Professional Ethics, Role, and the Whole Person

GEOFFREY S. PERUNIAK
Athabasca University

PRE-READING QUESTION

1. What are your thoughts on the practical use of ethics?

Introduction and Learning Objectives

It is a common but misguided belief that all there is to practising professional **ethics** is to follow the ethical code of the particular association to which you belong is. There is much more to professional ethics than following a rulebook. In this chapter we look at some of these rules, and examine where they came from and why. There are primary and philosophical principles of ethics that impact us as citizens and whole persons before and after we become professionals. Ethical codes in professional associations are basically tools. It can happen that the rules in such codes are misinterpreted or distorted or given different priorities. It is one thing to talk about adhering to ethical codes, and quite another to actually follow them.

The first part of this chapter explores implications of professional ethics for career development practitioners. Our discussion begins with "Case 1: Moral Issues," an illustration of ethics based on a true story. General concepts and definitions of morality are introduced, as well as an evaluation of what it means to be a professional. We then examine key factors that frame how ethical questions are handled. Code of

ethics is one major factor. A principle-based approach to decision making is applied to Case 1 using one of the codes of ethics. Other factors covered include private and public morality, social responsibility, professional dissent, and finally the role of personal character.

The second part of this chapter uses "Case 2: Professional Development" to highlight the often-overlooked and under-valued ethical principle of self-improvement. This approach to personal and professional improvement builds on local knowledge while minimizing costs. Case 2 is analyzed using a virtue-based approach to ethical decision making. Clearly, in a short chapter such as this, it is not possible to do justice to all the complex issues raised by professional ethics. It is hoped that all career practitioners will take at least one course in professional ethics.

After reading this chapter, you will:

1. Understand general ethical concepts including definitions of morality.
2. Recognize the importance of being a self-reflective career practitioner.
3. Be able to distinguish between a principle-based approach and a virtue-based approach to ethical decision making.
4. Utilize the steps in ethical decision making.
5. Have knowledge of the Code of Ethics for the *Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners*
6. Understand the importance of self-improvement as an ethical imperative.

Case 1: Moral Issues

Pat is an intelligent, 38-year-old woman living in a rural town. After high school, Pat worked with her husband in their real estate business. When the business went bankrupt and her husband left the marriage, she was suddenly financially broke, a single mother with a 5-year-old son. She applied for a career practitioner job and acquired it only recently. She needs this job, because paid work in town is not plentiful. "The good jobs, full-time with benefits, are all spoken for," she reports. Pat has a two-year business certificate from a college and several years of volunteer experience as the director of a local food bank.

In recent years, the provincial government had offloaded much of career services to the private sector. Pat works for Ted, a private contractor. Ted runs his career services business by securing contracts from various levels of government. Contracts usually run from year to year with no guarantee of renewal. Pat shares office space with two other women who provide administrative support for the project. She works full-time, being paid minimum wage with few benefits. "What really annoys me," says Pat, "is that Ted says that there is no money for professional development. I don't feel competent in my job. Sure, I can make my way through his manuals, but that

and a two-year business certificate are not good enough for this job. I want some real training. Sometimes I feel like a fraud."

Ted had informed her that the number of clients seen per month is down; so, in addition to service provision, he is asking Pat to circulate through the town and "solicit" clients. This means trying to persuade clients to sign up for career services. Pat doesn't like this "hidden" part of her role. "I didn't sign up for this," she said. "I'm not going to go around trying to create a demand for my services. It just feels wrong in my gut." She expresses the added resentment that "Ted calls to check up on my numbers all the time. He's on vacation in Europe where he is travelling with his latest girlfriend. So here I am slogging away on minimum wage while he's off on his latest world cruise that I'm helping to fund!"

She may secure a future funding renewal if she recruits people, but that goes against her principle of doing what her job and her heart says — service provision. If she fails to recruit, Ted may fire her or she may lose her job because the funding agency doesn't renew the contract due to low client numbers. She could complain to a labour relations board, but that would likely end her chances for a job from Ted and any of his associates. What should Pat do?

General Concepts

Professional ethics often involves questions of morality to distinguish between right and wrong. **Moral issues** are about what values or whose values are to prevail in securing the rights and welfare of people, and in making the world a better place to live. Mautner (1966) explains that ethics comes from the Greek word *thos*, meaning "habit" or "custom," and he further characterizes ethics, as used in this chapter, as **normative ethics**:

> . . . rational inquiry into, or a theory of, the standards of right and wrong, good and bad, in respect of character and conduct, which ought to be accepted by a class of individuals.
>
> This class could be mankind at large, but we can also think of medical ethics, business ethics, et cetera, as a body of standards that the professionals in question ought to accept and observe.
>
> This kind of inquiry and the theory resulting from it . . . do not describe how people think or behave, but prescribe how people ought to think and behave. This is accordingly called normative ethics, since its main aim is to formulate valid norms of conduct and of evaluation of character. (p. 137)

Again, moral issues are about **values**. They are not necessarily about fact. The question of whether Pat should report Ted for pressuring her to "make up" clients is a moral issue. That Pat actually did report Ted is a matter of fact. Of course, facts

contribute enormously to the making of moral decisions, but decisions about facts are not the same as decisions about moral issues.

What makes moral issues particularly difficult are the **value dilemmas** that they raise. The protection of one set of values necessarily precludes another value or set of values. To make no decision at all can result in a decision by default. If Pat ignores Ted on the recruitment issue, then Pat not only jeopardizes her pay cheque and her son's welfare, but also leaves herself open to being blacklisted as a trouble-maker. She might have a hard time getting another job in town. She also puts the renewal of the career services contract at risk and jeopardizes the jobs of her fellow employees. If she obeys Ted, then she stands to undermine her own credibility and that of the local career services office. She cannot easily opt out of a decision here. We will return to Pat later.

