

**AP-LS Student Committee Webinar: Monday, April 21, 2014**

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“Personal Values Impacting Clinical Work with Diverse Populations”

Keeton v. Anderson-Wiley, 2011 in Georgia:

- Doctoral student in counseling psych program: what if school policy is directly adverse to your personal values?
- Was assigned a case of a person who was gay, made it known that if she had counseled him she would have to tell him what he was doing was morally wrong and change his behavior – or she would have to refer to conversion therapy.
- University disagreed, said against ethical standards to change client’s values. Offered student a remediation plan but it declined, and university dismissed from program. Sued university, went to district and then appellate level
- First amendment: freedom of speech and religion. Appellate court ruled in university’s favorite: has every right to mandate that people see diverse clientele and mandate against discrimination against clientele.

Ward v. Polite, 2012:

- Doctoral student in counseling psych program: student believed homosexuality immoral and said could not be in any kind of counseling relationship requiring her to affirm homosexuality
- University policy of nondiscrimination: cannot choose clients or force personal values upon clients. Student offered remediation plan, declined.
- Appellate court: not that the university has that right, but looked at referral policy – different circumstances.
- Ward did not say that she’d have to tell the client they need to be different. Went to supervisor and recommended that it’s clear to the client from the beginning that sexual behavior counseling would not be provided, or that the client could be referred to someone else.
- Appellate court said it looked like university was expecting student to change her own values – discrimination against values held by individual. Sent back to district court, but case was settled before trial.

Problem with Ward v. Polite: there was no ruling; settlement left the issue in limbo until state legislators took action. Led to:

- The Conscience Clause (Arizona 2012): training programs cannot discipline or discriminate against a student because they refuse to counsel a client about goals conflicting with student’s religious belief, as long as the student consults with supervisor to determine proper action to avoid client harm.

Is The Conscience Clause a problem for our profession?

- APA Ethics Code, Principle E: be aware of biases and differences, and do not participate in or condone prejudicial activities against others.

- We should be working with diverse clients, not choosing to treat only those with whom we share social groups. That is considered discrimination.
- APA's concern: legislatures are telling us how to train professional psychologists.

Formed a work group: Dr. Linda Forrest (head – work on student training)

Preparing Professional Psychologists to Serve a Diverse Population

1. Potential value conflicts need to be acknowledged in training
  - A developmental perspective is recommended: start from the beginning of training.
2. Trainers respect trainee right to maintain personal belief system
  - Believe what you want to believe, but be able to acknowledge that not everyone shares your value system.
3. Cultural competency should be considered a core competence.
  - This is clearly set forth in APA's requirements for accreditation.
4. No trainee should expect to be exempt from having a particular category of clientele.
  - Training programs should have a statement upfront that no one will be exempt in order to obtain a degree from the institution.

Cultural Competence: Goals:

1. Develop the ability to hold core values while exploring new ideas (and different worldviews).
  - Dr. Conroy: self-disclosed that she is against the death penalty, but would not decline to work with someone who is for it. Able to work with that person, even though may disagree.
2. Develop the ability to value all people and all worldviews.
  - What can I learn from this person? Different perspectives are a valuable learning experience.
3. Develop a sense of responsibility to the public.
  - If we refuse services to a certain group, they might be without services in that case. If we narrow ourselves to only those who hold our same worldview, we limit ourselves professionally.
  - Issue of abandonment: what if you're seeing someone who suddenly announces a worldview that violates yours? Potential damage to client.

Towards Cultural Competence:

- Will require a lot of self-disclosure.
- Explore attitudes about personal values and engage in introspection: how is this particular idea going to affect your work? How could it?
- Study cultural groups you're unfamiliar with: can discover negative thoughts/biases you have that you wouldn't be aware of otherwise.
- Accept working with diversity and value conflicts as an exciting clinical challenge: Dynamic inclusivity - How many people can I find a way of working with that I didn't think I could? Challenge yourself, and get help from supervisors!