

The CAP Monitor

To serve the interests of the public and guide the Profession of Psychology.

Issue 27

Summer 2007

Ethical Decision Making

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We make ethical decisions every day in our personal and professional lives, and most of the time it is easy to decide which decisions are right and wrong. It is not as easy if the interests of different parties (including our own self-interest) conflict, or our ethical principles are fuzzy, or as psychologists we are not familiar with the requirements of the law or the regulatory body to which we are accountable. A higher standard of ethical behaviour is required of professionals who provide services for others because the relationship is based on a fiduciary or trusting relationship.

An ethical dilemma is a problem, and ethical decision making is problem solving. A dilemma is not a forced choice between two unacceptable alternatives, but rather choosing among alternative possible responses. The College of Alberta Psychologists provides a number of documents as a basis for regulation and as a guide for thinking about ethical practice.

- The *Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists, 3rd Edition* (2000) articulates the ethical principles and values that broadly define the practice of psychology. It is a reference for defining unskilled practice, and it provides an ethical decision making process for making decisions. In the con-

duct of disciplinary hearings, the psychologist who has used the decision-making steps may be seen as acting in good faith. The Code of Ethics is more aspirational than a code of conduct.

- The *Standards of Practice* (called Code of Conduct prior to the proclamation of the Health Professions Act in January 2006) translates some aspects of the Code of Ethics into enforceable behavioural rules that have the force of law and are often used in disciplinary hearings as a basis for determining unprofessional conduct. These standards are considered behavioural, prescriptive, definitive, mandatory, and enforceable.
- *Professional Guidelines for Psychologists* have been developed for several specific areas of practice to assist practitioners to provide competent and ethical service, often in newly emerging or controversial areas, e.g., child custody assessments, recovered memories, dual roles, release of information to third parties,

advertising and public communications. Although these guidelines are not enforceable, they may be used to assess whether a psychologist has acted competently.

Historically psychology was slow in seeing the need for codes of ethics. The American Psychological Association began work on a code of ethics for psychologists following the end of WW II. Professional codes of ethics appear to have two lines of parentage. The most practical objective was to make rules to prohibit behaviour that would harm research subjects and clients, this occurring originally in the context of the horrors of Nazi Germany and in the emergence of jurisdictions to regulate the practice of psychology, both occurring in the 1940s and 1950s. Informed consent was seen as the best protection against harm, because one would not give consent to being harmed. The second theme was to provide a philosophical or moral foundation for the standards of practice. Philosophical tenets have a long history. Current literature includes discussion of such principles as autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, fidelity, and justice. (continued on page 6)

Calendar of Meetings

Note: These dates are subject to change if there are scheduling conflicts. The most up-to-date calendar is available on the CAP website.

Council Meetings

September 14, 2007

Annual Meeting

September 15, 2007

The most recently approved minutes can be found on the CAP website.

Credentials Evaluation Sub-Committee Meetings

Meeting Date	Deadline for Application
June 8, 2007	June 1, 2007
September 7, 2007	August 31, 2007
November 2, 2007	October 26, 2007
December 7, 2007	November 30, 2007

Oral Examinations

Examination Week	Deadline for Application
June 25 – 29, 2007	April 30, 2007
October 22 – 26, 2007	August 27, 2007

Registration Approvals Sub-Committee Meetings

Meeting Date	Deadline for Submission of Materials
June 20, 2007	June 13, 2007
August 17, 2007	August 10, 2007
September 24, 2007	September 17, 2007
October 29, 2007	October 22, 2007
November 23, 2007	November 16, 2007
December 17, 2007	December 10, 2007

Survey of Provisional Psychologists And Supervisors

The Registration Advisory Committee invites all provisional psychologists and supervisors to complete an online survey regarding your experience with supervision.

This survey is available on the CAP website at www.cap.ab.ca

Your feedback is greatly valued.