What makes morality even more complex is that every person is immersed in an unfolding history of **sociocultural heritage** that includes one's race, gender, and social class. Principles of right and wrong are handed down in this rich, social mosaic and we adopt or reject these principles on an individual basis. Many times we are not even aware of which principles of right or wrong we have adopted. This often makes it difficult to recognize that an **ethical conflict** even exists. That is why it is sometimes easier to see ethical breaches in someone else's behaviour than in our own.

Towards an Ideal Self-Reflective Practitioner

In this chapter we are not as concerned about obvious immoral activities, such as stealing or killing, as we are about the choices between sets of conflicting values. We are striving towards an ideal of a **self-reflective career practitioner**. Callahan (1988) described this ideal:

> An individual acts as an autonomous moral agent when he or she acts on the basis of principles which are not merely imposed from without (e.g., by peer pressure, by some authority) or which have been internalized as a matter of mere habit, but rather when those principles have been consciously evaluated and accepted by the individual as the correct principles to direct his or her behavior. The autonomous moral agent has a clear sense of why he or she acts as he or she does and deliberately accepts acting that way on the basis of a reasoned, reflective conviction that such action is morally right. . . [and] involves the movement beyond conditioned or "knee-jerk" reactions and merely self-interested behaviors to principled action where acceptance of the principles governing one's behavior is the result of a careful reflection which takes into account the moral integrity of the agent and the rights and interests of others. (pp. 10–11)

There is an expectation that human service professionals, such as career practitioners, should be guided by ethical principles and be especially sensitive to moral issues, as clients may be fragile and vulnerable when accessing the services of a professional. But who are professionals, anyway?

The Profession

Career development is an emerging **profession** in English Canada (Burwell, Kalbfleisch, & Woodside, 2010; Kalbfleisch & Burwell, 2007). Professions usually require a code of ethics for their members. But what is it about a profession that it requires such a code? There is no one accepted definition of "profession," but Webster's International Dictionary (1986) gives many of the relevant characteristics:

> . . . a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive preparation including instruction in skills and methods as well as the scientific, historical, or scholarly principles underlying such skills and methods, maintaining by force of organization or concerted opinion high standards of achievement and conduct, and committing its members to continued study and to a kind of work which has for its prime purpose the rendering of a public service. (p. 1811)

"Maintaining by force of organization or concerted opinion" might suggest an ethical code as a means for upholding high standards within the profession and protecting the interests of the clients and the public. A focus on intellectual development is also implied in the definition — in our case, this would be attention to career development theory and methods. Thus, a professional facilitates direction and growth, rather than producing relatively static things such as furniture or bricks. Another characteristic of a professional is the ability to work autonomously and use judgement when providing service. Of course, there is a wide range of autonomy in professions depending upon structures for oversight.

One further characteristic of a profession is that it tries to limit outsiders from providing the same service. In older, established professions such as medicine, there is a virtual monopoly over the provision of service. Membership in the profession is a privilege rather than a right. This means that the onus is on professionals to prove they are qualified to provide such services. Finally, professions are self-regulating to a large extent (Bayles, 1988). Self-regulation means that the government has granted a professional group the privilege and responsibility to regulate itself and to protect the public from harm by governing its members, including qualifying and disciplining, in a competent and reasoned manner.

The Resolution of Moral Questions

A number of factors affect how moral questions are identified and resolved. A code of ethical conduct for the profession is the first point of reference. Private and public morality, social responsibility, professional dissent, and personal character are other factors that will be discussed below.

Codes of Ethical Conduct

As mentioned, most professional associations have codes of ethics composed of principles for their members to follow. A principle is a "rule or code of usually good conduct by which one directs one's life or actions" (Webster's Third International Dictionary, 1986, p. 1803). For instance, the code of ethics for the *Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners* or S&Gs (National Steering Committee, 2004) outlines 17 principles that cover competency and conduct (9 principles), the practitioner-client relationship (6 principles), and consultation with other professionals (2 principles). The British Columbia Career Development Association's (BCCDA) code of ethics provides 13 principles for their members (BCCDA, 1996), with slightly different emphasis than the Canadian Standards. The code of ethics for the Career Development Association of Alberta (2009) has a set of 13 principles that again look different than the other two codes but cover much of the same territory — respect for the client, beneficence, non-malfeasance, and integrity.

SPOTLIGHT: *PRINCIPLES OF ETHICS*
by Lara Shepard

The Principles of Ethics represent goals that professionals aspire to. There are five fundamental principles that form the foundation of ethical codes:

1. *Autonomy*: Professionals have a duty to treat the client according to the client's desires, within the bounds of accepted treatment, and to protect the client's confidentiality.
2. *Non-maleficence*: Professionals have a duty to protect the client from harm.
3. *Beneficence*: Professionals have a duty to act for the benefit of others.
4. *Justice*: Professionals have a duty to be fair in their dealings with clients, colleagues and society.
5. *Fidelity*: Professionals have a duty to be honest and trustworthy in their dealings with people.

Principles can overlap each other as well as compete with each other for priority. Principles may at times need to be balanced against each other, but, otherwise, they are intended to act as a guide to practice.

Key Resources

- The *Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners*. The Standards and Guidelines <http://career-dev-guidelines.org/career_dev/index.php/the-standards-guidelines/the-sgs-at-a-glance>.
- British Columbia Career Development Association (BCCDA) Code of Ethics <http://www.bccda.org/codeOfEthics.cfm>.
- Career Development Association of Alberta (CDAA) Code of Ethics <http://www.careerdevelopment.ab.ca/Default.aspx?pageId=1184755>.

