ETHICS REVIEW AND CASE VIGNETTES

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AGENDA

• INTRODUCTION
• ETHICS AND MORALITY
• CASE VIGNETTES
• Our moral sense, our altruistic nature, is an adaptation—a feature helping us in the struggle for existence and reproduction—no less than hands and eyes, teeth and feet. It is a cost-effective way of getting us to cooperate, which avoids both the pitfalls of blind action and the expense of a superbrain of pure rationality

(Ruse, 1986, p.99)
ARE THERE MORAL ABSOLUTES?
ETHICS VS MORALITY

• What is the difference between ethics and morality?
• How can we be client centered and still promote moral decisions while upholding our ethical obligations to our clients?
• Is psychotherapy value free? Should it be?
• How do we deal with values of clients that are different to ours?
• How important is self awareness?
MORALITY IN MFT

• Commitment

Tom is devastated when he finds out his wife Cindy is leaving the marriage. He is so upset that he does not think that he can handle being a father right now and considers moving away and giving up custody.

(Doherty, 1995)
MORALITY IN MFT

• Justice

Bob is recently divorced and feels he was treated terribly by his ex wife, with whom he shares 3 small children. He is having a difficult time dealing with the children when he has them for weekend visitations, and comes up with an idea to ‘talk his ex-wife into’ letting him take 2 of the 3 children at a time, an arrangement that would mean his ex-wife would never have a child free weekend.

(Doherty, 1995)
MORALITY IN MFT

• Truthfulness

Ryan is a college student who is struggling with depression. He has an exceptionally close relationship with his mother, who is having a hard time with Ryan’s newfound independence in college. Ryan has decided that he would rather spend the Christmas holiday with his girlfriend than his mother, and is planning on telling his mother that he has a school project he has to work on.

(Doherty, 1995)
MORALITY IN MFT

• Community-attention to larger systems in which families live
  An impoverished single black mother is seeing you for depression.

(Doherty, 1995)
CHARACTERISTICS OF MORAL THERAPISTS

• Caring
  Genuine, compassionate

• Courage
  Willing to challenge

• Prudence
  Feedback and suggestions reasonable

(Doherty, 1995)
CHARACTERISTICS OF MORAL THERAPISTS

• Willingness to use moral language
  Willing to discuss what is right, fair, responsible, just

• Respect for your interpersonal commitments and responsibilities
  Honors your need to act responsibly to others in your life

• Respect for community commitments and responsibilities
  Interpersonal as well as intrapersonal

(Doherty, 1995)
WARNING SIGNS OF LESS THAN MORAL THERAPISTS

- Discouragement of moral language-distinguishing between moral and nonmoral ‘shoulds’
  ‘E.g. I should buy these new shoes’ vs ‘I should not abandon my children’
- Being too quick to encourage cut-offs
- Seeing only negatives in the people in your life
- Seeing you only as the protagonist
- Disparaging your sense of duty towards others

(Doherty, 1995)
VIGNETTE #1

- Dr. Lisa Metzger finds out after she has been seeing a patient for several months that the client is her son’s girlfriend, Rafi. She does not know what to do because this is a new romantic relationship and she has been seeing the client for several months. The client does not know Dr. Metzger is her boyfriend’s mother, and Dr. Metzger does not disclose immediately, wondering what she should do. Dr. Metzger is horrified as she has to listen to explicit details of her son’s sex life. Dr. Metzger becomes very anxious and changes her therapeutic interventions in order to encourage her client to break up with her boyfriend. Dr. Metzger bumps into her client in a department store. As she sees her son and her patient in the store she abruptly pulls her husband behind a bed trying to avoid to be seen by Rafi and David. Because her husband wants to know what is going on she discloses the nature of her relationship with Rafi. When Dr. Metzger tells her son that she knows about his romance and that Rafi is her client, she also discloses some of the content of their therapy sessions with him.
VIGNETTE 1
VIGNETTE 1

