne to take the lead in her own therapy. If she brings up in therapy an area in her life that she wants to change, then the sessions will have a focus.

We liked that Richard expressed his concern for her, and attempted to get her to look at the consequences of her current behavior. This could be a useful focus of the therapy. He also tried to suggest a possible link between her behavior and her theme of feeling abandoned by her father. Clinically, this might be a useful strategy.

The most basic question that Suzanne can address pertains to how well is what she is doing now working for her. If her behavior is leading her in the direction she wants to go, why is she coming for counseling? If she determines that what she is doing is not rewarding beyond meeting her immediate need for fun, then we would ask, "If what you are doing is not getting you what you ultimately want, would you like to talk about other behaviors?"

RELATIONSHIP ISSUES

#7 "The Affair" (30:35—Natalie/Janice)

Summary of role-play: The client (Natalie) is struggling with her marriage and the fact she is having a long-term affair. She feels alive, youthful, and beautiful when she is with this other person. At home she feels depressed and sees her purpose as being just to serve him. For years she has been there for others, but now she has to think about herself. The counselor (Janice) says, "Having an affair is not a good answer for someone—it just hurts everyone. I just don't think it is a good idea."

YOUR IMMEDIATE REACTIONS TO THE ROLE-PLAY YOU JUST VIEWED

1. What do you imagine it would be like to be the client in this situation?

2. What key reactions do you have to how Janice dealt with Natalie?

3. What main ethical issue(s) do you think this role-play illustrates?

4. What is your stance on this ethical issue (or these ethical issues)?

5. How might you begin to work with the client in this situation?

NEXT, WATCH THE FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION OF THE ROLE-PLAY

After viewing the discussion that follows this role-play situation, complete the exercises below as a way to refine your thinking as it applies to this case.

Questions to Consider

1. Janice's main comment is, "I really don't think affairs are a good idea. They are never a solution and are always hurtful to those involved, including the person having the affair." What do you think of Janice's interventions? Could this ever be justified as an appropriate and ethical intervention?

2. If the counselor encourages Natalie's affair, could this represent a countertransference reaction or a value imposition?

3. Natalie says, "I'm having an affair of 3 or 4 years. My husband doesn't pay attention to me. I need to do what feels good to me." What goes on inside of you when you hear this?

4. What are your values about being faithful in a committed relationship, and how would your values affect the way you counsel Natalie?

5. If you were Natalie's counselor, what would you most want to pay attention to and why? What does this tell you about your values?

6. If you had no conflict of values with Natalie, to what degree do you think you could be of help to her?

7. If your values were in conflict with Natalie's, what would you do to resolve the conflict?

8. Do you see any potential sources of countertransference on your part that would make it difficult for you to objectively and ethically work with Natalie?

9. If you felt stuck with Natalie, would you seek consultation? If so, what kind of help would you want from the consultant?

10. Under what circumstances, if any, might you consider a referral for Natalie? Why?

COMMENTARY

Value imposition and possible countertransference may be operating in this vignette. Janice is using guilt as a way to get to her client. She seems unwilling to really listen to her client's struggle, and what meaning the affair might have in her life. She is too quick to focus on the affair, to judge what the client is doing, and to tell her what to do. Janice's behavior toward the client does not allow room for client autonomy.

Rather than judging Natalie's values and behaviors, it would be better to invite Natalie to look at what she is getting from the affair and determine if there are any problematic elements in the relationship that she would like to explore in the therapy sessions.

Who is to determine what is good for this client? Janice thinks that her affair is going to be harmful. Yet the client thinks that what she is doing is good for her. Also, some counselors would believe her actions of doing what she wants is in her best interests. In this case, it is possible for counselors to impose their values in at least two ways in this situation, either by judging the affair and persuading her to end it, or by strongly supporting her affair (or even suggesting that she have an affair if her

needs are not being met by her husband). The counselor's role is not to judge the client's behavior, but to challenge the client to evaluate her own behavior and make decisions that are congruent with her value system.