Implementing the Ethical Decision-Making Model

The *Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners*' Code of Ethics (National Steering Committee, 2004) includes a set of problem-solving steps in the resolution of an ethical dilemma called "Steps in Ethical Decision-Making" (see Appendix A). It may be helpful to apply the Code of Ethics to Case 1 to see how a principle-based method might work in practice. (Before proceeding, please review the principles of the code and the steps in Appendix A.)

1. The *first step* in the ethical decision-making method is to recognize that an ethical dilemma exists. Unfortunately, no rule tells us how to do this. Pat was troubled by Ted's directive to solicit clients for the business. Upon reflection, she was able to articulate: "I'm not going to go around trying to create a demand for my services. It just feels wrong in my gut."

2. The *second step* is to identify the ethical issues involved, the parties concerned, and the principles that apply from the Code of Ethics. Pat knew that her ethical issue involved herself, her boss, her clients, and the community-at-large. Pat reviewed each principle of the Code in light of her reluctance to solicit clients and could see her employer was in violation of four of the principles as follows:

   i. *Marketing* (Principle 1.e.) indicates that practitioners should "maintain high standards of integrity in all forms of advertising, communications, and solicitation and conduct business in a manner that enhances the field" (S&G's Code of Ethics, 2004, p. 131). We see from Pat's case that these high standards of integrity are compromised when she is expected to "raise" more clients. How far should she go in selling her services? Should she trick people into a service they have not asked for? This is a slippery slope. Also, this is not bread she is selling but a very personal activity.

   ii. *Relations With Institutions and Organizations* (Principle 1.f.) indicates that practitioners should "encourage organizations, institutions, customers and employers to operate in a manner that allows the career development

practitioner to provide service in accordance with the Code of Ethics"
(p. 131). Again, there is reason for Pat to resist her employer's entreaties
in this respect. Ted is pressuring Pat to break principles in the Code.

iii. *Integrity/Honesty/Objectivity* (Principle 2.a.) cautions practitioners to be
"aware of their own personal values and issues and avoid bringing and/or
imposing these on their clients" (p. 132). If Pat follows Ted's directive, it
is clear that her own concerns about job security are conflicting with her
professional conduct towards potential clients.

iv. *Conflict of Interest* (Principle 2.f.) advises that practitioners "do not
exploit any relationship to further their personal, social, professional,
political, or financial gains at the expense of their clients . . ." (p. 133).
Once again, if Pat actively seeks out clients in the manner Ted suggests,
she would be exploiting potential clients for financial gain, clearly a
conflict of interest.

3. *Step 3* calls for an analysis of the risks and benefits of any proposed action. We
did part of this analysis earlier in the chapter under "General Concepts," when
we saw that there were drawbacks to following Ted's directions as well as real
risks in not doing so. The risks involved the limited job opportunities in a small
town and the need to put bread on the table. Pat first proposed talking to Ted
about his directive and attempted to convince him to change it. If she was
unsuccessful, then the next step might be to approach some of Ted's colleagues
and friends in the hope that they could change his mind. If that proved
unsuccessful, Pat believed that, although she might lose her job, jeopardize her
future prospects, and place a strain on the family finances, her self-esteem and
peace of mind demanded that Ted's directive be challenged.

4. *Step 4* is to take action and review the results with a view to making appropriate
adjustments along the way. Pat tried talking to Ted to get him to change
his mind. He refused. One adjustment she made then was to approach his
colleagues, but they declined to interfere. Finally, Pat reported her boss to a
legal body responsible for labour practices in the province, and at the same time
initiated a search for new employment in the area.

5. Finally, *Step 5* asks the practitioner to review the whole episode and consider
how to best prevent such an occurrence in the future. The review would also
highlight what the practitioner had learned from the experience and how that
learning would affect his or her future performance. In this case, Pat did not see
how she could have prevented Ted from issuing his demands. On the other hand,
she was proud that she recognized there was a problem and that she took action
consistent with her values, even at the expense of her financial security. She
recognized that without a union, she was on her own in this kind of situation.
She would put more emphasis on seeking unionized work in the future.

Private and Public Morality

In addition to codes of ethics, private and public morality is a major factor in the identification and resolution of ethical questions. As multidimensional beings, we fulfill many roles in our lifetime. We can simultaneously be parent, child, spouse, executor of a will, neighbour, and citizen. The norms of **private morality** would usually apply across such roles. Private or individual morality is ordinary, everyday morality that applies to people within the social and historic norms of the culture, and relates to how we conduct ourselves in our relations with others. For instance, we know that it is wrong to steal, lie, cheat, and kill — these are norms that apply across all roles. However, there are some occupational roles that seem to have their own rules with respect to morality. If you are a judge, then you may send people to prison or even to death. A defence lawyer may try to trick an honest witness and defend a liar. These are not responsibilities given to the ordinary citizen. These are special occupational roles that confer special moral privileges. This is known as **public morality** (Nagel, 1988).

One of the big questions raised by private/individual versus public/occupational morality is the extent to which the latter can escape from the considerations of morality that apply to ordinary citizens. In other words, to what extent and under what conditions does public morality trump private morality? If you are a career practitioner then it is unlikely that this occupational role will shield you from the obligations of private morality. The role is only at the early stages of being professionalized in English Canada and it does not come with such power or responsibility to slip the normal bounds of private morality.

Social Responsibility and Professional Dissent

Sometimes there may be a social responsibility on the part of the professional to disagree with his or her employer. We saw this illustrated earlier with Pat. When, in what ways, and to what extent are the individuals within a corporation accountable for moral misdeeds committed by that organization? When is there an obligation on the professional to oppose official policy or practice of his or her organization?

