Why are Behavior Analysts NOT Talking about This?

Ethics & Conduct: What You Should Know

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Education:

- BS in Psychology (TCU)
- B.S. in Criminal Justice (TCU)
- M.Ed. Special Education (UNT)

Certification:

- BCBA (Board Certified Behavior Analyst)
- Texas LBA (Licensed Behavior Analyst)
- Texas EC-12 Special Education Teacher
- Texas EC-4 General Education Teacher

Experience:

- In-Home ABA programs 2005-2007
- School Based Behavior Consultant/Specialist 2007 - 2018
- Program Supervisor 2018 (Therapy and Beyond)
- Clinical Director 2018-2021 (Therapy and Beyond)
- DFW Area Director 2021 (Therapy and Beyond)

Family Life:

- Wife to John
- Mom to Drew (8), Sam (6) and Hayley (2)
- Dog and cat mom

Core Value

Social Responsibility: giving back to the professional community

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 Defining Ethics

02 Ethical Philosophy

03 Ethical Dilemmas

04 Application of Ethics Code

05 Resources

06 Ethics in the Workplace

Defining Ethics

What are Ethics?

Beliefs	Laws	Values	Ideals	Morals
Belief of what is right	Ethical guidelines that we follow	Beliefs that guide human behavior	Moral concepts that help define good and bad	Understanding of right and wrong

Poll Question

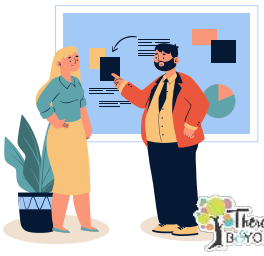
In your opinion what is the most important characteristic of Ethics?

A. Beliefs
B. Laws
C. Values
D. Ideals
E. Morals

Defining Ethics

Bailey and Burch 2016 referenced Koocher and Keith-Spiegel 1998 guiding principles that medical professionals need to follow

1.) Do no harm
2.) Respecting Autonomy
3.) Benefiting Others
4.) Being Just
5.) Being Faithful
6.) According Dignity
7.) Treating Others with Care and Compassion
8.) Pursuit of Excellence
9.) Accepting Accountability



Ethics Defined

According to Cooper, Heron, Heward (2020) ethics is a set of behaviors, practices, and decisions that address basic and fundamental questions:

What is the right thing to do ?

What's worth doing?

What does it mean to be a good behavior analyst?

Ethical Philosophy

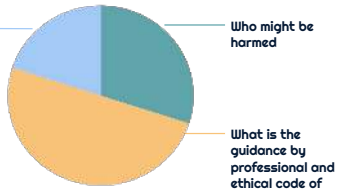
Skinner's philosophical perspective (1978)

B.F. Skinner defined ethics as certain standards of behavior that are **developed by a culture and promote the survival of that culture**.

He urged that ethics govern behavior, and are therefore functionally related to the survival of the individual, group, culture, and species.

When a behavior analyst is confronted with a complex ethical question effective navigation can only be accomplished if the behavior analyst's ethical compass is intact and reliable.

Ethical Considerations for the Behavior Analyst



Ethical Dilemmas and Application of Ethics Code

Poll Question

In your opinion, what type of ethical violation is the worst or most difficult?

A. Dual Relationship
B. Gifts
C. Parents asking about medical information of BCBA or RBT

PROBLEM

If a BCBA or BCaBA has a multiple relationship with other coworkers.

What is the Ethical Violation and Solution?

ETHICAL VIOLATION

Ethical Code: 1.06-Multiple Relationships and Conflicts of Interest

SOLUTION

Keep all relationships professional in the workplace.

Problem

If a BCBA or BCaBA is working for a family, and becomes quite close to them, is offered gifts and the BCBA accepts.

What is the Ethical Violation and Solution?

Ethical Violation

Ethical Code 1.06-Multiple Relationships and Conflicts of Interest.

