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CAN ETHICS BE SEXY?

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- Chair, Professional Conduct Proceedings (BACP)
Can ethics be sexy?

- I would rather have a cup of tea
- Ethics are just a list of dos and donts
- *Boring*
Ethics can be Fascinating, Exciting, and endlessly interesting.
A quiz

• Give examples of ways in which you could unethically:
Boost profits

• Accept individuals when the organisation is only funded for couples work (or vice versa)
• Accept long–term clients when only funded for short-term (or vice versa)
• Work beyond level of competency
• Accept clients who are in therapy with others
Things you might be tempted to steal from the office

• Stationery
• Photocopying
• Memory sticks
• Journals
• Electricity
Take business trips

- Take partner along (and charge for them)
- Stay with friends or family but charge for a hotel
- Charge for equipment that you don’t need for that trip.
Things you should report (but don’t)

• A client who tells you that they are claiming benefit illegally
• A colleague who answers e-mail whilst on the phone to clients
• Client or colleague who uses recreational drugs
• Unethical behaviour from colleagues
What are Professional Ethics?

• A moral and philosophical code

• A guide for conducting professional life

• Can be written as *Rules* or *Principles*
Types of ethical codes

- Mandatory – musts and shoulds (e.g. 10 commandments)

- Aspirational – standards to reach for (e.g. BACP ethical Framework)
Why ethical codes/frameworks

• A frame, or a boundary, to the counselling relationship

• A protection from exploitation.

• A minimum standard for professional practice
Values of ethical thinking

Integrity    Warmth

Empathy    Humility

Ethical Values
HUMILITY

“The ability to access accurately and acknowledge one’s own strengths and weaknesses”

BACP Ethical Framework 2010
Lack of Humility can lead to

• Seeing self as expert and therefore:
• Not using supervision properly
• Forgetting about client autonomy (I know best)
• Lack of proper contracting.
• Client dissatisfaction (and loss of income to self or organisation)
Concepts of ethical mindfulness

Psychological Insight

Self-Reflection

Ethical Mindfulness

Supervision

Reflection on Process
Ethical mindfulness requires psychological mindfulness.

Psychological mindfulness requires ethical mindfulness.

One ethical dilemma does not necessarily have one right answer.
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Ethics can be Fascinating Exciting endlessly interesting
Tasks

Option 1
• As the inexperienced counsellor you have decided to report your colleague. How do you justify this ethically?

Option 2
• As the inexperienced counsellor you have decided to say nothing. How do you justify this ethically?

Option 3
• You are the experienced counsellor. How do you ethically justify your decision to your less experienced colleague?