Personal Character

There is a final factor that is involved in moral questions and that is the character and personality of the career practitioner. As May (1988) stated:

> The practitioner's perception of role, character, virtues and style can affect the problems he [or she] sees, the level at which he tackles them, the personal presence and bearing he brings to them, and the resources with which he survives moral crises to function another day. (p. 408)

This personal character factor yields a diversity of counsellor perspectives and has led to a virtue-based ethical approach to decision making in organizations such as the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (Schulz, Sheppard, Lehr, & Shepard, 2006). Virtue-based approaches recognize that emotional and intuitive aspects of a counsellor's personality play an important role in decision making beyond the rational and cognitive elements of the principle-based approach discussed earlier for Pat's case. Case 2 will illustrate a virtue-based approach.

Furthermore, we differ in our capability for critical self-reflection when faced with moral crises of consciousness, dilemmas of confidentiality, or conflicts of interest. Also, the self is not static, and the ability of the self to change and grow must be considered.

Self-Improvement, Awareness, and Development

One of the tenets of professionalism is the practitioner's commitment to self-improvement. We recognize that learning needs continue regardless of the credential we have obtained. I believe that the continuing self-development of the practitioner is greatly underestimated in importance. For example, of the 72 ethical guidelines provided in the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) Code of Ethics (Schulz et al., 2006), only one directly addresses the professional and personal development of the practitioner. In the S&Gs' Code of Ethics, *Principle 1.b of "self-improvement"* is mainly aimed at the role and the field of practice, not the whole person: "Career development practitioners are committed to the principle of lifelong learning to maintain and improve both their professional growth and the development of the field in areas of knowledge, skills and competence" (p. 131).

This is not surprising since most codes of ethics are devoted to ensuring proper standards of practice, quality assurance, and an overarching emphasis on the clients and the service provided. While this emphasis is laudable and understandable in the professionalization of the field, it minimizes the role of self-develop-ment among the layers of rules and regulations. There is a singular lack of attention to the development of the whole person and his or her relationship to the professional role.

A large component of the career practitioner's time is spent in **experiential learning** both before and after the attainment of specific professional credentials. This type of learning is fundamental to the identity and essence of the whole person-practitioner. It is assumed here that what facilitates the person also facilitates the practitioner — that the practitioner is part of the whole person and best integrated as such. Furthermore, it is assumed that of the many elements of experiential learning, only some pertain directly to the practitioner role, but all may enhance insights and critical reflection of the whole person in a developmental progression towards

points of view that are more inclusive, discriminating, permeable, and integrative of experiential learning (Mezirow, 1991, 2006).

Different roles sometimes call upon different aspects of the self to show up. Here, *role* is defined as "a function performed by someone or something in a particular situation, process, or operation" (Webster's International Dictionary, 1986). *Self* refers to "an aspect of one's personality predominant at a certain time or under certain conditions" (Webster's International Dictionary, 1986, p. 2059). Horowitz (2008) talked about how roles are adopted by a person in terms of that person's committee of selves and he asked, "Which self is the chair?" In other words, which of the many parts of your personality will assume leadership in this situation? He suggested that different selves emerge from different emotional states (e.g., the angry self, the self-righteous self), but they can also emerge from different roles (e.g., the judicial role, the daughter role, the office role, etc.). One challenge is to integrate these various selves so that they all contribute to one another, and ultimately to a lasting sense of fulfillment.

SPOTLIGHT: *BOUNDARIES*
by Waylon Greggain

Boundaries make the relationship professional and safe for the client, and set the parameters within which services are delivered. Professional boundaries typically include fee setting, length of a session, time of session, personal disclosure, limits regarding the use of touch, and the general tone of the professional relationship. In a more subtle fashion, the boundary can refer to the line between the self of the client and the self of the therapist.

The primary concern in establishing boundaries with each individual client must be the best interests of the client. Except for behaviours of a sexual nature or obvious conflict of interest activity, boundary considerations often are not clear-cut matters of right and wrong. Rather, they are dependent upon many factors and require careful thinking through all of the issues, always keeping in mind the best interests of the client. The practitioner has a fiduciary duty to act in the best interest of the client. Being ultimately responsible for managing boundary issues, the practitioner is accountable should violations occur. Given the power imbalance that is inherent in the professional/client relationship, clients may find it difficult to negotiate boundaries or to recognize or defend themselves against boundary violations. Clients, if unaware of the need for professional boundaries, might at times even initiate behaviour or make requests that could constitute boundary violations. (Herlihy & Corey, 2006)

Case 2: Professional Development

It has been said that necessity is the mother of invention. Such might apply to the following case. Career practitioners working in rural communities face a number of challenges in pursuit of professional development. First, there is often not enough money to cover travel, subsistence, accommodation, and professional fees to send rural practitioners to the city for training. To bring an expert from the city into the community is also expensive, with not enough practitioners in need of training to justify the costs. A regional approach would often attract more practitioners, but the problem of rural travel brings the discussion full circle (Dickson, Koons, McElligot, Peruniak, & Speers, 2007).

I have been a member of a local, rural professional development group for nine years. It was not what I had in mind when we started. In the spring of 2003, many government and non-government agencies in Alberta were challenged with limited resources. Services were being privatized. Staff and budget cuts had been ongoing for several years. Increased workloads were leading to high levels of stress and burn-out in career practitioners.

