Ethical Decision-Making in CSD

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Introductions

- Jenny Brodell, M.A., CCC-SLP
  - Full-time employee of University of Iowa and UIHC
  - Pediatric speech and language disorders; autism

- Krista Davidson, M.S., CCC-SLP
  - Full-time employee of University of Iowa
  - Augmentative and alternative communication across the lifespan

- Meaghan Foody, M.S., CCC-SLP
  - Full-time employee of University of Iowa and UIHC
  - Aural rehabilitation across the lifespan
Agenda

• Introductions and Overview
• Review Code of Ethics
• Review Relevant Principles
• Ethical Dilemmas and Breakout Discussions
• Summary and Concluding Thoughts
• Q and A
How important are ethics in today's society?
What does ethics mean to you?

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.
We know ethics...

• can be challenging.
• can be a bit dry.
• can be time consuming.
• (insert us in superhero capes here)
ASHA Code of Ethics

• The Code of Ethics is our governing body’s framework of principles and standards of practice (ASHA, 2023)
• If you are an ASHA member or ASHA certified – this applies to you
• As a clinical educator it is also part of your responsibility to make sure that you are educating student clinicians
History of ASHA Code of Ethics

• First version of the ASHA code of ethics was established in 1952
The Evolution of the Code of Ethics

• ASHA Code of Ethics must adapt with cultural changes
• The ASHA Board of Ethics is comprised of 17 members
  o Two public members
  o At least five audiologists who hold Certificate of Clinical Competence in Audiology
  o At least five speech-language pathologists who hold the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology
• Mandated to regularly review the Code to enhance its "currency, accuracy, and comprehensiveness"
• Most recent update was released in 2024
Link to ASHA Code of Ethics
SLP and Ethics

- It is our responsibility to be well versed in the ASHA Code of Ethics
- Speech-language pathology affects the health, well-being, and quality of life of the individuals we serve
- Prevent violations or sanctions by knowing what the Code contains
Clinical Instruction and Ethics

- Responsibility of a clinical educator to ensure that you and your students know about the ASHA Code of Ethics
- Incorporate reflection related to ethical decision making throughout clinical instruction
- Seek opportunities to highlight and direct student clinicians to the ASHA Code of Ethics
- Balance your responsibilities to your clients as well as student clinicians in your decision making
Check-In

• How many of you supervise clinical fellows or graduate students?
  o How have you supported trainees in recognizing and navigating ethical implications in clinical situations?

• How many of you are students?
  o How has ethical decision making been approached in your education?
Principle I

“Individuals shall honor their responsibility to hold paramount the welfare of persons they serve professionally or who are participants in research and scholarly activities, and they shall treat animals involved in research in a humane manner.”

https://www.asha.org/code-of-ethics
Principle II

“Individuals shall honor their responsibility to achieve and maintain the highest level of professional competence and performance”

https://www.asha.org/code-of-ethics
Principle III

“We shall honor our responsibility to the public when advocating for unmet communication and swallowing needs.”

https://www.asha.org/code-of-ethics
Principle IV

“Individuals shall uphold the dignity and autonomy of the professions, maintain collaborative and harmonious interprofessional and intraprofessional relationships”

https://www.asha.org/code-of-ethics
Principle I Breakout Discussion

You, a speech language pathologist, are attending a district-wide training and have the opportunity to meet and interact with other SLPs in the district. In a conversation related to working with children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing you hear an SLP say that when a child's hearing aid isn't working, they just put it in their backpack because their educational audiologist is "never around and impossible to get a hold of." Is this an ethical violation? How would you respond?
Principle I Ethical Dilemmas

- Rule B: Individuals shall use every resource, including referral and/or interprofessional collaboration when appropriate, to ensure that quality service is provided.
Debrief
You are working with an 18-month-old client who was recently added to your clinical caseload. The child wears bilateral cochlear implants which she received at a nearby medical center. When discussing goals and objectives based off your assessment findings, the parent tells the graduate student she thinks those goals are too low because “the team at the medical center told me she would definitely have 50 vocabulary words by now.” Is there an ethical violation in this scenario? How would you handle this situation?
Principle I Ethical Dilemmas

