Clarifying your values and their role in your work

- When counselors expose their values, they need to clearly label them as their own.
- Counselors may not agree with their client’s values but they must respect the rights of the clients to hold different values.

Clarifying values continued

- Counselors should not teach their clients specific moral rules and values.
- The therapeutic environment must be one of objectivity.
- Inform clients of areas where your values will not allow you to be neutral.

Not Counseling

- Counseling is NOT preaching, persuasion, or instruction.

Ten ethical guidelines continued

- 4. Assess contributory factors that pertain to the goals
- 5. Inform client of values, if the values are likely to influence the client’s choice of goals
- 6. Avoid or correct errors in clinical judgment
Ten ethical guidelines continued

- 7. Assess the risks that the client's goals might pose to the client or others
- 8. Consider how the client’s goals may affect others
- 9. Avoid deceiving clients
- 10. Honor any promises made to the client

The Ethics of Imposing your Values on Clients

Client values

A survey of mental health professionals found that these are the basic values they felt clients should have to help them become mentally healthy:
- Self-determination
- Developing effective strategies for coping with stress
- Developing the ability to give and receive affection

Client values continued

- Increasing one's ability to be sensitive to the feelings of others
- Becoming able to practice self-control
- Having a sense of purpose for living
- Being open, honest, and genuine
- Finding satisfaction in one's work

Client values continued

- Having a sense of identity and self-worth
- Being skilled in interpersonal relationships
- Having deepened self-awareness and motivation for growth
- Practicing good habits of physical health

Value Conflicts: To Refer or Not to Refer

A challenge for counselors is to recognize when their values clash with a client’s values to the extent that they are not able to function effectively.
Note

- Merely disagreeing with a client is not ethical grounds for a referral.

Shared Life Experiences and Values

- Counselors don’t need to have experienced the same struggles as their clients to be effective.

Practice

- Identify the factors in your life that would either help or hinder you in establishing a good working relationship with your client.

The Role of Spiritual and Religious Values in Counseling

- Spiritual and Religious matters are therapeutically relevant.
- A spiritual component is critical to the recovery process.

Spiritual values continued

- Empirical evidence shows that spiritual values and behaviors can promote physical and psychological well-being.
- There are many paths for fulfilling spiritual needs.

Spiritual values continued

- Spirituality is seen as less formal than religion.
- It is an innate human quality.
- It is what connects us to other people, nature, and the source of life.
Religious Teachings vs. Counseling

- Both religion and counseling help people ponder the following questions:
  - "Who am I?"
  - "What is the meaning of life?"

They both address the following issues

- Healing through an exploration of self
- Self acceptance
- Admitting one’s shortcomings
- Dealing with guilt

More issues addressed by both

- Accepting personal responsibility
- Coping with resentments
- Letting go of self destructive patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting

Personal Beliefs and Values of Counselors

- Counselors have an ethical responsibility to be aware of how their beliefs affect their work
- and to make sure they do not unduly influence their clients.

Including Spiritual and Religious Values in Counseling

- Caution: be aware of your own countertransference when it comes to religion.
- Don’t impose your beliefs of religion on clients.

End of Life Decisions

- Rational suicide: a person has decided, after going through a decision-making process and without coercion from others, to end his or her life because of extreme suffering involved with a terminal illness.
Psyc 475 – Professional Ethics in Addictions Counseling

End of Life Decisions

- Aid-In-Dying: providing a person with the means to die; the person self-administers the death causing agent.
- Hastened Death: speeding up the dying process, which can entail withholding or withdrawing life support.

Criteria to evaluate whether a person’s desire for suicide or hastened death is rational

- They have an unremitting and hopeless condition
- They are acting under their own free will
- They have engaged in a sound decision-making process that includes consultation with a mental health counselor

Checklist

- Who can make an assessment of mental competence:
  - a. Exploration of the person’s values regarding suicide
  - b. Consideration of the impact on significant others
  - c. Discussions with objective others (medical and religious professionals) and with significant others

Values Pertaining to Sexuality