Building a Local Professional Development Network

Shaky Beginnings

The impetus for a local professional development network came from two career practitioners who felt we should be able to do professional development locally. We approached the provincial body of career practitioners about setting up a local chapter. Yes, there was start-up money, but everyone in the group had to belong to the provincial body and pay association dues. After several unsuccessful starts, we realized that people did not wish to pay dues and that to get a stable number of participants we could not insist that everyone be a formal career practitioner. We invited counsellors and other human service providers as well. We finally had a group of five regular members.

Our informal style — no formal agenda, no minutes, no chairperson — belied an implicit agenda of discovering what we were to be doing together. We grappled with what our professional development would look like. Ideas ranged from (a) developing a structural framework for assessing the possible negative side effects of human services through the work of John McKnight (1989), (b) developing a community manifesto, or (c) changing the mandate of a local human service provider. But something was wrong with all these ideas. One of the counsellors identified it: "I spend all day helping solve other people's problems. The last thing I need is to belong to a group that wants to solve more problems. Maybe problems are the problem."

Specifically, we realized that our preoccupation for solving other people's problems — external problems — prevented us from examining our own. No

one had asked us to solve a "community" problem. It slowly began to dawn on us that we were the community. But how could we need help? After all, we were the professionals. We help others. To help ourselves is to admit that we need helping, not an easy admission when you are getting to know new colleagues. Besides, wasn't it selfish to serve ourselves first? How could we justify getting time off from work in order to meet? As it turned out, several of us could not. Therefore, we scheduled meetings after work.

Our early meetings examined the challenges each of us faced in our professional role. We looked at how our role could benefit from having our "whole self" come to work. We studied how so-called efficiencies in our respective workplaces cut a wedge between our role and our whole self. Numbers counted; creativity did not. Onnismaa (2004) discussed the impact of a disturbingly similar, business-like trend with counsellors — a marketing approach, superficial measures of client satisfaction, and quality that had come to mean only the absence of mistakes. We pondered how to respond. We shared perspectives. The insights that emerged became the impetus for our meetings. We legitimized, at least to ourselves, why what we were doing was valuable. For example, if we as professionals became burned-out, our contributions to our larger community would be diminished. This led us to see the strengthening of our professional resiliency as an appropriate professional development activity. Over the years, we have examined our own stories through topics such as barriers to communication, differences between listening and hearing, impacts of limited resources on staff, impacts of performance appraisals and wage disparity, importance of organizational culture, burn-out, and strategies for implementing change.

We became less concerned with trying to justify our activities to the workplace and more engrossed in how our larger self interacted with our role. We thought it was telling of the schism between role and person that our personal and professional insights would never appear on the annual performance assessment. For instance, several of our participants were able to identify that they were not happy in their present workplace, that it was constricting the development of their whole self, and affecting their work performance. Subsequently, they changed jobs. Other participants changed the way they reacted to workplace stressors. The identification and naming of various kinds of discontent may not hit the radar of a performance review but they have tremendous and long-term impact on who we are as persons. The following kinds of questions acted as stimulants in one of our early meetings:

1.   Am I becoming someone I don't like?
2.   Am I in a place I don't like?
3.   Am I at the back of someone else's bus?
4.   How did I get here?
5.   What's the worst that can happen? Have I blown things out of proportion?

6. Is my anger [or other emotion] an early warning sign for me to look after myself?
7. Am I happy about how my various roles contribute to a fuller sense of self?

Eventually the group took as its purpose the finding, preserving, and enhancement of ourselves in our work role. In other words, our group explored ways to integrate our professional and career lives with our personal lives. In this sense, we were our own client first. We could see that our group sessions functioned as a form of restorative professional development.

Mechanics

As we went along, we uncovered important elements in this model of professional development. There was no plan. Group size varied from five to eight participants. Meetings were monthly. If most members felt that such a meeting was an added hassle for them that month, then we happily cancelled. We were trying to counter the trend of a prescribed, objective-driven work environment that fostered increased defensiveness and self-protection while limiting a sense of playfulness and openness.

When providing personal, narrative illustrations, special care must be taken to protect participant confidentiality, especially in a small community. Without those narrative illustrations, however, discussion gets bogged down in language meanings. A story gives us a common starting ground from which to raise relevant questions. Space in this chapter prevents a more detailed exposition of the dynamics of the group.

Cautions

This model is simply one example of professional development done in a rural locale, although it is applicable beyond a rural location. It is neither the best way nor the only way to pursue professional development in a local setting. This is not a new model and it shares many characteristics of Parker Palmer's clearance committees in which there is no judgement — only open, honest questions. (Palmer, 2004).

There are a number of limitations to this model. First, not everyone is interested in sharing their experience with others or in examining their beliefs introspectively. Second, there must be the possibility of a degree of trust emerging from the process if this model is to have a chance at success. Third, there must be some tolerance for ambiguity, especially at the beginning, for common interests and directions to emerge. Fourth, power relationships were equal in our group, with no member having their work boss present. Otherwise, a problem of conflicting interests might arise when personal, work-based examples were used to clarify thinking. Fifth, this group seemed to work best with five to eight members. After that, getting "air time" was a problem. Sixth, employers may not be supportive of this kind of model. If work is just about service to others or making money, then employers may not buy in. But if work also concerns the impact of quality of life, including worker participation,

then this model may be appropriate (Lowe, 2000, Phillips, 2006). Finally, this model may work best when members come from a range of agencies rather than within a single agency. Not all employers tolerate criticism of their workplace. Because bureaucratic power is real, being too honest with people in the same organization might leave a worker vulnerable to repercussions.