- In what ways was therapist moral and/or ethical?
- What ethics have been violated?
- What aspects of morality have been violated?
Therapist Maggie is a therapist in private practice. Her client Stewart is waiting to see her in her waiting room. When Maggie opens the door to call Stewart into session, she finds her sister Milly, eager to confront Maggie about a family dispute.
VIGNETTE 2
VIGNETTE 2

• In what ways was therapist moral and/or ethical?
• What ethics have been violated?
• What aspects of morality have been violated?
Antwone has been in therapy with his military therapist for 3 sessions. He has a history of significant trauma and abandonment issues. The next scene takes place in a public bathroom.
VIGNETTE 3

- In what ways was therapist moral and/or ethical?
- What ethics have been violated?
- What aspects of morality have been violated?
Dale and Brennan are stepbrothers, and their parents have asked them to go to therapy to deal with some behavior issues.
VIGNETTE 4
• In what ways was therapist moral and/or ethical?
• What ethics have been violated?
• What aspects of morality have been violated?
VIGNETTE 5

• Car therapy with a client
VIGNETTE 5

• In what ways was therapist moral and/or ethical?
• What ethics have been violated?
• What aspects of morality have been violated?
Martin is a professional assassin. He is going to therapy over his anxiety about going to his 20 year class reunion.
VIGNETTE 6
VIGNETTE 6

• In what ways was therapist moral and/or ethical?
• What ethics have been violated?
• What aspects of morality have been violated?
Tony has been in therapy with Dr. Melfi for quite some time. This is one of their sessions.
VIGNETTE 7

• In what ways was therapist moral and/or ethical?
• What ethics have been violated?
• What aspects of morality have been violated?
• Tony’s therapist, Dr. Melfi, is at a dinner party with colleagues.
VIGNETTE 8
VIGNETTE 8

• In what ways was therapist moral and/or ethical?
• What ethics have been violated?
• What aspects of morality have been violated?
• Will has been in therapy with his therapist Sean dealing with some past trauma issues. This is one of their sessions.
VIGNETTE 9

- In what ways was therapist moral and/or ethical?
- What ethics have been violated?
- What aspects of morality have been violated?
Billy is in court ordered therapy after a stint in jail. He is seeing psychiatrist Dr. Madolyn. This is their first session.
VIGNETTE 10
VIGNETTE 10

• In what ways was therapist moral and/or ethical?
• What ethics have been violated?
• What aspects of morality have been violated?
• Dr. Crane is a psychologist who is the chief administrator for Arkham Asylum. He has made a deal with a local crime boss to declare anyone who is arrested and works for the crime boss to be criminally insane, so that they can be housed in a luxurious wing of the asylum.
VIGNETTE 11

• In what ways was therapist moral and/or ethical?
• What ethics have been violated?
• What aspects of morality have been violated?
• Antwone confronts his therapist at this therapist’s office
VIGNETTE 12

• In what ways was therapist moral and/or ethical?
• What ethics have been violated?
• What aspects of morality have been violated?
• Susanna is 18 years old. She has been having some displaying some behaviors that her parents find disturbing. Her parents have sent her to a psychiatrist.
VIGNETTE 13
VIGNETTE 13

• In what ways was therapist moral and/or ethical?
• What ethics have been violated?
• What aspects of morality have been violated?
• Thomas is seeing his therapist Dr. Lowenstein and is revealing a traumatic story from his childhood.
VIGNETTE 14
VIGNETTE 14

• In what ways was therapist moral and/or ethical?
• What ethics have been violated?
• What aspects of morality have been violated?
Conrad is talking to his therapist about a painful experience in his past.
• In what ways was therapist moral and/or ethical?
• What ethics have been violated?
• What aspects of morality have been violated?
• Mr. Jones has bipolar. Elizabeth is his therapist. This takes place after a therapy session
• In what ways was therapist moral and/or ethical?
• What ethics have been violated?
• What aspects of morality have been violated?
VIGNETTE 16

• Goodbye between therapist and client
• In what ways was therapist moral and/or ethical?
• What ethics have been violated?
• What aspects of morality have been violated?
REFERENCES