Annual Meeting & Professional Development Day



HOLD THE DATE

September 15, 2007
Shaw Conference Centre
9797 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton AB
780-421-9797

8:00 am - 8:30 am	Registration
8:30 am - 10:00 am	Breakfast and Annual Meeting
10:30 am - 12:00 pm	Presentation by the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta (Presenter TBA)
12:00 pm - 1:30 pm	Lunch Break

Please note: The Ethical Issues in Supervision Session is the full afternoon.
 Those not attending the Supervision Session will attend the Administrative Law & Regulation Panel Discussion and then choose one of the two sessions running from 3:30 to 4:45 pm.

1:30 pm - 4:45 pm	Ethical Issues in Supervision (Bob van Mastrigt, R. Psych. and John Pearce, R. Psych.)	
1:30 pm - 3:00 pm	Administrative Law & Regulation James Casey, Q.C., Craig Boyer, Thomas Marriott, Julie Gagnon	
3:00 pm - 3:30 pm	Afternoon Break	
3:30 pm - 4:45 pm	Third Party Payers (Carole Kanchier, R. Psych.)	Continuing Competence (Paul Jerry, R. Psych. and Jana Hyer Davies, R. Psych.)
5:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Wine & Cheese Reception Volunteer Appreciation	

A detailed brochure will be mailed under separate cover.
 Registration fee of \$50 includes breakfast, attendance at the Annual Meeting, the OIPC presentation, lunch, and either the Supervision presentation, or Administrative Law & Regulation Panel Discussion.

If you choose the Administrative Law & Regulation session, you then have a choice of Third Party Payers or Continuing Competence.

A block of guest rooms will be held at the Courtyard by Marriott Hotel (99 Street & Jasper Avenue) until August 14.
 Please call (780) 423-9999 or 1-800-321-2211 for accommodations.

Examination Results

Examination for Professional Practice of Psychology

A total of 46 candidates wrote the EPPP examinations between February 1, 2007 and April 30, 2007.

Pass 30 (65%)
Fail 16 (35%)

Oral Examinations

A total of 27 candidates undertook the oral examination between February 1, 2007 and April 30, 2007.

Pass 23 (85%)
Fail 4 (15%)

Changing Your Address?

Please notify the College promptly in writing of changes in your address, phone/fax numbers or e-mail address.

A change of address form is provided on the College website.

Register Updates

NEW MEMBERS

Congratulations and welcome to the 18 new registered psychologists who have been added to the Register between **February 1, 2007 – April 30, 2007.**

Jody Carrington
Paula Cervený
Ford Cranwell
Marta Edgar
Catherine Elliott
Laurie Gaboury
Donna Granson-Heise
Shelley Hanna
Danica Heidebrecht
Marya Jarvey
Behnam Kohandel-Ghahnaviehei
Helen Massfeller
Ginger Smith
Leslie Snelling
Susan Spellman Cann

Shandra Taylor
Nicole Tonn
Cynthia Yeoh

Our apologies for omitting the following four people from our last Monitor who were registered between October 1, 2006 and January 31, 2007:

Linda Watt
Catherine Wilkes
Rhonda Wizniak
Denise Wollard

Reinstatement

David Ford
Peter Kells

The College has learned, with regret, of the death of Mr. Robert A. Hall and sends sincere condolences to his family, friends and professional colleagues.

Registration Cancelled as of May 16, 2007 for not renewing Practice Permits

Magdalena D. Amestica
Michael Boyes
J.P. Brisebois
Pui-wan Cheng
Alicia Hinger
John F. Kinsman
Louanne Lisk
Anita R. Madill
Ian McKenzie
Gillian P. Rundle
Adriana Saenz
Lilly A. Selby
Susan Slive
Cheryl Turner

Provisional Psychologists

T. Trudy Burge
Michael Mackenzie
Alexza Rojas-Valdriz
Linda Stelte
Tammy Tompkins

Call for Nominations

2007/2008 COUNCIL OF THE COLLEGE OF ALBERTA PSYCHOLOGISTS

In accordance with the bylaws of the College of Alberta Psychologists, a call for nominations for the year 2007/08 Council is presented. All nominees must be Registered Psychologists who are not under order of discipline and must be nominated by two Registered Psychologists who are also not under order of discipline. Prior to accepting nominations, all nominees are encouraged to carefully read and give proper consideration to the description of "Standards and Accepted Practices for Council Members" which is available on the CAP website.

