

Professionalism/Ethics Overview

(Some of this material comes from CSUN Psychology Professor Dr. Scott Plunkett's Course Notes on Ethics and Professionalism. Thanks Scott!)

Profession - A vocation or occupation requiring advanced education and training

Characteristics of a Profession

- Benefits society
- Requires professional mastery of theoretical knowledge involving intellectual activity and practical judgments related to the work situation
- Has a self-regulation process to determine who is admitted and who is expelled
- Requires continuing education
- Has a code of ethics of guidelines for professional practice
- Involves intellectual activity and judgments related to the work situation

Professional Person - Expected to have a set of values, skills, attitudes and behaviors that coincide with the standards established by the professional group to which they belong.

Characteristics of a Professional

- Client-oriented
- Works by task or goal, not by the clock
- Does not require constant supervision
- Practices loyalty to colleagues
- Continue to upgrade and broaden professional competence

A Helping Professional Acquires Practical Working Models

- Acquire what to do to help people grow through the entire developmental lifecycle and to successfully overcome daily challenges
- Learn the stages and steps that define the helping process
- Master communication skills necessary to help clients/students etc. grow and develop
- Procure skills and techniques
- Become competent in collaboration in the helping process
- Give what has been learned to those they serve
- Effectively assess whether the help offered is effective or not

A Variety of Reasons People become a Helping Professional

What attracted you to the helping professions?

What is your main motivation for wanting to be a helper?

- The need to make an impact
- The need to return a favor
- The need to care for others
- The need for self help
- The need to be needed
- The need for money
- The need for prestige and status
- The need to provide answers
- The need for control

The Portrait of an Effective Helper

Think of the attributes of an effective helper. What are a few traits you identify as being most helpful?

- Honest assessment of your own strengths and weaknesses
- Aware you are unable to inspire clients to do in their lives what you are unable to inspire yourself to do
- Open to learning and have a basic curiosity
- Have the interpersonal skills needed to establish good contact with other people
- Genuinely care for the people you help
- Realization it takes hard work to bring about change
- Aware that clients often limit themselves through a restricted imagination of their future
- Willing to draw upon a number of resources to enable clients to move toward their goals
- Able to challenge your own cultural values and learn the values of others
- While you struggle with your own problems you are able to separate them from the helping of others
- Take care of yourself physically, mentally, psychologically, socially, and spiritually
- Capable of establishing and maintaining meaningful relationship with at least a few significant people
- You have a healthy self-esteem that enables you to respect others and their own right to pursue their own destination