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PowerPoint Slides for  
On-Demand Webinar

# The Ethics of Helping

Boundaries and Relationships

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# GOALS FOR THE WEBINAR

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- Define the concept of ethics and how it applies within the helping profession
- Describe the common values and principles that guide codes of ethics in helping professions
- Identify steps in a process for ethical decision-making

# ETHICS: PART OF DAILY LIFE

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- The values and beliefs that guide our choices
- We develop principles and guidelines for actions
- Training starts early in life
- Start with impulses and move toward making more thought out choices



# ETHICS...

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*You and your very good friend have agreed together to work at watching your diet and weight during the holiday season. You're at a social gathering and they aren't in the room.*

*Do you have the third cookie ?!*

# ETHICS: HOW DO WE DEVELOP THEM?

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- Experiences influence how we treat others
- If we have built up pain, we may feel entitled to take that out on others or the world around us
- When we are in pain or struggle, it is hard to think beyond pain or pleasure

# ETHICS

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- We develop life-earned **wisdom**
  - *Values shape us*
  - *Beliefs influence us*
  - *Rules & policy guide us*
  - *The opinion of others and Experiences teach us...*
  
- *We develop our own **moral compass...***



# ETHICS...

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*You're at a department store trying on some new pants. You put your hand in the pocket and find \$50!*

*Do you tell anyone? Do you keep it?*

# WHAT ARE ETHICS?

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- **Ethics** = philosophy/beliefs that govern a person's actions
- **Ethical dilemmas** = when a situation does not have a clear “right” or “wrong” answer; **or** any course of action that may feel “wrong”





# ETHICS...

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*You've sold your house to a friend – the deal went through last week! There is a huge storm on the weekend and the roof leaks.*

*Do you have it fixed?*

# WHAT ARE ETHICS IN THE WORKPLACE?

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- **Ethical Decision-Making** = A reasoned, deliberate process that includes several people giving input (consultative)
- **Code of Ethics** = A clearly defined list of principles that guide a specific group



# YOUR EXPERIENCES OF ETHICAL DILEMMAS

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Have you ever:

- Accepted a gift from a client?
- Kept a secret from or with a client?
- Became friends with a client?
- Treated a client with special care?
- Shared personal info with a client?



# COMMON VALUES IN CODES OF ETHICS

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- **Autonomy** → *each person has the right to respect and to their own decision-making*
- Example: Supporting and advocating for those vulnerable to others' influence
- **Beneficence** → *relationship benefits the client, not the helper*
- Example: Counselling work is guided by the goals of the client

# COMMON VALUES IN CODES OF ETHICS

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- **Non-maleficance** → *helper does best to avoid doing harm*
- Example: Helper needs proper training to do their job to best support work toward goals
- **Fidelity** → *loyal to clients, agency, and profession*
- Represent the mission of agency and live up to their principles

# COMMON VALUES IN CODES OF ETHICS

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- **Justice** → *treat all fairly; non-judgement & non-discrimination*
- Example: No discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or levels of ability
- **Veracity** → *truthful in direct work and record keeping*
- Example: Accurate & truthful in spoken and written communication



# THE “BIG SIX”: COMMON PRINCIPLES

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- **Confidentiality**

- *Protect client information*
- **Boundaries around this information**
- How is information secured?
- Electronic communication & social media
- How and when is information handled and shared?
- How do you manage your own thoughts, feelings, & values?

# THE “BIG SIX”: COMMON PRINCIPLES

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## **Informed Consent**

- *Each person is informed of what to expect*
- **What does client understand their rights & responsibilities are?**
- What will you do, and what are you NOT able to do?
- What is expected of them?
- What can they expect of you and the agency?



# THE “BIG SIX”: COMMON PRINCIPLES

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## **Conflicts of Interest (avoid)**

- *When a helper may benefit personally from a situation involving their professional job or role*
- Multiple roles with a client
- Multiple relationships with a client
- Personal and professional interests may clash
- Cultural sensitivity and agility

# THE “BIG SIX”: COMMON PRINCIPLES

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- **Duty to Warn/Report**

*When there is reasonable concern of immanent risk, a helper needs to report, refer, or consult with appropriate others*

- Often there are several principles at play
- Who has the right to know?
- Who has the *need* to know?
- Conflicting needs of clients can make this tricky

# THE “BIG SIX”: COMMON PRINCIPLES

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## Record Keeping

- *We need to keep accurate and clear records of our interactions with the public*
- Physical records
- Electronic records
- Links with informed consent

# THE “BIG SIX”: COMMON PRINCIPLES

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## **Counsellor/Helper Competence & Impairment**

- *Know your limits!*
- Education, training, and support available to helper
- Supervision & debriefing
- Self-care

# AN ETHICAL PROCESS

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## **Document**

*Keep accurate written notes and records of ethical concerns, resulting consultations, and decisions made.*

*It can also be important to include steps NOT taken.*

## **Define**

*It is helpful to clearly identify what ethical dilemma is being considered. Which principles are at play?*

## **Identify and review relevant policies**



# AN ETHICAL PROCESS

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## ***Consider rights and responsibilities***

*Weigh out for both the client and for the helper and agency.*

*Who will benefit? Who might be harmed or incur cost?*

## ***Consider your past actions and others in similar situations.***

### ***How did you feel after in the past?***

*Are there examples to follow that can offer wisdom and learning?*

## ***Consider your options?***

*What are all the reasonable possibilities?*



# AN ETHICAL PROCESS: ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

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- Ask :
  - *Who benefits from this decision?*
  - *Who is impacted negatively?*
  - *Could there be blind spots for me? Do I have personal experiences that I could be reminded of?*
  - *If roles were reversed, what would I want the other person to do?*
  - *What decision will I feel proud of ?*
  - *What decision would I want others to know about?*
- Consult! With supervisor, senior peer, trusted colleagues
- Continue to monitor risks and outcomes

We continue to learn as we go through ethical dilemmas.





## ADDITIONAL EVENTS & RESOURCES

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- Other Public Workshops
- On-site Training
- Live and On-Demand Webinars
- Blog Articles
- Free Monthly Webinar

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