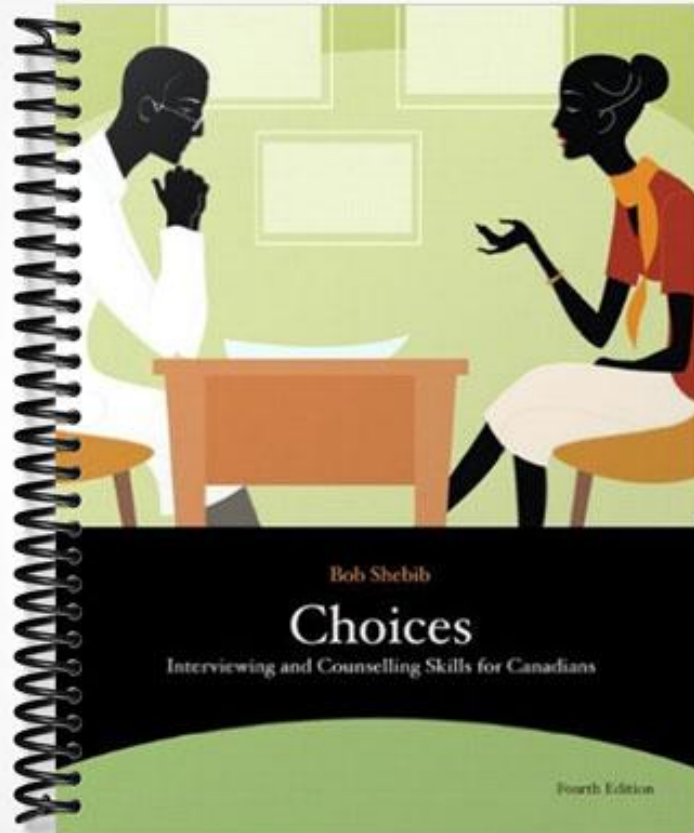


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Bob Shebib

Choices

Interviewing and Counselling Skills for Canadians

Fourth Edition

Bob Shebib
Choices: Interviewing and Counselling Skills for
Canadians, 4/e
Instructor's Manual

Chapter Two
Ethics, Values, and Self-Awareness

Chapter Outline

- Describe professional ethics, including standards related to dual relationships and confidentiality
- List and describe the core values of counselling
- Identify principles for resolving ethical dilemmas.
- Understand the importance of counsellor objectivity and self-awareness.
- Know how to increase self-awareness.
- Understand and manage personal needs and values in counselling.

Comments and Possible Answers to Selected Text Exercises

1. Can we promise our clients absolute confidentiality? Why or why not?

Answer: We can only promise relative confidentiality because of such realities as duty to warn others of intended harm by the client or responsibility to report child abuse.

2. What are some advantages and disadvantages to allowing clients access to files?

Answer: Advantages - Empowers clients to be involved in the process. It helps counsellors remain accountable for their assessments. It provides an opportunity to share perceptions.

Disadvantages - May lead to counsellors editing important information or observations in order to avoid conflict. Clients may react with anger. Some clients may not be emotionally able to handle the information.

3. Under what conditions would you make exceptions to the principle of self-determination?

Answer: In emergencies where the client is unable to make a decision for themselves. If the clients behaviour might harm others. When clients lack the emotional or intellectual ability to act on their own behalf.

4. Use the concepts in this chapter to explore ethical issues and strategies for each of the following situations.

Suggestion: Encourage students to use Figure 2.2 (page 53) to conceptualize the steps and Figure 2.4 (page 55) to identify risks and benefits.

- a. An elderly, frail woman suffering from inoperable cancer decides to kill herself.

Comment: Use this question to explore religious, moral, and legal issues regarding right to die, assisted suicide. Consider how different cultures might respond to this - e.g., hari-kari in traditional Japan. Related issues to consider: mental health status, professional responsibility to do no harm.

- b. A client decides to give his life's savings to his church.