Virtue-Based Ethical Decision-Making Approach: Application to Case 2

In Case 1 about a Moral Issue, the approach to decision making was based on principles: it was a rational, systematic, problem-solving, step-by-step analysis. For Case 2, Professional Development, we will show a **virtue-based approach** to decision making. A virtue-based approach recognizes that in addition to the rational mind there is an important role for emotions and intuitions. CCPA suggests that a series of questions be considered in a virtue-based approach (Schulz et al., 2006, pp. 339–340; Sheppard & Schulz, 2007, p. 4). Each question will be considered in turn with respect to Case 2 about the integrative model.

Question 1: What emotions and intuitions am I aware of as I consider this ethical dilemma, and what are they telling me to do?
Initially the practitioners were feeling beat up and burned-out. Of course, this basic truth did not emerge at first. Who would want to admit to such feelings among strangers? But with enough time and trust, we realized that we all were feeling undervalued and having a hard time reconciling our professional roles with our personal character. These feelings led to wanting to take charge of our own professional development by getting together locally with other practitioners who were similarly concerned.

Question 2: How can my values best show caring for the client in this situation?
Airlines tell us that in the event of a change of pressure and the appearance of oxygen masks, parents should place the masks on themselves before helping young children. Airlines recognize that to provide effective service for others we first need to look after ourselves first. In the local professional development network the clients were in fact us. By recognizing that we were experiencing a conflict between our work roles and our identity as whole persons, care was shown to our clients. In the helping services, it is sometimes hard for organizations, pressed as they are to be efficient, to recognize that in giving help to others there is a danger in neglecting the helper. Of course, unions have formed in reaction to this danger, but not everyone has access to a union and neither are unions completely trouble-free. In showing care for ourselves, we simultaneously show caring for our other clients by enabling ourselves to be the best we can be.

Question 3: How will my decision affect other relevant individuals in this ethical dilemma?
"Relevant individuals" in this case could include fellow employees, family members,

friends, and any others who are working with us. Obviously, finding a way out from feeling beaten up and burned-out would have a positive effect on our personal and professional relationships. This was certainly the premise on which we operated and which our experience confirmed.

Question 4: What decision would I feel best about publicizing?
Would we have acted differently under a wider, more public scrutiny? The choice was to take charge of our professional development or to remain unhappy and reactive in our various agencies. We would have felt good about publicizing our proactive stance.

Question 5: What decision would best define who I am as a person?
Again, we had a choice to remain silent and reactive or try to take charge. The whole point of exploring this model was to integrate our professional development with who we were as persons. Our decisions to get together, to allow enough time for a process to emerge, to see ourselves as our own clients, to opt out of formal structures and agendas, and to trust our whole self were all cumulative affirmations of who we were as persons. In retrospect, we gave ourselves permission, space, and time to discover who we were as people vis-à-vis our professional roles. As mentioned previously, several members changed their employment, not solely because of these talks, but in conjunction with them.

In summary, a virtue-based approach to ethical decision making seeks to uncover clues for making the right ethical choice from our emotional and intuitive life. It seems reasonable to expect that practitioners would use both principle-based and virtue-based ethical decision making to the extent that they supplement one another. Both approaches rest on a foundation of principles even though these principles differ in terms of what senses of the self are most valuable in making an ethical choice — analytic/rational for the principle-based approach and emotional/intuitive for the virtue-based approach.

Conclusion: Implications and Further Considerations for Career Practitioners

Part of the purpose of this chapter was to help situate practitioners with respect to ethics as citizens and as members of a profession, both of which are intertwined. Rote recognition of the ethical principles from a professional code is only the beginning. We need to understand that ethics are not simply an externally imposed set of rules, but come also from within the person through interpretation. Hence in this chapter there has been an emphasis on the personal and the ideal self-reflective practitioner.

Ethics may sound abstract but the effects are very concrete. What we believe to be right or wrong affects our roles, our relationships, and our very sense of self. Like gravity, ethics pervades our lives whether we're aware of it or not. This chapter has advocated for a practitioner who is willing to critically reflect on his or her beliefs of what is right and wrong in the course of assisting others on their journeys. Through such moral self-reflection, we honour the integrity of the service we provide and the role we adopt with the person we are becoming.
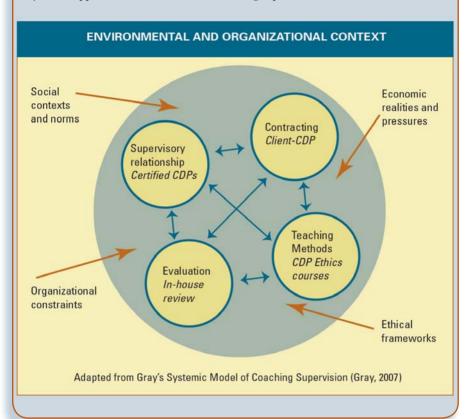
SPOTLIGHT: *A MODEL FOR ETHICAL DECISION MAKING*
by Seanna Quressette

Career development practitioners (CDPs) operate in a range of settings, funding structures, and circumstances. CDPs need both the knowledge of the S&Gs' Code of Ethics and the skills to apply the Code across a wide range of service platforms. In legislated counselling professions, skills in ethical decision making are gained through training and exposure to industry recognized codes of ethics, case study reviews, and supervision during ethical decision-making processes. At present, an informal survey of the Canadian career development training landscape shows an array of opportunities for CDPs to gain knowledge of the S&Gs' Code of Ethics through coursework, practical case applications within courses, and case studies. However, in order to advance the profession as a whole, there is a need for organizations and provincial associations to take up the challenge of building a framework for supervision of ethical practices.

