



FREE WEBINAR
May 25 2022
12:00 - 1:00 pm

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the webinar

Current Issues in Ethics and Aging

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Current Issues in Ethics and Aging

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Upon completion of this activity, the participant should be able to:

- Examine the complexities of ethical dilemmas involving older adults in health and human services.
- Clarify self-determination and autonomy of older adults when facing workforce challenges during the continuing pandemic.
- Utilize a framework for making decisions about ethical dilemmas in health and human service settings.
- Practice analyzing current ethical dilemmas involving older adults.

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Limitations/Risks

- Ethical issues are complex, multifaceted, and complicated.
- There are no black and white answers to ethical issues.

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Professional Codes


- NASW Code of Ethics (<https://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>)
- APA Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct (<http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/>)
- AMA Code of Medical Ethics (<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/physician-resources/medical-ethics/code-medical-ethics.page>)
- ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses (<http://nursingworld.org/DocumentVault/Ethics-1/Code-of-Ethics-for-Nurses.html>)

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NASW (2021) Codes of Ethics describe:

- Values of the Profession
- Self-determination
- Dignity and Worth of a Person
- Social Justice
- Integrity
- Importance of Relationships
- Competence


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Codes of Ethics Continued

- ▣ Roles and Relationships
 - Boundaries
 - Conflict of Interest
 - Dual Relationships
 - Intimate Relationships
 - Power Differentials
 - Working with Colleagues and within Organizations

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Legal Obligations in Ethical Codes

- ▣ Confidentiality
- ▣ Informed Consent
 - Capacity
 - Authority to Consent (minors, people with cognitive impairments/disability)
- ▣ Mandated Reporting
- ▣ Duty to Warn
- ▣ Research Obligations

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Ethical Dilemma

- “An ethical dilemma is a situation in which professional duties and obligations, rooted in core values, clash.” (Reamer, 2013, p.4).

Example: *Risk of Harm (Safety) versus Self-Determination*

- Do ethical codes tell professionals how to resolve an ethical dilemma?

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**“ETHICS IS THE WORK
OF EVERYBODY”**


(Purtillo, 2005, p.15).

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Ethical Dilemmas With Older Adults

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Common Ethical Dilemmas with Older Adults

End-of-life issues

Truth telling

Patient autonomy issues

Self-determination vs. safety, compliance,
professional liability, and decision-making capacity

Justice issues

Insurance coverage

Conflicts among parties

Family, Health Care Professionals, etc.

Technology related to confidentiality and privacy

Email, EMR, Social Media

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Current Ethical Issues

Crisis = Difficult decisions/choices

COVID

- Risk of getting COVID vs. Self-determination about Isolation
- Mandated vaccines for staff and older adults
- Resource Allocation – Rationing care based on age (Hostiuc et al., 2021)

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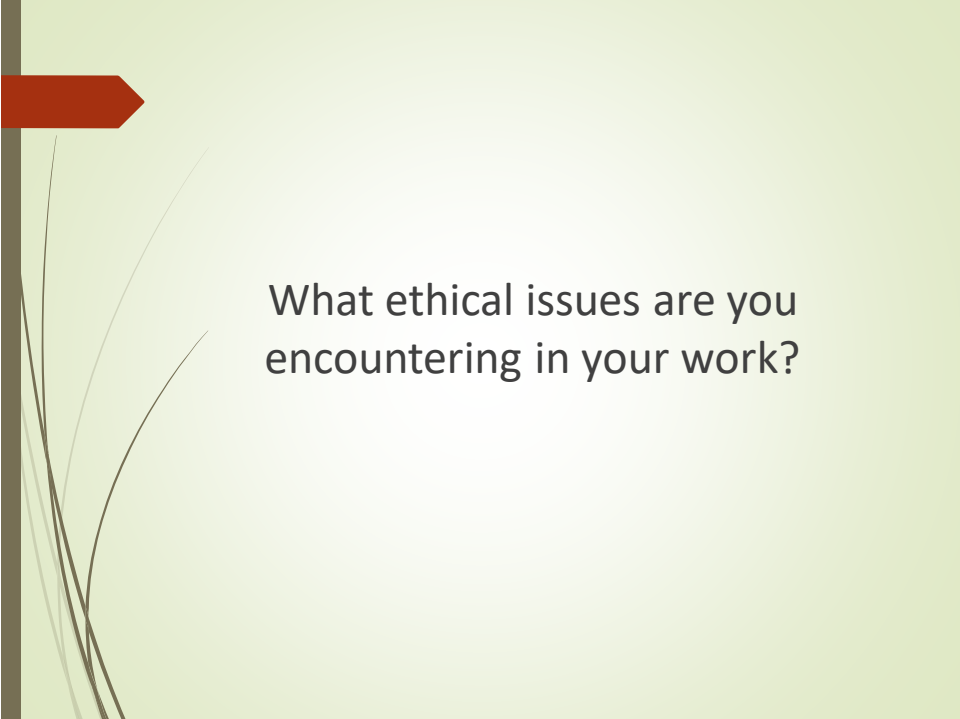


Current Ethical Issues,cont'd

Staffing


- Balancing staffing availability vs. ability to provide services to older adults
- Employees vs. travelers
- Quality of Care/Services

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What ethical issues are you encountering in your work?