Issues to consider: Mental health status, coercion or manipulation, rights of others in the clients family. While clients have the right to dispose of their assets as they wish, counsellors can and should assist clients to avoid impulsive decision making. For example, a client in the manic phase of bipolar disorder might impulsively give his money to the church. Similarly, a client with schizophrenia might hear voices telling him to give everything away. In either case, it is clear that the client's ability to make a rational and informed decision is impaired and counsellors should take action. The long-term interests of the client are best served by actions which prevent him giving away his assets.

- c. A client boasts that if his girlfriend tries to leave him, he will kill her.

Comment: Consider whether this is an idle threat or a serious intent. Discuss how one's professional duty to inform intended victims applies even if this supersedes the clients right to confidentiality. At the same time, preventing a client from harming someone else is also in his long-term best interests.

- d. A client from a counselling relationship that terminated six months ago phones to ask you for a date. (Assume that you are not in a current relationship.)

Comment: Use this question to explore when, if ever, a counsellor should be free to form a different relationship with a former client. Reference the CCA Code, sections B11 and B12 which provide some reference points, but no clear direction. See Conversation 2.2 on page 45. It is never acceptable to have sexual relations with a client.

- e. Your client leaves your office in anger, determined to "teach my wife a lesson for the way she treated me."

Comment: see question “c” above.

- f. Knowing that you are in the market for a new car, your client, a used-car salesperson, offers to help you buy a car at the wholesale price.

Comment: In this case the injunction forbidding dual relationships applies. Counsellors should not allow themselves to realize personal gain or loss from their relationship with a client.

Supplementary discussion questions: What if you know that buying the car will assist your client to meet a necessary sales quota? What if you buy the car and it is a “lemon?” If you buy, how might this affect your counselling relationship?

- g. A client inquires about your sexual orientation.

Comment: Self-disclosure should be offered only when it will benefit the client and when it will not compromise the helping relationship. Thus, in different circumstances it might be appropriate to share this information, while in others it would be inappropriate.

Supplementary discussion: How might the client's reasons for knowing change your answer? Suppose, for example, that your client was dealing with his own sexuality? If you are gay, do you think you have a responsibility to share this?

- h. Your client asks for your e-mail address so that he can keep in touch.

Comment: Counselling relationships are time-limited and when their intended purpose is achieved, the relationship should be terminated. On the other hand, clients may have need for additional service in the future. It is appropriate to provide agency contact information including your business email, but generally, it would be risky and ill-advised to provide personal email, phone number, or home address.

- i. Your client, a bisexual male, has tested HIV-positive but informs you that he does not wish to tell his wife. He says that he will practise safe sex.

Supplementary discussion: While Canadian law requires a person with HIV or any other sexually transmitted disease that could cause serious harm to disclose their status to their partner before engaging in sexual activity, the duty to warn has not been established by the courts. For a detailed discussion of this issue see:
<http://www.aidslaw.ca/Maincontent/issues/criminallaw/e-info-cla8.htm>

- j. You receive a call from the client's wife. She says she is concerned about her husband and asks whether you think her husband might be gay.

Supplementary discussion: Generally, clients have a right to at least relative confidentiality and disclosure to his wife would not be appropriate. However, an interesting dilemma arises if the husband in question is the man described in question “I” above.

- k. Your colleagues begin to talk about a client. You are with them at a local restaurant.

Comment: A restaurant is not an appropriate place to discuss clients. You could simply state that you are not comfortable having this discussion in this public place and you would prefer to meet later to discuss the matter. Or, you could excuse yourself from the group. At the very least, you should not participate. This is not easy given the social pressure to be part of the colleague group. Your problems may be compounded if you are a student or if you are new to the agency and have little power to effect change.

- l. One of your colleagues tells you that she has just returned from a one-day workshop on hypnosis. She says that she can hardly wait to try it on some clients.

