

Title: Exploring psychologist's identification and management of ethical dilemmas

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Exploring Psychologist's Identification and Management of Ethical Dilemmas

Ethics and exposure to ethical situations can be complex, unavoidable and ambiguous at times. The emphasis should be on raising the awareness of ethical issues and how to manage the associated risks when ethical issues arise. To date there has been limited investigations into the actual processes of, and factors that influence how psychologists identify and manage ethical decisions. To address this, a focus group of psychologists were presented with a range of ethical situations in a focus group discussion. The situations explored issues such as multiple relationships, use of multimedia, boundaries, professional responsibility and confidentiality. A thematic analysis identified key themes paramount in ethical decision making - open and honest communication; client safety as a priority; reflective thinking; and the role of consultation/supervision. Furthermore, clinical training and ethical decision making was identified as a separate theme, which explored ethical decision extending beyond a knowledge of ethical codes and guidelines; one that is not made in isolation; one that requires a great deal of assessing factors that impact the client, the psychologist, the therapeutic relationship, level of risk, and the clinical treatment outcome.