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Ethics Education in Human Services: Course Context and Teaching Activities

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Abstract

Ethical choices are a cornerstone of effective human services practice. Human services professionals are expected to adhere to ethical standards, but little is written on the teaching strategies that ready students for ethical practice with clients. This article meets the need for such literature by addressing the teaching context that influences student learning in human services courses and presenting four teaching activities. Future directions and suggestions for research to examine the effectiveness of these activities are offered.

Keywords: ethics education, human services, teaching ethics, ethics activities, ethical decision-making

Introduction

Like other service-oriented professions, human services is embedded in a culture of ethics (Anderson & Handelsman, 2011). Standard 44 of the Ethical Standards for Human Services Professionals (NOHS, 2015) indicates that educators of human services students should provide the means to familiarize, inform, and hold them accountable to the Standards. To promote ethical competence, human services training programs are tasked with including comprehensive ethics education in their curricula (CSHSE, 2018).

An essential component of an ethics education includes teaching a professional ethical code (Corey, Corey, & Callanan, 2005; Lambie, Ieva, Mullen, & Hayes, 2011; Vanlaere & Gastmans, 2007) as it promotes a grasp of foundational ideals in the profession. However, the acquisition of knowledge of ethical code content falls short because it does not prepare students for the complications of everyday professional practice, including the gray areas in ethics and having no single *right answer* to dilemmas (Dudani, 2014; Levitt, Farry, & Mazzarella, 2015; Shallcross, 2011). As such, ethics education focused only on teaching the mechanics of an ethical code is necessary but not sufficient (Kinsella, Phelan, Lala & Mom, 2015; Shallcross, 2011).

We teach ethics in human services degree programs for numerous reasons. Ethics preparation is important to the effectiveness of human services agencies because they will benefit from the good judgment of human services graduates, since ethics education increases the capacity for ethical reasoning (Svanberg, 2008). Ethics education also decreases tolerance for unethical behavior in the workplace (Lopez, Rechner, Sudaramurthy, & Olson-Buchanan, 2005). Didactic education in ethics gives opportunities to develop critical thinking, reflection, and self-examination (Smith, 2011). Students who are sensitized to morals in ethics education (Park, Kjervik, Crandell, & Oermann, 2012) are more likely to positively affect society through their work with clients, which is less likely to be uncompromised when forged from principled service. Finally, there are tangled moral, legal, and ethical issues that face our graduates, and ethics education assists in sorting out these issues (Barsky, 2019; Reamer, 2005).

Consequently, inherent in the process of ethics education is an understanding that ethical decision-making is a developmental process that necessitates compartmentalization of one's personal morals (Monin, in Dudani, 2014; Neukrug, Lovell, & Parker, 1996; Toffler, 2002). The

Ethical Standards for Human Services Professionals (NOHS, 2015) addresses the necessity of compartmentalization in Standard 7, stating, "Human service professionals ensure that their values or biases are not imposed on clients" (p. 3). Values imposition occurs in human services when professional helpers use their personal values actively or inadvertently to influence a client against his/her/their own values and judgment in the context of the professional relationship.

Francis and Dugger (2014) explain several means of imposing values in counseling including the manner in which the counselor uses micro-skills or selectively highlights only part of what the clients says. They may also impose their values by not helping the client explore his/her/their own values and selecting interventions and homework assignments without client input. In human services, similar values impositions can occur through remarks and nonverbal communication that oppose clients' beliefs, positions, or choices or through a helper's failure to show interest in the clients' priorities. Values impositions can occur through disapproval of different but common practices such as childrearing, when there is a poor fit between the clients' expressed values and the professional's choice of interventions, through favoring approaches to services that are not consonant with the clients' culture and/or ethnicity (Palladino-Schultheiss & Stead, 2008), or through not including what is meaningful to clients in service plans. The power differential between the client and the professional in the helping relationship and potential abuses of power can also open the door for values imposition (Francis & Dugger, 2014; Valutis & Rubin, 2016). The agency of the client can be diminished when a client wishes to please the professional or worries that the professional will report them to an authority if the client challenges the perspective of the professional.