Comment: Counsellors must insure that they “do no harm.” In this respect they have a responsibility to confront colleagues when they believe their actions have the potential for harm. A one-day workshop is insufficient preparation for using hypnosis as a counselling tool. Professionals who are concerned about the behaviour of colleagues have a responsibility to discuss this directly with them. If this confrontation is unsuccessful, it is appropriate to raise concerns with your supervisor. In some circumstances, such as those involving harm to clients (e.g., a counsellor in sexual relationship with the client) the matter must be reported to a supervisor and/or the appropriate professional body.

- m. You encounter one of your colleagues having lunch with a client. You notice that they are drinking a bottle of wine.
Issues: professional boundaries, dual relationships, responsibility of professionals to deal with the behaviour of colleague professionals. Drinking with a client violates appropriate boundaries. In order for counselling to be successful, conditions different than personal friendship must be maintained. In this case, you should first air your concerns with your colleague, but subsequent discussion with colleagues or professional bodies may also be warranted.

- n. You have an erotic dream about one of your clients.

Comment: Discuss how it is normal to have feelings (positive and negative) towards clients. Of prime importance is monitoring our

reactions in order to maintain objectivity. In some cases, we may not be able to do so, then discussion with colleagues and supervisors, or referral to another worker emerge as alternatives.

- o. While you are counselling a student (in your role as school counsellor), he discloses that he is selling marijuana to classmates. (Would your answer be different if you were a counsellor in a community agency unconnected to the school?)

Comment: Debate whether the duty to warn principle applies in this case.

- p. You are a counsellor working with a young, gay client. He has been socially isolated and is slow to trust anyone, but over time you have managed to form a strong working relationship. Imagine that he approaches you with a request that you walk with him in the annual gay pride parade. What variables would you consider in making your decision? What are the implications of going with him? What are the implications of not going?

Issue: Dual relationship.

- q. Your client is down to her last two dollars. She offers to buy your coffee.

Issue: Her financial state and the fact that buying you a coffee might be important to her. When clients offer gifts or favours, it is important to consider both the intrinsic value of the gift (meaning to the client) and the extrinsic value. While it is unethical to accept large monetary gifts from clients, it may be acceptable to accept small tokens of appreciation.

- r. Your car is broken and requires an expensive repair. Your client has been struggling to set up a mobile repair service, but business has been slow. He offers to fix your car for a discounted price.

Issue: Dual relationship.

5. A good friend invites you to a small dinner party. When you arrive, you are introduced to the other guests, including a client whom you have been working with for the past year.– You note that her companion for the evening is not her husband. From observing their behaviour, there is no doubt that this is a romantic relationship. She has never mentioned this relationship in the past. What would you do for the rest of the evening? Should you disclose this relationship to the woman's husband? If she asks you to keep your knowledge of this relationship from her husband, could you continue to see them for marital counselling?
6. Assess the extent to which you believe that each of the following counsellor behaviours might be acceptable. Use the following rating scale:

- 5 = *always*
 4 = *often*
 3 = *sometimes*
 2 = *seldom*
 1 = *never*

Be prepared to defend your answer. How might your answer vary depending on the circumstances?

- ___ seeing a client after having had one alcoholic drink
- ___ accepting an invitation for dinner at a client's home
- ___ hugging a client
- ___ inviting a former client to a party at your home
- ___ dating a former client
- ___ having sex with a client
- ___ driving your client home
- ___ discussing your client with a supervisor
- ___ assisting a client to end his or her life
- ___ accepting a client's decision to commit suicide
- ___ allowing your teenager to babysit for your client
- ___ buying a car from your client
- ___ lending money to a client
- ___ reporting your client to the police (after the client tells you that he or she committed a crime)
- ___ reporting suspected child abuse by your client
- ___ sharing personal experiences, feelings, problems, and so on with your client
- ___ getting angry with your client
- ___ discussing a client with your family or friends (without mentioning names)
- ___ giving a present to a client or receiving a present from a client
- ___ sharing information about clients with other counsellors
- ___ warning a person that your client has threatened to harm him- or herself
- ___ telling a client's partner that he or she is HIV-positive
- ___ advising a client to leave an abusive marriage
- ___ crying in the presence of a client
- ___ counselling a friend or neighbour at your agency

(Adapted from Shebib, 1997)

Comment: Use student answers to stimulate debate and to illustrate how difficult it is to have exact guidelines for practice.

