

Issues in Ethics: Ethical Issues Related to Clinical Services Provided by Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Graduate Students

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Clinical Supervisor vs. Student

- A clinical supervisor's role is to train and educate student clinicians. ASHA defines supervision as, "overseeing and directing the work of others." Clinical supervisors are at the students' side to help with critical thinking, mentor advice, and clarify any concepts that the student may have questions about.
- A student is someone who is enrolled in a speech-language pathology graduate program that requires supervision from someone who is ASHA certified.

Potential Ethical Issues

- ASHA's Board of Ethics does not have authority over speech-language pathology students, but they do have authority over the student's clinical supervisor.
- Graduate students should still be aware of ASHA's Code of Ethics and how it applies to their supervisor.
- Some issues that have come from graduate students providing services include:
 - Must clients be informed of the qualifications of those providing the clinical service?
 - What level of supervision should be provided to the students and clinical fellows?
 - Is it legitimate to charge for services provided by individuals who are not fully trained or certified?
 - Must students complete all related course work before being assigned to a particular case?
 - Can students be paid for practicum?

Code of Ethics

Common codes have the potential of being violated when graduate students are providing services. These may include:

Principle of Ethics I: Rule D

“Individuals shall not misrepresent the credentials of aides, assistants, technicians, support personnel, students, research interns, Clinical Fellows, or any others under their supervision, and they shall inform those they serve professionally of the name, role, and professional credentials of persons providing services.”

Principle of Ethics I: Rule F

“Individuals who hold the Certificate of Clinical Competence shall not delegate tasks that require the unique skills, knowledge, judgment, or credentials that are within the scope of their profession to aides, assistants, technicians, support personnel, or any nonprofessionals over whom they have supervisory responsibility.”

Principle of Ethics I: Rule G

“Individuals who hold the Certificate of Clinical Competence may delegate to students tasks related to provision of clinical services that require the unique skills, knowledge, and judgment that are within the scope of practice of their profession only if those students are adequately prepared and are appropriately supervised. The responsibility for the welfare of those being served remains with the certified individual.”

Principle of Ethics III: Rule A

“Individuals shall not misrepresent their credentials, competence, education, training, experience, and scholarly contributions.”

Principle of Ethics IV: Rule I

“Individuals shall not knowingly allow anyone under their supervision to engage in any practice that violates the Code of Ethics.”

Helpful Tips

- Know the Code of Ethics and how it applies to the profession.
- State Licensure agencies can provide support as well as your place of employment.
- If unsure about a task you have been asked to complete, consult with reliable sources.
- ASHA’s Board of Ethics can provide information on how to handle an ethical dilemma.
- Use the Decision-Making Model!!

Decision-Making Model

1. **Get the story straight:** Identify any and all information that you need to gather such as who was involved, the facts that you are missing, and also what are the circumstances.
2. **Identify the nature of the problem:** Moral, Ethical, or Legal?
 - a. Moral: Doesn't agree with your personal moral code.
 - b. Ethical: Violates professional or agency ethical code.
 - c. Legal: Violates the law
3. **Consult with reliable sources:** Review the Code of Ethics if one is available. Along with the Code of Ethics, review any laws or regulations that may be relevant. Lastly, consult with any experts or mentors that your trust.
4. **Brainstorm:** Brainstorm a variety of ways in which there is a "win-win" solution. Always look for the most practical approach when looking for the "win-win."
5. **Determine plan of Action:** Select the best "win-win" alternative!

References:

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