To undergird the seriousness of not imposing personal values on clients, values imposition has been tested in the legal arena. Two court cases in particular (Keeton v. Anderson-Wiley, 2010; Ward v. Wilbanks, 2009, cited in Francis & Dugger, 2014) focused on counselors who, based on their personal values, refused to serve clients who identified as gay, which was in direct contradiction to the values of the American Counseling Association. In Ward v. Wilbanks (2009) the counselor was dismissed from an academic degree program, and the courts upheld the decision. As values imposition continues to be taught and discussed in human services, it is clear for both legal and ethical reasons that it is necessary for students to examine their personal values in formal, deliberate means in human services degree programs.

Taught successfully, students may learn to guard against imposing values that may result in ethical decisions that may not be appropriate for the client being served (Comartin & Gonzalaz-Prendes, 2011; Hancock, 2014). Thus, comprehensive ethics education has the potential to reduce the development of problematic responses stemming from decisions based in rote application of ethical codes or inappropriate application of personal morals (Neukrug, 1996; Oramas, 2017; Sanders & Hoffman, 2010). Supporting this perspective, Dalton & Crosby (2012) emphasize the responsibility of higher education to promote ethical development as a means to prepare graduates for successful and responsible professional lives.

Definition and Goals of Ethics Education

Although there are a number of human services' textbooks that discuss ethics (Kiser, 2016; Mandell & Schram, 2020; Neukrug, 2017; Woodside & McClam, 2009) no formal definition of ethics education in human services exists in the literature, but components of a definition can be detected in a variety of related disciplines. Social work defines ethics education as including the development of analytic skills to explore moral responsibilities and the decision-making skills to respond to ethical ambiguity (Reamer, 2001; Sanders & Hoffman, 2010; Hugman, 2005). Similarly, counseling defines ethics education as including the teaching of

ethical codes and their application, raising an awareness of legal issues, clarifying of students' values, and promoting students' ability to engage in sound ethical judgments and actions (Ametrano, 2014; Corey et al., 2005; Kitchener, 1986; Remley & Herlihy, 2010).

Earlier writings in human services addressed the need for human services education to promote cognitive development among trainees to provide them with the complexity to make sound ethical decisions (Neukrug, 1996) and modeled an integration of ethics in all program aspects (Lichtenstein, Lindstrom, & Kerewsky, 2005). More recent human services textbooks have added direction for ethics education, including Kiser's (2016) use of case examples to assist students in recognizing the intersection of ethical, legal and personal value issues. Mandell and Schram (2020) help students dissect the means to maximize self-determination of clients in discussion questions. Neukrug (2017) offers vignettes to which the Ethical Standards for Human Services Professionals can be applied. Woodside and McClam (2009) provide case studies to help students recognize the subtle ways that confidentiality can be violated.

Drawing from the definitions of ethics education found in related fields and the literature offering theoretical approaches to ethical decision-making for human services students, the authors propose that ethics education for human services trainees is the provision of a context in which students can learn the standards of professional behavior and professional responsibility (Corey et al., 2005), develop a sensitivity to morals (Kitchener, 1986; Park, Kjervik, Crandell, & Oermann, 2012), know themselves in relation to ethical behavior (Boon, 2011; Hugman, 2005), and acquire thinking skills for real-life ethical decisions (Hope & Fulford, 1994; Neukrug, 1996). To achieve these goals, intentional pedagogy for ethics education is necessary to meet the standards of the profession and promote competent professional conduct in the field (Lichtenstein, Lindstrom, & Kerewsky, 2005). An appropriate context for ethics education includes a classroom environment that invites higher-level thinking and provides opportunities through course activities to contemplate real-world experiences that require complex decision-making processes (Honderich & Lloyd-Hazlett, 2016). Presented next is a discussion of the context for ethics education, an explanation of the procedures and pedagogy of four course activities, and a conclusion, which provides perspectives on limitations and future directions of the present work.