Our hope would be that Janice would recognize her bias and explore her investment in judging her client. Is it possible that the counselor has been hurt by an affair and that she is projecting her own needs and unresolved conflicts onto Natalie? Whether the motivation for her judging the affair is based on Janice's own emotional reactions, her moral convictions, or her values regarding fidelity, we would encourage her to seek consultation or to bring her reactions to this client into a supervision session. The ethical course here might also involve Janice exploring her personal problems that may have surfaced in this case.

KEY POINTS

- In the four role-plays above that depict a conflict of values between the counselor and the client, the counselors try to persuade the client to adopt what they think is the best course of action to follow.
 - The counselor who does not approve of affairs and thinks they are bad, attempts to get her client to end the affair.
 - The counselor who is concerned about the welfare of his client who is practicing unsafe sex wants to persuade her to change her behavior.
 - The client who is indifferent to her parents' values and who wants independence, encounters a counselor who wants her to see her parents' viewpoint and to consider their wishes.
 - The client who has decided on a divorce hears her counselor's advice to consider what is in the best interests of her children.
- At times, a case could be made for counselors wanting to influence a client's present behavior or decisions. For example, some would argue that it is acceptable to attempt to educate clients on safer sex behaviors and to persuade them to consider consequences of their present actions if these actions are self-destructive.
- In many cases, what appears to be a situation involving a value conflict may actually be a manifestation of the counselor's countertransference. When countertransference occurs, the counselor's personal problems can make it difficult to keep a proper focus of therapy.
- Whenever you have a situation involving what appears to be a value clash, we hope you'll engage in self-reflection and discussion with a colleague or supervisor to determine if there is a value conflict or if countertransference is operating.
- When therapists attempt to work out their unresolved issues during their clients' therapy, this raises definite ethical issues. Thus, if you become aware of patterns of reactions to certain clients or client behaviors, and if you recognize your potential countertransference, it is your ethical obligation to monitor your reactions so that they do not obstruct your work with clients.
- At times, certain value conflicts between you and a client may make it difficult for you to help this client. We would hope that you do not immediately resort to making a referral whenever you encounter a situation that is challenging. Ethical practice implies that you work on yourself so that you are not limited by factors such as your own unresolved conflicts, countertransference, judgmental attitudes, and need to make decisions for clients. Assuming that you are a competent professional, it should be rare that you would find it necessary to refer a client because of value differences or your own countertransference.
- A way to make good use of supervision is for you to bring to your supervisor personal difficulties you are experiencing in working with certain clients. Rather than focusing on what to do with the client, it could be useful for you to explore what personal issues are getting in your way of listening to and being present for your client. Of course, supervision is not the place for you to work out your personal issues, but it can be a place to identify those areas where you may need to do more work in your own therapy, if you hope to effectively counsel others.
- There will be times when making a referral is the proper course to follow. In each of the situations involving value conflicts, you might consider when the best course of action would be to make a referral. Referrals may be appropriate when moral, religious, or political values are centrally involved in a client's presenting problems and when:
 - your boundaries of competence have been reached
 - you have extreme discomfort with a client's values
 - you are unable to maintain objectivity
 - you have grave concerns about imposing your values on the client
 - you recognize some area of countertransference that would make it difficult at the present time to effectively counsel the client

- Before quickly referring a client because of what appears to be a value conflict, consider other options first, such as:
 - bringing your struggle into supervision
 - seeking consultation
 - challenging yourself to do what you can to work with the client
 - considering personal therapy to work on an unresolved personal problem or an area of countertransference
 - looking for ways to engage in continuing education

AN EXERCISE: TO REFER OR NOT TO REFER

This entire segment is centered around learning how to deal with value conflicts in an ethical manner. In some of the situations that you have already seen, and in the cases that are presented later, it may become apparent to you that if you are not able to keep certain values in check, referral may be the ethical course to follow.

Take a few minutes to complete the following checklist as a way to identify potential problem areas for you. Consider the circumstances in which you would be inclined to refer a client to another professional because of a conflict of value systems.

