

Pastoral Skills Training – Family Life

Lesson 10: Ethics

Student Guide

Lesson Objectives	
Identify the practices that constitute ethical pastoral counseling. <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Define ethics.○ Identify potential areas of ethical difficulty in pastoral counseling.	
Session 1: Presentation Webinar	
Student Readings	
Philosophical Foundation of Ethics	10-philosophical-foundation-of-ethics.pdf
Case Study	10-case-study.pdf
Session 2: Discussion Webinar	
A discussion of assigned case study	

Ethics
Lesson 10



Pastoral Skills Training
Family Life Course
Phase 1
USACHCS

Ethics

Objectives

- Identify the practices that constitute ethical pastoral counseling.
- Define ethics.
- Identify potential areas of ethical difficulty in pastoral counseling.

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Ethics

What Are Ethics?

- "What we mean by ethics is what has traditionally been thought of as the 'ought' questions, as distinguished from the 'is' questions. 'You are here' is a fact. 'Ought you to be here?' is an ethical question." (Willard Gaylin)

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 **Ethics** 

Why Ethics?

- ▼ Ethical principles help establish the foundation of trust from which counselors can build a healing relationship.
- ▼ People trust counselors with precious and often embarrassing information that, if poorly handled, can cause great harm.
- ▼ Because it is usually practiced behind closed doors, counseling is unusually vulnerable to breaches of boundaries, allowing inappropriate relationships to grow if not carefully managed.
- ▼ Because of the complexity of interactions between a person and a pastoral counselor, it is possible for counselors to manipulate, or even to be manipulated, by people.

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 **Ethics** 

Existing Codes of Ethics

- ▼ American Association of Pastoral Counselors – Code of Ethics
<https://aapc.org/content/ethics>
- ▼ Association of Professional Chaplains – Code of Ethics
http://www.professionalchaplains.org/uploadedFiles/pdf/code_of_ethics_2003.pdf
- ▼ Conscience: While guidelines help us to define appropriate behavior in a multitude of situations, there are always situations that fall outside of direct or implied guidance. For this reason, it is important for counselors to pay careful attention to the guide of conscience as well as basic principles of behavior.

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 **Ethics** 

Professional Practices

- ▼ Counseling exists to serve the needs of the counselee, not the counselor. Counselors should seek to serve the best interests of those whom they serve, giving voice to the vulnerable whenever possible.
- ▼ Skills and knowledge are to be used to help; avoid using them for personal gain. Counselors use their knowledge and professional associations for the benefit of the people they serve and not to secure unfair personal advantage.
- ▼ Counselors should make referrals or obtain consultations when it is in the best interests of those they serve .

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Ethics

Needs of Counselee

- ▼ The needs of the counselee must always come first.
- ▼ Defining question: Whose need am I serving right now by making this statement or asking this question?
- ▼ If counselors aren't honest with themselves, or others, then their own needs may become the priority. It is more effective, and probably more loving, to conduct the counseling session professionally—with the counselee's needs placed as the priority.
- ▼ Self-awareness: A counselor must constantly check his or her motives, and be aware of personal needs that he or she may inappropriately try to meet through work with a counselee.

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Ethics

Client Relationships

- ▼ Don't over-promise or make unrealistic predictions.
- ▼ Don't drag a counseling relationship out if it is not progressing.
- ▼ Don't end a counseling relationship simply because the counselor is discouraged, or tired, or irritated.
- ▼ American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC):
 - ▼ "We do not abandon or neglect clients. If we are unable, or unwilling for appropriate reasons, to provide professional help or continue a professional relationship, every reasonable effort is made to arrange for a continuation of treatment with another professional."

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Ethics

Dual Relationships

- ▼ A dual relationship exists when a client and a counselor have two or more discrete roles with each other that could lead to conflict.
- ▼ AAPC states: "While acknowledging the complexity of some pastoral relationships, we avoid exploiting the trust and dependency of clients. We avoid those dual relationships with clients (e.g., business or close personal relationships) which could impair our professional judgment, compromise the integrity of the treatment, and/or use the relationship for our own gain."

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 **Ethics** 

Sexual Harassment

- ▼ All forms of sexual behavior or harassment with clients are unethical, even when a client invites or consents to such behavior.
- ▼ The counseling relationship is notoriously vulnerable to the cultivation of damaging love relationships. Many, many such love affairs conclude with the counselee (ex-counselee) feeling like they were manipulated into the affair.
- ▼ Most codes of ethics prohibit any sexual relationship within two years of a counseling relationship.

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 **Ethics** 

Confidentiality

- ▼ Ethics would indicate that the counselee has a right to be given enough information in order to make an intelligent choice about entering into counseling.
- ▼ Confidentiality issues should follow the prescribed direction and laws that govern them (see Lesson 1: The Intake Process).

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 **Ethics** 

Discussion Questions

- ▼ How do ethical practices protect the counselee?
- ▼ How do ethical practices protect the counselor?

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QUESTIONS?