Classroom and Course Context for Ethics Education

Classrooms may be one of the best places for people to discuss ethics. However, it is the faculty who set the pace for learning and acquiring aspects of professional behavior and attitude change (Barretti, 2007). Classroom efforts are not likely to succeed without high-quality teachers (Boon, 2011). Wescombe-Down (2009) states: "A pedagogically fit teacher is able to maintain a positive, inclusive, and safe learning environment" (p. 20). This is particularly important in classes where challenging ethical dilemmas are discussed, and students are asked to share personal reactions, moral conflicts, and potentially unpopular ethical decisions (Hatipkarasulu & Gunhan, 2012). To create a learning environment appropriate for ethics education, instructors are encouraged to establish ground rules for engagement among students, similar to those used in multicultural education courses (Gorski, 2004; Miller, Donner, & Fraser, 2004). These include the use of active listening and respecting others when they are talking, being aware of body language and non-verbals, sharing one's own experience rather than invalidating someone else's story, striving for open-mindedness, respectfully challenging one another while refraining from personal attacks, and maintaining privacy among peers in the class (Gorski, 2004; Miller, Donner, & Fraser, 2004).

Finally, the modeling of ongoing investment in ethics by faculty can serve to demonstrate a life-long commitment to self-examination pertaining to personal values, continuing ethics education, and meaningful dialogue around ethical dilemmas to aid in thoughtful and appropriate ethical decision-making (Hugman, 2005). The authors suggest that this modeling in conjunction with deliberate application of skills applied through course activities may assist in promoting ethically competent human services professionals.

Course Activities

Intentionally designed activities have been found to promote learning among students (American College Personnel Association, 2008). When activities aim to provide role-taking experiences with opportunity for reflection and feedback in a supportive yet challenging manner, growth and development are possible (Brendel, Kolbert, & Foster, 2002; Hawley, 2006). Also key in moving students to higher order cognitive skills that are necessary for ethical decision-making are experiential activities and class discussions (Kaczmarek, 2001).

Several human services textbooks are a source of teaching materials for ethics education such as discussion questions, case studies or vignettes, and decision-making guides (Kiser, 2016; Mandell, Schram, Dann, & Peterson, 2020; Neukrug, 2017; Woodside & McClam, 2009). These examples are a laudable start, but there is a need for additional classroom and course activities to assist growth in ethical understanding and behavior in the field of human services. Instead of borrowing from other professions, the activities presented below help fill this gap with the aim to promote human services students' ability to apply the human services ethical standards, process difficult ethical dilemmas, and make ethically competent decisions. Each activity supplies a rationale and purpose for the activity, a practical description or how-to for the activity, contraindications and tips, additional relevant information, and a summary. All the activities can be used as graded assignments.

Activity 1: Writing and Responding to Ethics Vignettes

Rationale and purpose. This activity provides two opportunities for students to apply their knowledge of the Ethical Standards for Human Service Professionals (NOHS, 2015) and practice higher-order cognitive skills such as analysis and synthesis (Bloom, Engelhart, Furst, Hill, & Krathwohl, 1956). Most professional ethics textbooks include vignettes to illustrate ethical dilemmas or allow students to answer questions in order to apply their learning (e.g., Kenyon, 1998; Parsons & Dickenson, 2016). However, adding a component in which students write the vignettes serves several important functions that lead to greater learning (Lincoln, 2006; cf. Bailey, Sass, Swiercz, Seal, & Kayes, 2005). It increases active student engagement with the NOHS ethical standards (2015), requiring them to consider ethical problems and dilemmas that may arise in their current or anticipated practices. Grounding this activity in student-generated vignettes permits them to learn how other students respond to challenging scenarios that reflect the writers' concerns and fears. Peer discussions in the writing and response phases help students become more aware of their personal assumptions that may not be consistent with NOHS ethical standards (2015), decreasing their risk of later facing remedial action (Kincaid & Andresen, 2016). Importantly, students report that they value vignettes written by other students (Levesque, 2018). Students are more invested in other groups' potential solutions when they are made in response to their own scenarios, rather than impersonal vignettes created by textbook authors or instructors, thus promoting active learning.

To foster these higher order skills, student groups create ethics vignettes based on problematic situations that human services workers might encounter. The group then responds to

a vignette written by a different group, which allows them to practice responses to difficult situations by applying the Standards. This activity may be completed in two in-class hours separated by a week so that the instructor has time to review and prepare the vignettes for the second part of the activity.

Activity description.

Part I: In small groups, students review the Standards and discuss their experiences and fears. Each group writes a vignette that presents a short, ethically complex situation for a human services student or worker. No questions, instructions about what to focus on, or identified Standards may be included. The vignette must be understandable by someone who cannot ask the group questions. Groups email their vignettes to the instructor, who reviews them for a portion of the grade and removes any guidance provided to readers (e.g., Angelo's dilemma is…; Is confidentiality an issue?). The instructor anonymizes each vignette and makes it available to a different student group.