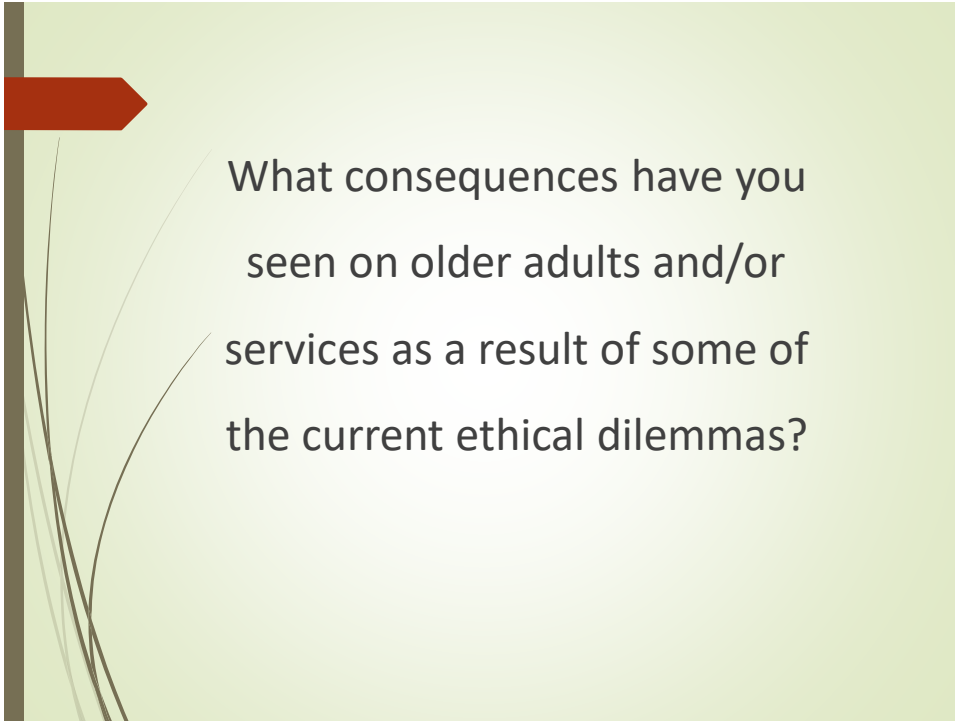
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Consequences for Older Adults

- ▶ Ageism (Barth et al., 2021; Hostiuc et al. 2021)
 - Internalized and externalized
 - Sacrifice
- ▶ Loss of Self-Determination (Tretteteig et al., 2021)
 - Isolation
 - Family Pressure
- ▶ Emotional Impact on older adults and staff (Mo & Shi, 2020)

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What consequences have you seen on older adults and/or services as a result of some of the current ethical dilemmas?

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Framework for Ethical Decision Making


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Reamer's (2013) Process for Ethical Problem Solving

- 1) Identify the ethical issues, including conflicting professional values and duties.
- 2) Identify the individuals, groups, and organizations likely to be affected by the ethical decision (from a feminist ethics perspective include relationships).


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Reamer's (2013) Process for Ethical Problem Solving, cont'd

- 3) Tentatively identify all possible courses of action and the participants involved in each along with possible benefits of each. (Consider client wishes and the cost of doing nothing).
- 4) Thoroughly examine the reasons in favor of and opposed to each possible course of action, considering relevant legal principles, code of ethics, professional values, personal values, especially those that conflict with one's own

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Reamer's (2013) Process for Ethical Problem Solving, cont'd

- 5) Consult with colleagues and appropriate experts (health care team, attorneys, supervisors, etc.)
- 6) Make the decision and **document** the decision-making process
- 7) Monitor, evaluate, and **document** the decision

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Questions?

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References

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<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>.

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Questions or comments?
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Next Webinar: Tuesday June 28 12N-1PM

New Training on Elder Sexual Abuse
with

Dr. John Brose, Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Clinic Director of
Associated Clinic of Psychology (ACP)
Linda Walther, certified SANE-A, MN Coalition of Sexual Assault

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