Gray (2007) proposed a systemic approach to coaching supervision that has strong applicability to a wide range of CDP settings. We can see that this model includes the key components of the shifting CDP landscape in Canada. To translate this model to a Canadian CDP ethical decision-making skills setting, I propose the following understanding. These points are depicted in Figure 1:

1. The contracting circle represents the client-CDP ethical decision-making interaction.
2. Training methods represents the CDP ethics courses where knowledge, practice, and case study exposure is provided.
3. The evaluation circle represents the in-house review of ethical decision making (when CDPs consult with their immediate managers regarding ethical decisions).
4. The supervisory relationship circle represents a new relationship in the Canadian CDP landscape — that of professional CDP supervisor who sits outside the management relationship. This supervisory relationship could be fulfilled by certified CDPs with a reasonable length of client service experience and advanced training in both ethics and supervision skill.

Supervision is a key tenet of many human services professions. A major step forward in the field of career development practice in Canada would include a systemic approach to ethical decision-making supervision.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

Social contexts and norms

Economic realities and pressures

Contracting Client-CDP

Supervisory relationship Certified CDPs

Organizational constraints

Teaching Methods CDP Ethics courses

Evaluation In-house review

Ethical frameworks

Adapted from Gray's Systemic Model of Coaching Supervision (Gray, 2007)

References

Bayles, M. D. (1988). The professions. In J. C. Callahan (Ed.), *Ethical issues in professional life* (pp. 27–30). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

British Columbia Career Development Association. (1996). *Code of ethics*. Retrieved from <http://www.bccda.org/codeOfEthics.cfm>.

Burwell, R., Kalbfleisch, S., & Woodside, J. (2010). A model for the education of career practitioners in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Career Development, 9*(1), 44–52.

Callahan, J. C. (1988). Basics and background. In J. C. Callahan (Ed.), *Ethical issues in professional life* (pp. 3–25). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Career Development Association of Alberta (2009). *CCDP code of ethics*. Retrieved

from <http://www.careerdevelopment.ab.ca/Default.aspx?pageId=1184755>.

Dickson, K., Koons, S., McElligot, J., Peruniak, G., & Speers, M. (2007). Reclaiming the self: An alternative model to professional development. In A. Smith (Ed.), *Building tomorrow today conference proceedings* (pp. 49–58). Edmonton, AB: Career Development Association of Alberta.

Gray, D. (2007). Towards a systemic model of coaching supervision: Some lessons from psychotherapeutic and counselling models. *Australian Psychologist, 42*(4), 300–309.

Herlihy, B., & Corey, G. (2006). *Boundary issues in counseling.* Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Horowitz, M. (2008). *A course in happiness: Mastering the 3 levels of self-understanding that lead to true and lasting contentment.* New York, NY: Penguin.

Kalbfleisch, S., & Burwell, R. (2007). Report on the Canadian career counsellor education survey. *Canadian Journal of Career Development, 6*(1), 4–20.

Lowe, G. S. (2000). *The quality of work: A people-centred agenda.* Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

McKnight, J. (1989). Do no harm: Policy options that meet human needs. *Social Policy,* Summer, 5–14.

Mautner, T. (Ed.). (1996). *A dictionary of philosophy.* Oxford: Blackwell.

May, W. F. (1988). Professional virtue and self-regulation. In J. C. Callahan (Ed.), *Ethical issues in professional life* (pp. 408–421). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. (2006). An overview on transformative learning. In P. Sutherland & J. Crowther (Eds.), *Lifelong learning* (pp. 24–38). New York, NY: Routledge.

Nagel, T. (1988). Ruthlessness in public life. In J. C. Callahan (Ed.), *Ethical issues in professional life* (pp. 76–86). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

National Steering Committee. (2004). *Canadian standards and guidelines for career development practitioners.* Ottawa, ON: National Steering Committee for Career Development Standards and Guidelines. Retrieved from <http://career-dev-guidelines.org/career_dev/>.

National Steering Committee. (2004). *Canadian standards and guidelines for career development practitioners. Code of ethics.* Retrieved from <http://career-dev -guidelines.org/career_dev/>.

Onnismaa, J. (2004). Ethics and professionalism in counselling, *Canadian Journal of Career Development, 3*(1), 43–48.

Palmer, P. J. (2004). *A hidden wholeness.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Phillips, D. (2006). *Quality of life: Concept, policy and practice.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Schulz, W., Sheppard, G. W., Lehr, R., & Shepard, B. (2006). *Counselling ethics: Issues and cases.* Ottawa, ON: Canadian Counselling Association.

Sheppard, G., & Schulz, W. (2007). *Code of Ethics.* Ottawa, ON: Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association. <http://www.ccpa-accp.ca/_documents/CodeofEthics_en_new.pdf>.

Webster's Third New International Dictionary. (1986). Springfield: Merriam-Webster.

Glossary

Ethical conflict occurs when two ethical principles demand opposite results in the same situation. Solving ethical conflicts may require establishing a hierarchy or priority of ethical principles, or examining the situation through another ethical system.

Ethics (or moral philosophy) is the systemization and defence of concepts of right and wrong behaviour (Adapted from *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* <http://www.iep.utm.edu/ethics/>).

Experiential learning is inductive, action-oriented, and learner centred with emphasis on the process of learning rather than the product. Experiential learning is often viewed as a cyclic five-phase process where: (a) an activity occurs, (b) observations are shared, (c) patterns are determined, (d) inferences and principles are derived, and (e) learning is applied.

Moral issues are concerned with or relating to human behaviour, especially the distinction between good and bad or right and wrong behaviour.

Normative ethics are concerned with establishing norms, criteria, or standards that define principles of ethical behaviour by which professional practices might be guided or judged.

Profession is a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive preparation, including instruction in skills and methods as well as the scientific, historical, or scholarly principles underlying such skills and methods. A profession is a group of people in a learned occupation, the members of which agree to abide by specified rules of conduct when practising the profession.