Part II: Each group discusses the vignette it has received and writes a professional, consultative response. This should cite the relevant Standards and explain their decision-making process. Other material to report may include emotions experienced when first reading the vignette, legal considerations, advice for the human services provider(s) in the vignette, diversity and cultural considerations, and points of disagreement within the responding group. Groups email their responses to the instructor, who reviews them for the remainder of the grade and creates an anonymized master document with all vignettes and responses. This anthology may be discussed in class or form the basis for additional activities.

Contraindications and tips. Students should have exposure to the Standards before engaging in this activity. Ideally, they will have had opportunities to ask questions and discuss the Standards. Emphasize to students that if they use aspects of a real situation, they must disguise it sufficiently to provide confidentiality. Students also should be aware of the potential for stereotyping and microaggressions as they write and respond. The instructor should review vignettes carefully and request revisions if they are needed prior to distributing them for Part II.

Other information. This activity can be modified to require that specific components be included in the vignette (e.g., diversity factors, specific settings, specific human services roles, etc.). The response can be modified to require the use of specific ethical decision-making models. The instructor can model this activity by responding to a vignette provided by students or from another source.

Students enjoy the opportunity to try to stump their peers with difficult ethics scenarios. In responding to complex vignettes, they typically discover that applying the Standards helps the human services professional to simplify the problem and respond appropriately.

Summary. This activity allows students to create professional vignettes that reflect their own ethical concerns, and to gain experience analyzing ethical dilemmas and responding as a consulting peer.

Activity 2: Ethical Decision-Making Project

Rationale and purpose. This activity is designed to assist students in developing their ethical decision-making skills. It is aligned with Neukrug, Lovell, and Parker's (1996) theoretical

approach to promoting ethical processing in counselors through inviting complex thinking with regard to difficult ethical dilemmas. Such a decision-making process would reflect a developmentally advanced, relativistic perspective based on William Perry's (1999) Developmental Model of Intellectual and Ethical Development. This model states that ethical decision-making follows a continuum from dualistic to relativistic processing. As compared to a dualistic processor, in which black and white/right and wrong thinking occurs, students are encouraged to think as a relativist, using flexible, complex, and non-dogmatic approaches when faced with ethical dilemmas. The aim of the activity is to demonstrate the importance of engaging in thoughtful ethical decision-making as opposed to focusing on determining the "right" answer based on one's own personal values. Students are challenged to decide upon a plan of action that results in the greatest amount of good for as many of the individuals involved in the dilemma as possible, while also recognizing that any action may also have some negative consequences for those involved. Since becoming an ethical professional has been described as a developmental process (Neukrug, Lovell, & Parker, 1996), providing students with the opportunity to move from dogmatic to relativistic approaches to ethical decision-making through this activity may promote the developmental process (Ametrano, 2014).

Activity description.
Directions: Student groups of three to four process one ethical dilemma assigned to the class utilizing the Corey, Corey, and Callanan (2011) eight-step ethical decision-making model. The model includes the following steps: (1) identify the problem, (2) identify the potential issues involved, (3) review the relevant ethical guidelines, (4) review the relevant laws, (5) obtain consultation, (6) consider possible courses of action, (7) enumerate the consequences of the various decisions, and (8) decide on the best course of action. In addition to the course text, students are encouraged to refer to the NOHS ethical standards (2015), as well as supplementary resources, particularly current refereed professional journal articles to support their responses to each step. A case example appears below.

Producible: Groups are expected to submit a report detailing their responses at each of the steps in the Corey et al. (2011) model accompanied by a one-page reflective commentary on her/his role in the project, and opinions about the process. During a class session, groups give brief presentations on their decision-making process and outcome. Each group can be encouraged to share their experiences working together to reach a decision about the case. The instructor can highlight similarities and differences in the groups, allowing for the opportunity to emphasize that the actual outcome is less important than the deliberate, complex, and comprehensive process of getting there.

