



WORKING WITH CONFLICTING ETHICAL FRAMEWORKS

One of the challenges faced by counsellors is they may find themselves working with conflicting ethical frameworks or codes of practice.

Example 1

The policy of a drug rehabilitation unit is that if a client discloses they are using street drugs, the counsellor needs to break confidentiality.

Example 2

The policy of a youth work organisation is that if a young person discloses they are using alcohol or taking drugs, the counsellor needs to break confidentiality.

For those counsellors setting up a practice within an agency or organisation with defined confidentiality policies, it is useful to have honest and open dialogue around the limits of confidentiality.

Any exceptions should be made clear in the contract and explained to the client before the commencement of therapy.

There are some areas where ethical codes may conflict, for example, the UK's National Youth Agency's *'Ethical Conduct in Youth Work'* states:

'5.1.3. ... taking responsibility for assessing risk and managing the safety of work and activities involving young people'

The above requirement would be outside of the ethical remit of a practitioner who is working solely as a counsellor.

References

Nya.org.uk. 2020. *Ethical Conduct in Youth Work*. [online] Available at:
<http://www.nya.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Ethical_conduct_in_Youth-Work.pdf>
[Accessed 16 May 2020].