Solution

Behavior analysts do not accept gifts from clients or accept invitation to social gathering as this constitutes a multiple relationship (new 2022 ethical code no more than $10 dollar value). Best practice is to inform clients/caregivers of ethical code on the outset of services as an antecedent approach.

PROBLEM

A BCBA/BCaBA has developed a romantic relationship with student, supervisee, employee, etc.

What is the Ethical Violation and Solution?

ETHICAL VIOLATION

Ethical Code: 1.07
Exploitative Relationships

SOLUTION

Immediately notify your employer and take steps needed to remove supervisee status and maintain professional boundaries in the workplace

Problem

A BCBA/BCaBA is friends outside of the workplace with certain RBTs. Other RBTs in the workplace file a complaint that the BCBA/BCaBA is engaging in favoritism towards the RBTs that the BCBA/BCaBA are friends with outside of work.

What is the Ethical Violation and Solution?

Ethical Violation

Ethical Code 1.06-Multiple Relationships and Conflicts of Interest.

Solution

Behavior analysts recognize and inform clients and supervisees about the potential harmful effects of multiple relationships.

If behavior analysts find that, due to unforeseen factors, a multiple relationship has arisen, they develop a plan to resolve the multiple relationship, and share that plan with their supervisors.

PROBLEM

The parents of a client are really concerned about a new topography of spitting and licking that has recently emerged. The parents have asked the BCBA/BCaBA if a punishment procedure that was previously effective when used with their child could be implemented for the spitting/licking.

What is the Ethical Violation and Solution?

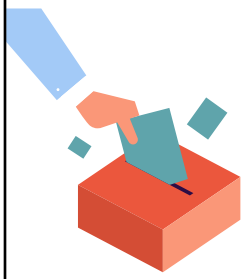
PROBLEM

ETHICAL VIOLATION

Ethical Code: 4.08 Considerations Regarding Punishment Procedures

SOLUTION

- Explain to parents that time will be needed to both conduct a functional analysis of the behavior, and first exhaust reinforcement procedures before implementing any aversive measures.
- If punishment procedures are necessary, behavior analysts **always include reinforcement procedures** for alternative behavior in the behavior-change program.
- Behavior analysts ensure that aversive procedures are accompanied by an **increased level of training, supervision, and oversight.**
- Behavior analysts must evaluate the effectiveness of aversive procedures in a timely manner and modify the behavior-change program if it is ineffective.
- Behavior analysts **always include a plan to discontinue** the use of aversive procedures when no longer needed.



Ethical Resources

The time is always right to do what is right.

Martin Luther King

Resources

BACB Ethics-Related Journal and Book Resources

https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Ethics-Related-Journal-and-Book-Resources_200603-1.pdf

ABA Ethics Hotline

https://www.abaethicshotline.com/who-we-are/

The National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorder

https://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/national-professional-development-center-autism-spectrum-disorder

Ethics in the Workplace

Poll Question

What is most valuable aspect of ethics in the workplace?

A.) Employee behavior

B.) Health of organization

C.) Protection of patient well being

D.) All the above

Ethics in the Workplace Defined

Ethics in the workplace is defined as the moral code that guides the behavior of employees with respect to what is right and wrong in regard to conduct and decision making.

Why are ethics important in the workplace?

- Stimulate Positive Employee Behavior
- Help sustain organizational growth
- Protect interest for employees and patients

If ethics are poor how can it negatively impact workplace?

- Negative attitude and negative gossip
- Create organization demise
- Strain relationships and cause damage to employees and patients

Remembering the importance of Ethical Practices

As behavior analysts we get so caught up in the day to day that we forget to **stop and think**.

Remember that the struggle between right and wrong is always present.

We have to remember to stop and ask, **"Is there an ethical problem here?"**

If we don't stop and ask this question, we are not representing our best self or our workplace.

KEY WORD!
Workplace

Questions???

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