



THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER
FOR HEALTH CONCERNS

Current Ethical and Legal Issues in the Behavioral Health Field

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Why this Course is Needed

The ethical and legal issues for behavioral health professionals have changed considerably over the past decade. There is a growing professionalism in the field. More is expected than ever as greater ethical and legal requirements are imposed.

This course explores current ethical and legal issues in the behavioral health field. The focus of this class is to enhance the professional development of health care professionals so as to adhere to the ethical codes, standards of conduct, legal statutes, and certification/licensing regulations of disciplines represented in the treatment process. It addresses how to minimize exposure to possible legal or ethical violations. Since no code of ethics can describe what to do in every situation, it is important to begin with the big picture, how to make ethical decisions. The class starts with macro-ethical principles, and moves into micro-ethical principles. Recent relevant case rulings are presented. The course distinguishes between what is legal, ethical and moral.

Course Objectives

At the completion of this course participants will be able to:

- Describe the characteristics of the principles of autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence, and fairness/justice;
- Describe three professional and legal mandates for professionals for accountability;
- State the mandates of “do no harm” and the implications for professionals;
- Describe five elements which should be in a supervision contract;
- Describe crisis management issues and the plan of action for an agency in the event of a clinical crisis;
- State the legal and ethical issues related to personnel selection, assignment and liaison;
- Describe the difference between dual qualities and dual relationships in counseling;
- Describe the limits of confidentiality for professionals;
- Discuss the implications of the Patriot’s Act on confidentiality, especially as compared with 42 CFR and HIPPA regulations;
- Define the “psychological Miranda warning.”

About the Trainer

Dr. David Powell has forty years of clinical experience and masters’ and doctoral academic degrees in counseling and psychology. He also has a master’s degrees in medical ethics from Yale University and has attended courses on ethics at Harvard University, studying at the medical, law, and divinity schools. He has trained throughout the world in clinical supervision, management and ethics and taught on ethics at Yale and Princeton Universities. He is the author of a self-study course published by DLCAS on ethics and clinical practice.