• Rule J: Individuals shall accurately represent the intended purpose of a service, product, or research endeavor and shall abide by established guidelines for clinical practice and the responsible conduct of research.
  – Fully explaining diagnoses and providing realistic and comprehensive information at an accessible level for clients and caregivers

• Rule M: Individuals may make a reasonable statement of prognosis, but they shall not guarantee—directly or by implication—the results of any treatment or procedure.
  – Discussing possible outcomes founded in research and clinical expertise without providing guarantees related to progress
Debrief
The graduate student clinician you supervise is currently working at two different placements. She tells you about an 8-year-old client with cerebral palsy and dysarthria at her second site who would clearly benefit from AAC. The student says the supervising SLP told her she doesn’t “do AAC” and continues to only address oral speech production. How would you handle this situation?
Principle II Ethical Dilemma

• Rule C: Individuals shall enhance and refine their professional competence and expertise through engagement in lifelong learning applicable to their professional activities and skills.
  - Recognizing our professional biases to ensure that families and/or clients are given all potential intervention strategies, approaches, etc. to make the most well-informed and individualized decision
Debrief
Principle II Breakout Discussion
What are the potential ethical implications of this administration situation? How would you handle it?

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.
Principle II Ethical Dilemma

• Rule F: Individuals in administrative or supervisory roles shall not require or permit their professional staff to provide services or conduct clinical activities that compromise the staff member’s independent and objective professional judgment.
Debrief
In your weekly planning meeting, your graduate student shares ideas for a therapeutic approach that she saw posted on her favorite Instagram SLP’s page. You know that this approach does not have a strong evidence base. How do you support the student in balancing time-saving planning strategies while maintaining ethical standards of evidence-based practice?
Principle III Ethical Dilemmas

• Rule E: Individuals' statements to the public shall provide accurate and complete information about the nature and management of communication disorders, about the professions, about professional services, about products for sale, and about research and scholarly activities.
  – Ensuring the programs we develop, run, and market are based in evidence; not over-stating efficacy of treatment approaches or using an approach without researching it (even if it is posted about, disseminated in an invited training, etc.)
  – Funding and resources don't necessarily equate to best practice
Debrief
Principle III Breakout Discussion
How would you navigate this situation with your colleague?

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.
Principle III Ethical Dilemmas

• Rule C: Individuals shall not misrepresent diagnostic information, services provided, results of services provided, products dispensed, effects of products dispensed, or research and scholarly activities.
Debrief
You see a 10-year-old child with autism and intellectual disability for a follow-up evaluation. This child does not currently have a consistent communication modality. Through parent report and documentation review, your student sees that this child receives school-based SLP services, outpatient SLP services, and behavioral therapy, all of whom are using different communication modalities (PECS, imitation of verbal speech, high-tech device). Parent reports concern with collaboration between the providers. How would you navigate the situation as a consulting practitioner?
Principle IV Ethical Dilemma

• Rule A: Individuals shall work collaboratively, when appropriate, with members of one's own profession and/or members of other professions to deliver the highest quality of care.
  – Inter/intraprofessional collaboration is central to the success of our clients
  – Regardless of differing philosophies and priorities, geographical or time constraints, and difficulty obtaining authorization to contact others, collaboration should be central to your practice
Debrief
Principle IV Breakout Discussion
How would you advise your colleague given the information she just shared with you?

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.
Principle IV Ethical Dilemmas

- Rule B: Individuals shall exercise independent professional judgment in recommending and providing professional services when an administrative directive, referral source, or prescription prevents them from keeping the welfare of persons served paramount.
- Rule E: Individuals shall not engage in dishonesty, negligence, deceit, or misrepresentation.
Debrief
Summary

• Many situations we encounter are “ethically gray”
• We need to recognize these gray situations and consider multiple variables, ask questions/seek perspectives from those involved to navigate a path forward
• Remember as SLPs we are not only expected to be ethically responsible clinicians we also must support the development of ethically responsible future clinicians
References


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• Lindsey Carter, M.A., CF-SLP
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Questions?

uiowa.edu
Thank you

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