

Ethics of Clinical Psychologists



Ethical dilemmas are a part of every day life.

For psychologists, success relies heavily on a doctor-patient relationship based on trust.



http://teams.technion.ac.il/images/pictures/doctor_patient.jpg

There can be very serious consequences if this trust is broken, which has led the American Psychological Association (APA), along with many other organizations, to create a code of ethics for its members.

Strict adherence to the code is often required to maintain a license to practice clinical psychology.



AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

**Some of the most common
ethical issues facing
clinical psychologists are-**

Confidentiality

- The idea of doctor-patient confidentiality is very important.
- Many patients would never open up to their therapist if this confidentiality did not exist.
- However, many psychologists are presented with situations in which legal or moral concerns create an ethical dilemma.

Payment

- Generally, a person is entitled to payment for services rendered.
- However, this also presents potential ethical issues for a clinical psychologist.
- Insurance companies are often more interested in the bottom line than in the well-being of the insured.
- This can cause a psychologist to prematurely terminate a therapeutic relationship due to lack of payment.

Relationship

- It is important that the doctor-patient relationship is not complicated by outside interests.
- A doctor and patient in a romantic relationship would compromise the ability of the doctor to treat the patient and of the patient to be forthcoming with the doctor.
- Relationships outside that of doctor and patient, such as business or other personal relationships, are also likely to interfere with the doctor's ability to treat and the patient's willingness to be open about psychological issues.



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- The codes of conduct put in place by various organizations define ethical behavior, but there is always the possibility of abuse.

Rigorous enforcement of the codes is necessary to contain these abuses and help maintain the trust required for success in the profession of clinical psychology.



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