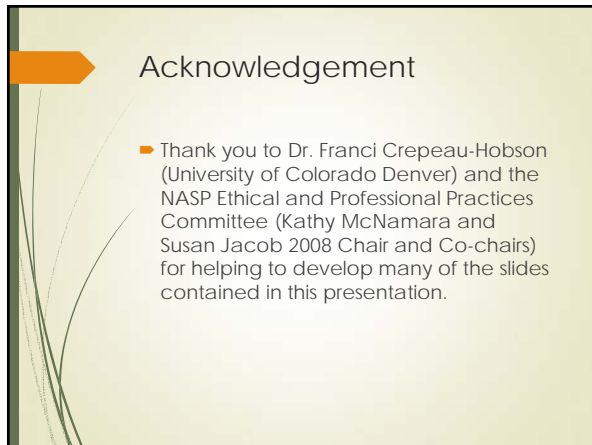




Making Ethical Decisions

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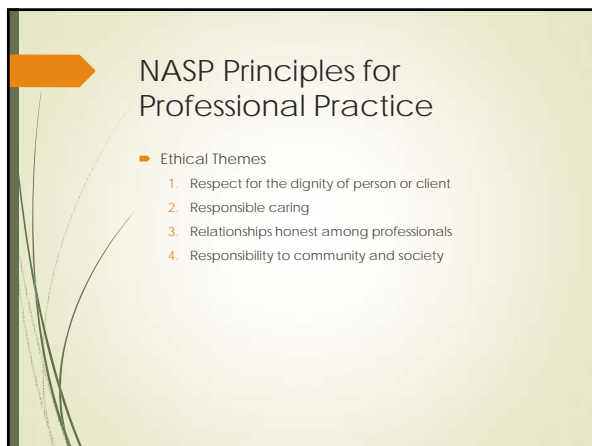
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Acknowledgement

- Thank you to Dr. Franci Crepeau-Hobson (University of Colorado Denver) and the NASP Ethical and Professional Practices Committee (Kathy McNamara and Susan Jacob 2008 Chair and Co-chairs) for helping to develop many of the slides contained in this presentation.

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NASP Principles for Professional Practice

- Ethical Themes
 1. Respect for the dignity of person or client
 2. Responsible caring
 3. Relationships honest among professionals
 4. Responsibility to community and society

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**General Ethical Principle 4:
Responsibility to Community and Society**

- Discuss what this means
 - "School psychologists attempt to resolve suspected detrimental or unethical practices on an informal level. If informal efforts are not productive, the appropriate professional organization is contacted for assistance and procedures established for questioning ethical practice are followed."

NASP, III. A. 8

**General Ethical Principle 4:
Responsibility to Community and Society**

- Discuss what this means
 - "School psychologists also are citizens, thereby accepting the same responsibilities and duties as any member of society ... (they) may act as individual citizens to bring about social change in a lawful manner ... (I)f regulations conflict with ethical guidelines, school psychologists seek to resolve such conflict through positive, respected, and legal channels, including advocacy efforts involving public policy."

NASP, III. D. 1, 2, 5

**General Ethical Principle 4:
Responsibility to Community and Society**

- Ann Evans is a school psychologist who lives in the school district where she works. She is concerned about the failure of the school board to address the problem of school bullying; in fact, she heard a radio interview in which a board member claimed that the district's bullying problem had been eliminated. Ann knows this isn't true, since an increasing number of students have reported bullying episodes during recess periods and on school buses. Her co-workers have advised her to keep quiet about the situation, since the board takes a negative view of employees who openly challenge school policies and practices. "Besides," they suggest, "parents will eventually insist that the district do something about the bullying problem."

**General Ethical Principle 4:
Responsibility to Community and Society**

- Ethical Problem Solving Process
 1. Awareness of an ethical dilemma. An event occurs and your feeling/intuition may signal a conflict.

McNamara (2008)

**General Ethical Principle 4:
Responsibility to Community and Society**

- Ethical Problem Solving Process
 2. Identify the basis of the conflict. If not directly addressed in the ethics code what interests or standards are competing.
 - I. Conflicting interests of parties
 - i. Determine how each parties interests might be affected by action
 - ii. Determine your responsibility to each party
 - II. Competing standards
 - i. Determine what standards are involved. Is there a legal requirement to consider?
 - III. Unclear standards
 - i. What information is lacking? What do I need to know
 - I. Consult a supervisor or colleague
 - II. Consult written resources

McNamara (2008)

**General Ethical Principle 4:
Responsibility to Community and Society**

- Ethical Problem Solving Process
 3. Determine options for action
 - I. What is the likely impact, positive and negative, on all parties (including myself)?
 - II. Can negative impact be ameliorated? If so How?
 - III. Consider hierarchy of principles: respect for dignity of persons; responsible caring; integrity in relationships; responsibility to society
 - IV. Consider if the action is one I would recommend to a colleague. Am I comfortable with others knowing my decision?
 4. Decide upon a course of action. Evaluated the outcome

McNamara (2008)

**General Ethical Principle 4:
Responsibility to Community and Society**

Cindy, a troubled 14 year-old whom school psychologist Hannah Koz has seen previously for counseling, comes to her without an appointment. She is upset because two of her best friends, Tara and Trisha, have made plans to "ambush and beat up" another girl after school because of an argument about a boy. She knows that Tara and Trisha have been in trouble at school before for fighting, and she is worried they will be kicked out of school if they follow through on their plans. She is also concerned that they may really hurt their intended victim. Cindy asks Hannah to talk to the other two girls, but not to report it to any other adult.