Contraindications and tips. The assignment is given at the beginning of the term with a due date after the concepts addressed in the assignment have been taught in class, including a review of the NOHS ethical code, Corey et al.'s (2011) decision-making model, and Perry's (1999) model of ethical development. The instructor models the activity by presenting a different vignette and responding at each decision-making step to demonstrate what is expected from the group assignment.

Other information. The assigned dilemma in the activity can be structured as the instructor sees fit. For example, different populations could be addressed or a greater focus on diversity could be included. Issues that address different ethical codes and laws could be

incorporated. Another alternative is to have the group develop their own dilemma as part of the assignment.

Summary. Ethical decision-making is a complex process (Neukrug, 1996; Oramas, 2017). This activity allows students to see that there is not just one ethical standard that applies to a given dilemma and not just one right answer to solve a problem. The goals are to help students refrain from making knee-jerk decisions based on their own personal values when faced with an ethical issue, to review the Ethical Standards of Human Service Professionals (NOHS, 2015) for multiple Standards that may apply to a given situation, and to be open to consulting with those who will challenge their perspectives and help prevent values imposition. Ultimately, students should complete this activity with an awareness that every course of action in an ethical dilemma has both positive and negative consequences; therefore, the best response is the one that results in the greatest amount of good and least amount of harm for the most amount of people involved.

Ethical Dilemma: Case Example.
Cecil, 82, is seriously depressed and feels that he has no reason to continue living after recently having been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and given less than one year to live. As his case worker at the VA Hospital, you have been working with him for several years assuring his health benefits and pension are appropriately utilized. Lately, you have noticed a change in his affect. He expresses to you that he is determined to end what he considers to be an "empty existence" before death overtakes him. Cecil's partner of 45 years, Jude, died two years ago, and he now believes that the reality of his own mortality has become apparent. Cecil lives in a retirement complex but has few close friends. He and Jude had isolated themselves from others, and in order to safeguard their privacy, severed all social ties years ago. Cecil has no support system and is not interested in trying to develop one now. He tells you that he has lived long enough and has accomplished most of what he wished to do in life. He is now ready to die and wants only "to get it over with as quickly and painlessly as possible." He asks you to help him decide upon the most efficient means of achieving this goal. As his human services provider, what should you do?

Activity 3: Ethical Issues Case Study: Case Conceptualization
Rationale and purpose. This activity gives students the opportunity to process ethical decision-making skills (Drumwright, Prentice, & Biasucci, 2015) and to increase awareness of the complexities in the human services field. Codes of ethics, legal considerations, standards of practice, certification, licensure, and role identity of counselors are components that spark complex thinking when using the case studies. Students are given a case study with no identifying information on the first day of class. Students receive three case studies to complete over the term. Each case study includes three or four questions as a guide to help students apply critical thinking skills of analyzing, applying ethical standards, and supporting the reasons for their decisions. Two case studies are presented below.

Activity description.
Part 1: Groups of four to five students each receive copies of the Ethical Standards of Human Service Professionals (NOHS, 2015) and relevant mental health statutes to review, discuss, and apply to the case study. They may receive other ethical codes as well (for example,

NAADAC, 2016). The students have two weeks to write a paper on the case study with three focus areas: ethics, legality, and morals.

Part 2: Each student asks a professional consultant, external to the university, to review his/her paper. The consultant's responses are integrated into the body of the paper. The required subtitles are *Ethics, Legal Issues,* and *Moral Issues.* Students may choose to add additional subtitles such as *Possible Outcome* or *Summary.* A page should describe why the consultant was chosen as well as their experience and education in the field and contact information so that a networking list may be available for subsequent case studies. Finally, students share the most important thing they learned from their consultant and whether they would choose the same consultant again. Grading and feedback are based on students' application of the Standards and other materials as well as the reasons for their decisions.

Contraindications and tips: Students should have opportunities to explore the Standards, other codes, and state mental health statutes before engaging in this activity. These materials are discussed in-depth early in the term. Students are responsible for finding an outside consultant who is willing to assist them in reviewing the case study.

Other information. The case studies can be modified to include diversity factors and address a range of human service roles. Case studies can reference actual situations provided that identifying information is removed and disguised.

Summary. This activity allows students to develop and use their critical thinking skills and gives them practice in identifying and supporting a response to the legal and ethical aspects of human services-related situations (Preston-Shoot, 2011).