Private morality refers to conduct that is personal and free from government or societal concerns.

Public morality is a moral and ethical standard imposed by society.

Self-reflective career practitioners engage in active reflection to ensure their continuous development that in turn supports the growth, development, and learning of clients. It is believed that the ability to analyze one's own weaknesses and strengths while planning positive ways to enhance one's effectiveness provides the basis of skills to work effectively with clients.

Sociocultural heritage includes one's race, gender, and social class, encompassing both social and cultural values and practices.

Value dilemmas occur when one's beliefs or principles are in conflict with another set of beliefs.

Values are a broad range of beliefs or principles that are meaningful to a particular group or individual. Values are subjective and based on inner personal experience and occur at cultural and organizational levels.

Virtue-based approach is to work from the premise that a person will be caring and virtuous because it is the "right way" to be. The counsellor is an ethical agent who is able to make ethical decisions.

Discussion and Activities

Discussion Questions

1. What are your views of forming social relationships with your clients? What about after you have completed your professional relationship?
2. What unethical behaviours by your colleagues would you report, if any? How would you proceed?
3. In what circumstances would you break confidentiality? How can you inform clients about issues pertaining to confidentiality and the legal restrictions on it?
4. What is meant by informed consent? What rights do clients have when they meet with a career practitioner? Which rights are most important?

Personal Reflection

1. What kinds of barriers impede a practitioner's ability to recognize that an ethical conflict exists, as called for in Step 1 of the ethical decision-making model?
2. What early signs in the helping process indicate that a career practitioner needs to look after himself/herself?
3. Why is it so much easier to see ethical breaches in someone else's behaviour than our own?
4. Maintaining competency is a requirement of most professional bodies. How will you ensure that you meet this requirement?

Career Practitioner Role

1. What responsibilities do bureaucracies have to provide a healthy environment, free of unwarranted stress and burn-out for practitioners?
2. How can we as professionals help these bureaucracies live up to the aforementioned responsibility?

3.   Why is relatively little attention paid to self-development in the professional codes of career practitioners?

Activities

Thinking About Pat

Use the Code of Ethics in Appendix A to identify a second ethical conflict for Pat in Case 1. Analyze the conflict using the set of ethical problem-solving steps as outlined in the chapter?

1.   Which ethical conflict is of gravest severity? Why?
2.   To what extent is context important to the adherence of ethical principles? For instance, Pat faced real hardship if she alienated her boss by refusing his directive. Should we cut her some slack? If so, how much?
3.   Why could Ted not successfully argue, that like any good business person, he was just advertising his career development services in his directive to Pat? After all, to our knowledge he did not specify how she was to solicit clients.
4.   Of what significance is Ted's personality in resolving the ethical conflict? Of what significance is Pat's personality?
5.   Did Pat do the right thing by reporting her boss to the regulatory body? What other reasonable choices did she have?
6.   How does Pat combine principle-based and virtue-based ethical decision-making approaches?

Scenario Analysis

You are a career practitioner in a small town. You work with four other practitioners at a small agency. Through your work with a client, you become aware that one of the other practitioners is engaging in what you consider to be unethical behaviour. You are able to confirm what the client has shared with you.

1.   What course of action would you take?
2.   Explain why you would take this particular course of action.
3.   What ethical principle and what ethical standards in the *Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners*' Code of Ethics apply?

Resources and Readings

Resources

Websites

Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association has several resources on ethics including the CCPA code of ethics, standards of practice, and ethics casebook. <http://www.ccpa-accp.ca/en/resources/>.

Videos

Zurinstitute. Part A. Introduction to Boundaries <http://www.youtube.com /watch?v=9G1_0alVkIc>.
Zurinstitute. Part E. Dual or Multiple Relationships in Psychotherapy <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zc0XpuA_5cQ>.

Supplementary Readings

American Counselling Association, Ethics and Professional Standards <http://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/ethics>
Bingham, R. P., & Wong, G. (2010). My life is a balance. … In J. G. Ponterotto, J. M. Casas, L. A. Suzuki, & C. M. Alexander (Eds.), *Handbook of multicultural counseling* (pp. 19–25). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
Career Development Association of Alberta <http://www.careerdevelopment.ab.ca /Default.aspx?pageId=1184755>.
Edgar, K. (2013). Rebellion and the absurd: Camus's moral philosophy and ethical issues in career counseling. In C. Jungers & L. Gregoire (Eds.), *Counseling ethics. Philosophical and professional foundations* (pp. 279–301). New York, NY: Springer.
Ethics Resource Center. Introduction: An ethical decision-making model <http://www.ethics.org/resource/plus-decision-making-model>
Guindon, M. H. (2011). Ethics, social and cultural diversity, human growth and development, and career development. In M. H. Guindon (Ed.), *A counseling primer: an introduction to the profession* (pp. 49–65). New York, NY: Routledge.
National Career Development Association: Career Counseling Competencies. Available from <http://associationdatabase.com/aws/NCDA/pt/sd/news_ article/37798/_self/layout_ccmsearch/true>
National Career Development Association: Code of Ethics (Revised May 2007). Available from <http://associationdatabase.com/aws/NCDA/asset_manager/ get_file/3395>
Neault, R. (2009, Feb. 26). The ethics of advocacy: A Canadian perspective. Contact Point <http://contactpoint.ca/the-ethics-of-advocacy-a-canadian-perspective/>.

Patsiopoulos, A. T., & Buchanan, M. J. (2011). The practice of self-compassion in counseling: A narrative inquiry. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, *42*(4), 301–307. doi: 10.1037/a0024482