

Pastoral Skills Training – Family Life

Lesson 10: Ethics

Instructor Guide

Lesson Information	
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.
Class Time: Presentation	Approximately 1 hour
Class Time: Discussion	Approximately 1 hour
Lesson Materials	
Webinar Presentation	Page 2
Webinar Discussion	Page 7
PowerPoint Slides for Webinar Presentation	10-slides.ppt
Supporting Lesson Materials	
Student Guide	Student advance sheet containing the objectives of the lesson and the materials required for participation (10-student-guide.pdf)
Student Readings	Philosophical Foundation of Ethics – <i>Blanchette</i> (10-philosophical-foundation-of-ethics.pdf)

Webinar Presentation		
Title	Description	Slide Number
Objectives	<p>At the end of this presentation, you should be able to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	Slide 2
What Are Ethics?	Question: In the setting of pastoral counseling, what are ethics?	Slide 3
	<p>“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)</p>	
Why Ethics?	<p>Ethical principles help establish the foundation of trust from which counselors can build a healing relationship. Recognizing and giving a name to various ethical principles enables the counselor to consistently self-assess before and after ethical decisions.</p> <p>The intimate nature of pastoral counseling, coupled with the high potential for vulnerability of parishioners when they are seeing a pastoral counselor, make it especially important for counselors to exercise great care to maintain ethical behavior:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People trust counselors with precious and often embarrassing information that, if poorly handled, can cause great harm. • Pastoral counselors, even more than traditional counselors, stand in a powerful position with relation to God, people, and their sense of well-being. • 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 	Slide 4

	<p>counselor, it is possible for counselors to manipulate or even to be manipulated by people.</p>	
	<p>Question: What other special risks are inherent in pastoral counseling that make it essential to practice ethical behavior?</p>	
<p>Existing Codes of Ethics</p>	<p>Various counseling organizations have developed codes of ethics that guide and support their members in the daily decisions they make in their professions. While the Army Chaplain doesn't subscribe to a documented ethical code, many of the issues addressed in these documents are both applicable and imperative to the helping work you do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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, such as the golden rule. 	<p>Slide 5</p>
<p>Professional Practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 the personal gain of the counselor. 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. 	<p>Slide 6</p>

Needs of Counselee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 are not 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. These may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A need to demonstrate power or control. ○ A need for approval and affection. ○ A need to feel respected and appreciated. ○ A need to feel qualified as a counselor. ○ A need to impose theological positions. ○ A need to be needed. 	Slide 7
Client Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don’t over-promise or make unrealistic predictions. Only make realistic statements to the counselee regarding the pastoral counseling process and its outcome. • Don’t drag a counseling relationship out if is not progressing. It is important to remember that when something is not working, you should stop doing it and try something different. This is also true regarding the counselee’s right to be referred to another counselor when no progress is being made. • Don’t end a counseling relationship simply because the counselor is discouraged, or tired, or irritated. Counseling should end when it is in the best interests of the parishioner, or if the counselor is simply out of time. • American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Counseling relationships are continued only so long as it is 	Slide 8

	<p>reasonably clear that the clients are benefiting from the relationship.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “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.” 	
Dual Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A dual relationship exists when a client and a counselor have two or more discrete roles with each other that could lead to conflict. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Counselor and boss ○ Counselor and lover ○ Counselor and spouse of a friend ○ Counselor and business partner ○ What are other’s you have known? ● The problem with a dual relationship is that they tend to bleed over. A counselor might find out information about his boss that could hamper the boss’ ability to supervise the employee, etc. These types of relationships can be difficult to avoid, especially in small communities (e.g., a doctor and a counselor). At the very least, such relationships need to be carefully managed (What are you being to me right now?) to avoid confusion and possible manipulation. ● 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.” 	Slide 9
Sexual Harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All forms of sexual behavior or harassment with clients are unethical, even when a client invites or consents to such behavior. This behavior includes all forms of seductive speech, gestures, and behavior, as well as physical contact of a sexual nature. ● The counseling relationship is notoriously vulnerable to the cultivation of damaging love relationships. Many, many such love affairs conclude with the 	Slide 10

	<p>counselee (ex-counselee) feeling like they were manipulated into the affair. Most ethical complaints of counselors involve some form of blurred love/counseling relationship. (FYI: The second-most complaints? Mixed counseling and business/money relationships.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most codes of ethics prohibit any sexual relationship within two years of a counseling relationship. Sex/love and pastoral counseling simply don't mix. Don't do it. 	
Confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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). 	Slide 11
Discussion Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do ethical practices protect the counselee? • How do ethical practices protect the counselor? 	Slide 12
Ask for questions.		
Give reading and case study assignments to prepare for the discussion webinar.		
End webinar.		

Case Study

C – Chaplain

M – Male

F – Female

Situation 1: A chaplain (MAJ), who is having severe marital difficulties, is counseling with a couple who are struggling with issues of mistrust and lack of commitment. The chaplain feels guilty about his desire to leave his spouse and angry that she is mean to him. The male is an NCO and the female is a civilian.

C – (*To M*) Don't you know that when you pull away from F that it's painful to her?

M – Well, she's always bitching about something.

F – I am not, but you could help around the house more. Every time I go to look for you or ask for help you're nowhere to be found. I can't do it physically anymore. (*To the Chaplain*) You know they diagnosed me with fibromyalgia and I can hardly get out of bed in the mornings much less take care of him. I am tired. I have given him 18 years— stood by him, ironed and starched his old BDUs. I even used to polish his boots.

C – (*To F*): You have really given a lot to this marriage. (*To M*) How does it make you feel to hear F say this?

M – I've heard it all before.

C – What is keeping you on the fence?

M – I just need more space.

C – M, I think you need to make a decision and get off the fence.

M – S**t or get off the pot.

C – Exactly. Let me know what you decide next time we meet.

Situation 2: A Chaplain (MAJ) counseling with the female spouse of a senior officer. Couple is going through a divorce. Chaplain is offering support and guidance to the spouse during this time of crisis. Spouse is lonely and vulnerable. Chaplain is participating in civilian clothes day. He is wearing boots, slacks, and unit shirt. Chaplain greets her in the lobby.

C – Hey, how are you today?

F – Good. How tall are you?

C – (*Startled*) 6-ft 3 in.

F – Wow, you should wear civilian clothes more often. You're hot in cowboy boots.

Case Study Discussion Questions:

Situation 1:

- 1) In the first session, on a scale of 1-10, how balanced do you feel the Chaplain is being in his care for this couple?
- 2) Knowing he is vulnerable to becoming unbalanced, what kind of steps might the Chaplain take to ensure he doesn't do any harm or cross any boundaries?
- 3) What might a Chaplain in this situation see in himself that would tell him that he is in danger of doing harm or crossing a boundary? What steps would be appropriate if he saw this sign?

Situation 2:

- 1) How might a Chaplain respond to this situation in a way that sets a boundary while still retaining a pastoral position?