For each of the following, indicate the response that best fits you. Use the following code:

A = I could work with this person.

B = I would have difficulty working with this person.

C = I could not work with this person.

- ☐ a woman who has decided to get a divorce, even though she admits that doing so will be very difficult for her children and husband
- ☐ a woman who is unwilling to give up her affair but still wants to come in with her husband for couples counseling
- ☐ a man who is having an affair and admits to feeling very guilty, yet who does not feel ready to end the affair
- ☐ a client who is practicing unsafe sex with multiple partners and who seems completely unconcerned about potential consequences
- ☐ a client from another culture who has values very different from your own
- ☐ a client who has values you strongly disapprove of or goals that you do not respect
- ☐ a pregnant adolescent who wanted to explore abortion as one of her options
- ☐ a pregnant middle-age wife and mother of five children who wanted to explore abortion as one of her options
- ☐ a person with fundamentalist religious beliefs
- ☐ a woman who claims to be seeking a way to put God at the center of her life, and to let God make all of her decisions
- ☐ a gay or lesbian couple hoping to work on conflicts in their relationship
- ☐ a gay man who is struggling with "coming out" to his family
- ☐ a lesbian couple wanting to adopt a child
- ☐ a terminally ill man who is seriously thinking of ending his life
- ☐ a depressed man who is considering suicide as a way out of despair

Go back over your list, paying particular attention to the items you marked "C." Of this entire list, which client would pose the greatest challenge for you? Why do you think you'd have difficulty in working with this client?

What else might you do besides refer this client? What can you do to prepare yourself to work more effectively with clients who hold differing values?

REFERENCES

1. See *Issues and Ethics*, Chapter 3, especially the discussion on inventory of your values as a counselor (pp. 67–68), clarifying your values (pp. 68–71), and ethics of imposing your values on clients (pp. 71–72). There are several inventories that you can take (such as the one on pages 67–68 and the one on value conflicts on pages 72–73).
2. Refer to *Becoming a Helper*, Chapter 6, on the role of values, imposing versus exposing, and value conflicts with clients. On page 154 are some useful focus questions. There is an inventory on values that you can complete on pages 155–156.

AN EXERCISE: WHERE ARE YOU LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE A VALUE CONFLICT?

Go back to the previous four role-plays in the Student Video and identify the one area where you would expect to encounter the most difficulty to effectively counsel a client because of a clash between your values and the client's. Assume that you were involved in a counseling relationship with this client and discovered that your values made it hard for you to remain objective in this case. Below are the eight steps, with suggested questions, to assist you in thinking through an ethical dilemma you may actually face.

1. **Identify the problem or dilemma.** How can you know the nature of the problem? How might you begin the process of consultation with your client about the nature of the problem?

2. **Identify the potential issues involved.** How can you create a trusting and collaborative climate where your clients can find their own answers? What principles can you use in prioritizing the potential issues involved in this situation?

3. **Review the relevant ethical codes.** Are your values in agreement with the specific ethical code in question?

4. **Know the applicable laws and regulations.** Are there any state laws or regulations that have a bearing on the situation under consideration? What are the rules, regulations, and policies of the agency or institution where you work?

5. **Obtain consultation.** Assuming that you will consult with a colleague or a supervisor, what would you expect from this consultation? How can you use the consultation process as an opportunity to test the justification of a course of action you are inclined to take?

6. **Consider possible and probable courses of action.** What are some ways that you can brainstorm many possible courses of action? How might you involve your client in the discussion of the various courses of action?

7. **Enumerate the consequences of various decisions.** How can you best evaluate the potential consequences of each course of action, before implementing a particular action plan? What ethical principles can you use as a framework for evaluating the consequences of a given course of action?

8. **Decide on what appears to be the best course of action.** Do you solicit the input of your client in making this decision at this phase? Once the course of action has been implemented, what are some ways that you might evaluate the course of action?

ASK YOURSELF

Now that you have gone through this ethical decision-making process, answer the following questions.

1. Of all the possible cases, why do you think this case proves to be the most challenging for you?