7. Give examples of appropriate physical contact between social workers and clients. How might cultural, age, or gender variables affect your answer.

Comment: Encourage students to explore personal and family customs and values. Interviews with people from other cultures is always useful. Caution: Avoid using multi-cultural students as spokespersons for their culture.

8. The case below is based on from a case record completed by a social work student. Use the CCPA and CASW codes to evaluate the appropriateness of the language used.

I visited the Smith home to investigate allegations of child neglect. I was met at the door by Mrs. Smith, a single parent. I was surprised by her size; she was morbidly obese and smelled as if she hadn't showered in weeks. Rolls of fat hung out of Mrs. Smith's shirt, and portions of her legs were covered with dirt. Mrs Smith's slovenly appearance suggests she is unable to care for herself, much less her children (Reamer, 1998:93). [Reamer, F.G. *Ethical Standards in Social Work: A Critical Review of the NASW Code of Ethics*. Washington: NASW Press, 1998.]

Comment: Discuss differences between fact, opinion and inference.

9. Explore the issues involved in discussing clients with friends and relatives. Is it acceptable to discuss clients if you change their names and other identifying data? Defend your answer.

Comment: Family and friends are not bound by the same ethical codes. Once you disclose, you lose control over what happens with the information. You may need to unwind from a difficult day, but it is preferable to use colleagues and supervisors from within your agency.

10. Should some clients be forced to attend counselling?

Issues: Self-determination, rights of society for protection. Sometimes involuntary clients who are helped to see the value of counselling profit from the experience. This is particularly true when they are encouraged to set counselling goals that meet their needs and when the process is respectful of their rights.

11. Do you think gallows humour is ethical? Defend your answer.

Comment: See Conversation 2.1, page 40.

12. What strong beliefs do members of your cultural/ethnic group hold?

Comment: Assist students to share how their beliefs are the same or similar to those of the dominant culture. Explore implications for counselling.

- 13 - 23. These are questions designed to assist students to develop self-awareness. For students to become and remain proficient counsellors, they must make the development of self-awareness a priority. This work continues throughout one's professional career and should never be considered completed. Suggest that discoveries which students identify as problematic should be reframed as goals for development, with an appropriate action plan developed. Students can be invited to preview Chapter 7 material related to goal setting and action planning, pages 207 - 217. Over the semester, students might also be asked or

encouraged to make journal entries on any self-development work they undertake.

- 24 - 27. Questions 24 -27 are designed to assist student to self-examine their knowledge of cultures and religions. Invite the class to brainstorm ideas for increasing knowledge. Examples: attend diverse religious ceremonies, volunteer for a multi-cultural event, read books about different cultures, interview people from diverse communities, cultivate multi-cultural events, mark religious holidays for different religions on a calendar then try to acknowledge or celebrate these holidays.
28. Research the codes of ethics for 3 or 4 different professional organizations.– What common and unique features can you identify?

Comment/Suggestion: Select 5 or six codes from different professions and ask groups of students to analyze one of the codes. Mix the members of the various research groups so they can share their observations and analysis. Use the web-site identified in the text: <http://www.advocateweb.org/hope/codesofethics.asp>