Case study I. Use the following directions. In your group of three or four students, discuss the ethical considerations in this case study. Use the Ethical Standards, other materials, and these questions to guide you in writing your paper. Answer these questions: (a) Do you agree or disagree with the service decisions described in the case study, (b) Cite two or more ethical standard(s) related to each violation you see in this situation and discuss why those Standards apply, and (c) Discuss the moral issues or concerns present in this case study.
         Brianna has worked for three years as the clinical director of a human services agency. She has begun to hear rumors that staff member Angela, a licensed professional counselor and certified addiction counselor II, has been socializing with an ex-client of the agency. The client had completed the program less than four weeks before this relationship began.
         Hearing this rumor, Brianna confronts Angela about her association with the client, who has now been out of the program for about three months. Angela replies that they live in the same apartment building. They have been grocery shopping, attending Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings, and attending Angela's son's events. Angela has loaned her car to the ex-client. Angela states that they are friends who spend time together and are not in a sexual relationship. Six months after discharge, Angela and the ex-client are living together and engaged in sexual relationship.

Case study II.

Directions. In addition to the directions above, students should answer this question: what, if any, are Liliana's ethical obligations as the leader of this group, and which Ethical Standards support this?

Case study. Liliana, a certified addiction counselor III, facilitates an outpatient treatment group for adults with dual diagnoses of primary substance disorder with mental health concerns. The clients are generally compliant with their psychotropic medication, which is monitored by their primary care physicians and psychiatrists. Clients in the group have provided clean urinalysis and breathalyzer results to this agency for five months. The group consists of six male and six female clients.

During a recent session, the client Antonio said that he often drank to help him relax and have self-confidence when he first met a woman he was interested in dating. Upon hearing this, group member Sam joked that perhaps Antonio should consider "going gay" so that he wouldn't have this problem. Other members in the group laughed and made other homophobic jokes. Xavier, another client, said nothing. He had been struggling with issues around sexual identity and stigma. Xavier had not come out to the group, although he had confided privately in Liliana. He found the group conversation intimidating, frightening, and hateful, although he did not share this perception with Liliana or the group.

After the session ended, Liliana's supervisor asked why she had allowed the homophobic discussion to continue. Liliana maintained that since no one in the group seemed to be offended or verbalized concerns or opposition to the discussion, she felt it was appropriate to "let the group vent," adding, "no harm, no foul, no one got hurt."

Activity 4: Students' Reflections on the Standards of the NOHS Ethical Code

Rationale and purpose. Noted earlier in this article is the insufficiency of ethical codes, alone, as a basis for teaching and assuming ethical behavior. However, professional ethics and accompanying ethical codes must be known by students, and they have numerous purposes. For example, codes of ethics promote high standards of conduct and guidance when working with clients and colleagues (Weckart & Lucas, 2013). They assist in modulating personal values in practice (Spano & Koenig, 2007). They can influence the processing of ethical dilemmas (Lawton, 2004). They signify an organization's advancement in its development (Wilcoxon, Remley, Gladding, & Huber, 2008). Finally, they elicit respect from the public for professional organizations and bring awareness of ethics to an organization's members (Joyce & Rankin, 2010).

No studies exist to demonstrate whether or not university or college graduates use their ethical codes after graduation. Without attention drawn to professional ethics, students will not have the awareness that precedes intent to use ethics in numerous situations (Noel & Hathorn, 2013). Further hampering the use of an ethical code is that many traditional-age college students are not ready for self-directed learning (Cercone, 2008; Lowry, 1989). Wotruba, Chonko, and Loe (2001) suggest that the perceived usefulness of an ethical code is related to the degree of familiarity with it. This teaching activity increases familiarity through examination of the NOHS ethical code (NOHS, 2015), self-reflexive responses (Desautal, 2009) to questions on how to grow ethically, and attention to the student's reasoning on how to comply with the ethical code.

Directions. Students receive a copy of the Ethical Standards for Human Services Professionals (NOHS, 2015). To prepare for the written assignment, the instructor provides an

overview of the format of the code, locating the document on the NOHS website and pointing out that it is organized into sub-sections and standards. Students are asked to find terms they do not know or standards that do not make sense to them, and the instructor answers questions to provide clarity. The instructor also reviews several terms related to ethics such as decision-making, ethical dilemmas, ethical code, ethical conduct, and at-risk behavior (Brock, 1997).