Jacob & Hartshorne (2007)

**General Ethical Principle 4:
Responsibility to Community and Society**

Mark T. is a school psychologist who works with students in an alternative school with students who have difficulties in learning, emotional issues, and, in some cases, in adapting to the rules of school or community.

On Friday, Mark emailed one of the counselors at the other high school, seeking advice about one of the students: "Shane Smith is so challenging. His IQ is only 78 and he struggles with following even simple directives. In our last counseling session, he told me that his mom is still drinking and that she seems angry all the time. He also told me that he wets the bed almost every night. I am not sure what to do about this. Any suggestions?"

Mark closed the email by asking the counselor to be sure to delete the string of emails to ensure confidentiality.

**General Ethical Principle 4:
Responsibility to Community and Society**

Over the summer, Susan, a school psychologist, worked with the regional special education director and a team of principals, teachers, and other support staff to develop a three tier RTI model. Their cooperative includes a number of small rural schools and consequently, some schools are served by itinerant school psychologists. In the initial discussion of the RTI, the principals suggested that they be responsible for observing teachers to monitor treatment integrity. Susan is concerned, however, that tensions may arise between the need to document treatment fidelity and teacher concerns that such data might be used inappropriately by school administrators to evaluate teachers (and perhaps discharge them). She is also concerned about the impact this will have on service delivery and meeting the needs of kids.

**General Ethical Principle 4:
Responsibility to Community and Society**

Jack Western was a capable and conscientious school psychology intern during his first semester as Pearl Meadow's supervisee. After winter break, however, Jack was often late to school, sporadically absent due to illness, and appeared disorganized and unprepared for meetings. When Pearl expressed concern about this change in his performance, Jack apologized, attributed his tardiness and disorganization to the stress of completing his master's thesis, and promised to do better. The following week, however, when reviewing a student assessment he completed, Pearl noticed that Jack failed to record any of the child's verbatim responses of several WISC subtests, and that his report was poorly written, with little attention to integration and interpretation of findings. Then, after lunch that day, Pearl thought she smelled alcohol on his breath. When Pearl asked Jack about the incomplete WISC protocol and hastily written report during their supervision meeting, Jack disclosed that his wife had left him over Christmas and the he was devastated by their separation. He had never administered all the WISC subtests, and had simply fabricated the scores. When asked whether alcohol was a problem, he confided that he had been drinking heavily.

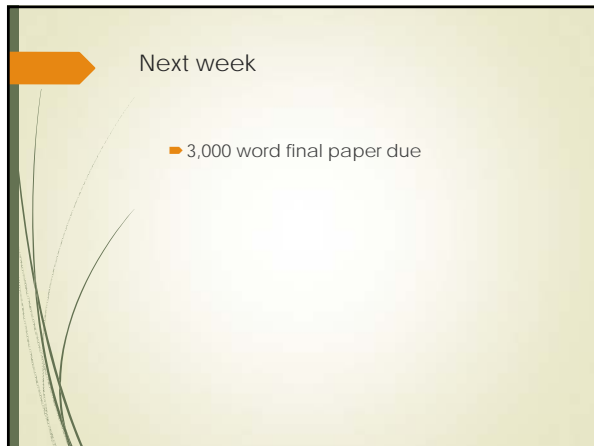
Jacob & Hartshorne (2007)

**General Ethical Principle 4:
Responsibility to Community and Society**

Charlie Maxwell, a school psychologist, overheard a conversation between a fellow school psychologist, Frank Brown, and a guidance counselor in the school district in which they both worked. Frank told the counselor that he didn't see much point in meeting with parents of students who were chronic behavior problems, since poor parenting skills obviously contributed to the problems of such students, and the parents were unlikely to be of any help in addressing their children's difficulties. When asked by the counselor how he got around the obligation to consult with parents of students who were referred to him, Frank said that, while he did ensure that he had a signed consent form from the parents, he made notations in his record that he had spoken with the parents, or attempted to contact them by phone, when in fact he had not.

**General Ethical Principle 4:
Responsibility to Community and Society**

Bobby is a relatively new student at East Elementary School (he transferred 3 months ago). According to his mother and school records, Bobby has always struggled academically and is currently reading a pre-1 level, though he has never been evaluated or identified with a disability nor has he ever had special education services. Bobby did not make any progress in his regular 4th grade classroom during his first few weeks at East. He was subsequently placed in a functional academics classroom comprised mostly of students with a speech and language impaired disability. Since then, Bobby has made a significant academic progress in all academic areas and is apparently very engaged. At an intervention team meeting, the principal told the school psychologist and other team members that Bobby must be placed back in to the regular classroom immediately since he was never provided with Tier 2 interventions and thus did not have a chance to respond to such interventions prior to being placed in the FA classroom.



Next week

- 3,000 word final paper due