Teaching Strategies/Classroom Activities

1. Use the short inventory of counselling ethics (page 14 of the Shulz text - see Resources) as a way to demonstrate that there potentially many (and often conflicting) responses to ethical situations.
2. Conduct a class discussion that addresses the questions: When and how should counsellors confront the ethical behaviour of colleagues? What can (should) counsellors do to when the policies of their agency are not helpful to clients?
3. Set up a debate. Resolved: That children over 14 years of age should have the right to seek and receive confidential counselling services.
4. Present the following scenario to the class:
Imagine that your client will have access to additional funding if he meet certain criteria. Such funding will greatly assist the client to deal with his problems. Would you be willing to “stretch” your assessment to ensure that he qualifies.
5. Ask student to work in a small group to develop a model response to the following client question: “Will you keep what I say confidential?”
6. Case scenarios and questions to stimulate class discussion on ethics. You could also use a debate format to explore selected scenarios.
 - Your best friend suffers from a catastrophic illness that has left her incontinent and paralyzed from the neck down. After many months living

in this condition she asks if you will assist her by providing drugs that will help her end her life. What would you do?

- Reverse the roles - suppose you were the one who became paralyzed.
 - Should the media report suicide? What are the arguments for yes? For no?
7. Form small groups to explore ethical issues and strategy choices for each of the following scenarios
- You work a residential setting. You suspect that one of the staff, Sandy, a single working mother is taking leftovers home. This is strictly against agency policy. At the same time, you are aware that Sandy has had trouble making ends meet, more so since her younger child's struggle with cancer.
 - April handles contracting on behalf of your agency. She is responsible for compiling statistical reports that form the basis of funding proposals. Her efforts have resulted in numerous profitable grants. You suspect that some of her stats are fudged. Corrected stats would probably result in loss of funding for some of your projects.
 - Who would you hire? Assume you are a member of a hiring panel for a social service agency. Fred is described as an efficient and unusually competent worker who has demonstrated superior ability to work with difficult clients. At the same time, his current colleagues have judged him as blunt and at times rude in his dealings with the team. Fred is not seen as a team player. Ruth, on the other hand, is well liked by her colleagues, fits in with the team, and is quick to offer assistance to colleagues. Her work with clients has been assessed as average. (*Your agency deals with troubled and resistant youth*).

Resources

1. Web Resources

- a. www.ccacc.ca/ccacc.htm
The Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association site contains links to Canadian counselling and mental health professional associations as well as guidance and professional development information.
- b. <http://www.casw-acts.ca/index.html>
The Canadian Association of Social Workers site has links and information for social workers.
- c. <http://www.scu.edu/ethics>
This site provides articles and links on the topic of ethics.

2. Shulz, W.E. (2000) *Counselling ethics casebook 2000*. Ottawa: Canadian Counselling Association, 2000. This Canadian text is linked to the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association Code of Ethics. It provides examples and assistance for dealing with ethical issues and dilemmas.
3. Pawlak, E.J. (1999) Organizational tinkering. In Compton, B., and B. Galaway (1999) *Social work processes*. 6th ed. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole. This is an excellent reading on how practitioners can affect organizational change.
4. Reamer, F.G. (2002) "Ethical Issues in Social Work." In Roberts, A., and Greene, G eds. (2009) *Social workers desk reference, 2nd Ed.*. New York: Oxford University Press.
5. Steinman, S.O, N. Richardson, & T. McEnroe (1998) *The ethical decision-making manual for helping professionals*, Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Supplementary Material and Additional Exercises

1. What barriers (real or self-imposed) do clients face when they contemplate making an ethical complaint?
2. Do you believe that counsellors have a responsibility to educate clients who make sexist or racist remarks? Explain your answer.
3. Imagine that you become sexually attracted to a client. Is this unethical? What are your response choices?
4. There are many people who work in social services who are not governed by professional codes of ethics. How should the ethics of their practice be monitored and controlled?
5. Suppose you are working in an agency that is dependent on government funding. You are responsible for keeping statistics on your clients. If you make a few small "adjustments" in the figures you know that your agency will qualify for increased support. What are the implications of your choices?
6. Ask students to reflect on their work in this chapter to develop their self-awareness. Ask how this work might assist them to become more effective counsellors.