The instructor also tours students through the three sections of the assignment. In the first section, *Growing Ethically with the NOHS Ethical Code*, students select three of the Standards in the ethical code in which they believe they need to grow. Students cut and paste or type the Standard number and paragraph that goes with it. Below the Standard, the students critically examine themselves and describe why they need to grow in relation to this standard (Siles-Gonzalez & Solana-Ruiz, 2016).

In the second section of the paper, *Reactions to the NOHS Ethical Code*, students write about two topics they are surprised not to find in the Standards. This is useful because students express concern that ethical codes do not address every challenging issue they might encounter. In addition, they bring their own views about what is ethical or not (Koerber et al., 2005). In a new paragraph, they write about their disagreements with one or more Standards. Pedagogically, allowing the articulation of different viewpoints may open students to a new perspective or synthesis (Higgins, 2011).

In the third section, *Ability to Comply with Ethical Codes*, students are given the opportunity to creatively construct three ways that they could develop the ability to adhere to the Standards. This part of the assignment projects students into the future with the intent to use ethical thinking. It also contributes to students becoming knowledge generators, an aspect of critical thinking (Brookfield, 2012), while examining their need for a plan. If students state that they do not know how to proceed, common ideas such as memorizing or flash cards are offered with the expectation that neither of these will be used by the students in their papers.

Contraindications and tips. This teaching activity is designed for undergraduates in lower-level courses. It works well whether it is the students' first exposure to the Standards or not. Some students question whether they can disagree with the NOHS ethical code (2015) due to a lack of familiarity with ethics and the profession. The instructor can address this by explaining that the current ethical code came about, in part, through disagreement as well as consensus. Further protests from students can be managed by allowing students to select three Standards not used elsewhere in the paper with which they agree and why.

Other information. After the assignment has been graded, the returned papers are used as the stimulus for a final discussion. Students share their responses and ask further questions about the Standards.

Summary. This activity promotes students' self-examination and provides an opportunity to plan for using the Ethical Standards for Human Services Professionals (NOHS, 2015). In addition, it exposes and corrects naïve views of the breadth and depth of professional ethical codes.

Conclusion

The teaching activities presented here include the review and application of the Ethical Standards for Human Services Professionals (NOHS, 2015) as well as opportunities for self-reflection and critical thinking. When combined with a classroom context designed to promote

learning in a safe and supportive, yet challenging, environment in which an investment in learning ethics is modeled, students may have the opportunity to cultivate their ability to engage as ethical professionals. Similar classroom activities implemented in master's counseling programs have shown an increase in students' ability to engage effectively in ethical decision-making and an increase in their ability to reconcile personal and professional values (Ametrano, 2014). Further, human services textbooks are important sources for growth in ethics education, and their suggested activities supplement well the teaching activities presented in this article (Kiser, 2016; Mandell, Schram, Dann, & Peterson, 2020; Neukrug, 2017; Woodside & McClam, 2009).

       Promoting the development of ethical professionals takes more than exposing them to the standards of an ethics code without analysis or debate (Boon, 2011; Dudani, 2014). Even with established means of analyzing the ethical code, people continue to change their decision priorities with additional education and experience (Kohlberg, 1981). Thus, it would be erroneous to assume that continued development of the professional in ethics is not necessary. It is recommended that ethics education continue throughout one's career (Oramas, 2017).

Limitations and Future Directions

       We conclude that orienting students to the human services culture of ethics requires exposure, immersion, and an examination of self in relation to this culture. However, the effectiveness of the activities presented in this article has not been evaluated specific to human services professionals. Research is needed to assess the impact of the classroom context and activities proposed in this article including sound ethical decision-making, the appraisal of ethical sensitivity, and complexity in the ability to take differing perspectives. In addition, follow-up studies to examine whether or not the activities proposed in this article translate to professional practice are also needed. Further, members of the profession of human services may wish to work on a collaborative definition of ethics education. The development and the scholarly investigation of additional teaching activities to enhance ethics education for human services students is also recommended. Research has been conducted in the related fields of counseling and social work, however there is a dearth of information pertaining to ethics education specific to human services. The present article aimed to present a model for shaping ethics education specific to human services, and research must follow.

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