Upcoming Vacancies on Council three Member-at-Large positions

You can obtain the "Call for Nominations" form and the "Nominee Biographical Information" form by:

1. calling the College office at 424-5070 (Edmonton) or 1-800-659-0857
2. requesting the forms electronically by emailing w.el-issa@cap.ab.ca, or
3. visiting the CAP website at www.cap.ab.ca

Nominees must return the completed "Call for Nominations" form, together with the "Nominee Biographical Information" form to:

The President, College of Alberta Psychologists
Suite 2100, Sun Life Place
10123 – 99 Street
Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 3H1

**NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED AT THE COLLEGE OFFICE
NO LATER THAN 4:00 P.M., FRIDAY, JUNE 29, 2007**

Resources

CAP Publications

Available on a cost-recovery basis from the College office as well as on our website:

- a) copies of CAP professional guidelines for psychologists (individually or as a package)
 - Addressing Recovered Memories
 - Advertising and Other Public Communication
 - The Use of Aversive Techniques in Behaviour Management
 - Child Custody Assessment
 - Control and Use of Tests by Psychologists
 - Non-Discriminatory Practice
 - Release of Confidential Information
 - Service Fees for the Provision of Copies of Client Files
 - Psychological Evaluations for Child Protection Decisions
 - Limits to Confidentiality and Consent for Services: Special Issues in Working with Minors and Dependent Adults
 - Dual Roles: Guidelines for Conducting Assessments and Providing Therapy with the Same Client
 - Supervisors and Registered Provisional Psychologists
- b) Status of Regulatory Documents in the Regulation of the Psychology Profession in Alberta
- c) Receiving Services from a Registered Psychologist (brochure)

Ethical Decision Making (cont'd from Page 1)

The first psychology code of ethics to provide ethical principles as a moral framework for the standards of behaviour appears to be the *Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists* in 1986. Codes of a few other professions today clearly state the ethical principles, and a smaller number link them to the standards. A transparent ethical framework is invaluable when rules are not sufficient, when it is important to consider context and relationships, and when the psychologist may need to explain, defend, or account for actions taken. Pedersen (2001) believes that psychology codes of ethics need to include a philosophical base in order to be sensitive to the needs of other cultures.

The *Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists* (CPA, 1986/1991/2000) and the *Companion Manual to the Canadian Code of Ethics* (CPA, 1988/1992/2001) have made two major contributions to psychology on provincial, national and international levels. The first is the formulation of the ethical principles, 1) Respect for the Dignity of Persons, 2) Responsible Caring, 3) Integrity in Relationships, and 4) Responsibility to Society, as the moral foundation for the ethics standards and for ethical decision making. Respect is the highest principle and is described as “valuing the inherent worth of all persons independent of”, which is a stronger statement than not discriminating on the basis of certain characteristics. However, it should be noted that placing Respect for the Dignity of Persons at a higher priority than Responsibility to Society, when they are in conflict, is not held by many non-western and aboriginal societies. The second major contribution is the recommended process for making ethical decisions in situations where there are conflicting principles or conflicting interests. It is necessary to understand the context and the nature of the people relationships in order to arrive at a satisfactory solution.

We will comment on the decision-making steps without duplicating the full text. Usually the first indication of an ethical dilemma is discomfort, or even anxiety, about what is the right thing to do. First of all, who will be affected by the decision and, of the different parties, for whose benefit does the psychologist have the greatest responsibility? What are the main issues, e.g., the law, respect, competency, confidentiality, conflict-of-interest? Recognize that inasmuch as one cannot be totally objective, try to be aware of the potential biases, self-interest, and stresses that may influence ethical decisions. Think of all the alternative actions that might be taken and what the probable consequences might be of each alternative for the parties involved. Consult, act, evaluate the results and, if needed, correct for any negative consequences. Consider whether there are ways that might prevent such dilemmas from occurring in the future, such as remedying policies, procedures, lines of communication. Here we have a recognition that while the individual psychologist is held responsible for individual actions, in the delivery of services today many people are often involved, and there are many pressures and demands over which the individual has minimal control. Although not included in the decision-making steps, psychologists are expected when appropriate to consult with parties that will be affected by the decision and with trusted colleagues or advisory bodies. (Note that confidential advice is available from practice advisors appointed by the Psychologists' Association of Alberta.)

The Companion Manual to the Canadian Code of Ethics (3rd Ed.), (Sinclair and Pettifor, 2001) is a useful companion for all Canadian psychologists. In addition to other helpful features, it provides four examples of ethical decision making. The

Feminist Ethical Decision-Making Model (Hill, Glaser & Hardin, 1995) proposes to supplement the usual “rational-evaluative” approach with the “Feeling-Intuitive” process that focuses on one's feelings and learnings throughout the decision-making process.

The Canadian Counselling Association Code of Ethics (1999) includes both ethical Principles and the CCA Process of Ethical Decision-Making, which are similar in structure to the CPA Code. Both the CPA and the CCA decision-making steps concentrate on primarily cognitive rational steps. However, the CPA introduced 1) the term “responsible caring” as a person-involved relationship between the psychologist and the client in place of such terms as “competency” and “client welfare”; 2) a consideration of personal factors that might influence decisions; and 3) a recognition that external pressures may influence the nature of professional activity. CCA introduced a step very similar to the Feminist Intuitive Decision-Making Steps to explore one's inner feelings about the ethical dilemma.

Changing aspects of society and systems for funding health care services present ethical challenges for those providing direct services. First, in the US and Canada there is increased concern that third party funders often make business decisions to control costs that are seen as clinically contra-indicated, e.g., limiting the diagnoses, the number of sessions, or type of therapy that will be covered. Second, as society becomes more multicultural, we find that some of our practice standards are not sensitive to beliefs in other cultures relative to consent, confidentiality, professional boundaries, approaches to healing. Our focus on individualism and science, or on equality (continued on next page)

of women and men, may not be seen in other cultures as serving the collective good. In both situations psychologists need to know the expectations of the regulatory body, of the law, and also the aspirations demonstrated in the ethical principles. The ethical decision-making process may help psychologists to determine what is in the best interests of the clients within the context of their lives. Some approaches require addressing contextual issues in order to serve the individual client. The use of the ethical decision-making steps, as needed, should be open to public scrutiny. When the rules are not enough, we are fortunate to have explicit ethical principles and an ethical decision-making process to guide us. We aspire to provide the best of care, rather than the least that will keep us free of disciplinary sanctions.

Here is an ethical dilemma that is not covered in codes of conduct although one might consider issues of the law, consent, confidentiality, client welfare, and respect for several entities, to be important issues. Sometimes after one determines what needs to be done, there remains a question

of how to carry out the decision in the most supportive way for the client. Sometimes there is more than one response that would be ethical but one is more respectful than the other.

A woman is referred to you for assessment and therapy because she is showing signs of depression. She has immigrated with her family from another culture where the man as head of the household makes all the decisions, and is physically abusive if she is not obedient. She would never report him to the police, whom she does not trust, or would she leave him because of shame, the fear that he would kill her, and her inability financially to care for the children. You would like to recommend marital counselling, but she says that he would never agree. However, he might come if you said that she had serious mental problems, he had none, and you wish to discuss how he might help her get better. In addition you learn that his health insurance plan will not cover marital counselling.

How do you address the legal, ethical and cultural issues? How much contextual information do you need? How do you

help this woman and her family?

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- Sinclair, C., & Pettifor, J. (2001). *Companion manual to the Canadian code of ethics for psychologists*. Ottawa: Canadian Psychological Association.

On-Line Resources

Websites

The College's website at www.cap.ab.ca serves two purposes: communication with the public and communication with College members. The website is updated regularly and is a good source of information for everyone.

Other useful websites for CAP members:

- Psychology Profession Act and Regulations, www.gov.ab.ca/gp
- Health Professions Act, www.gov.ab.ca/gp
- Psychologists' Association of Alberta, www.psychologistsassociation.ab.ca
- Canadian Psychological Association, www.cpa.ab
- Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards, www.asppb.org



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