

An ethic of relationship and care in therapy and supervision

Dr Els van Ooijen

Based on:

van Ooijen, E. (2013) *Clinical Supervision made Easy. A creative and relational approach for the helping professions*. Ross-on-Wye: PCCS Books.

Changes in ethical frameworks over time from rule based to principles based codes.

Principles based codes - explicit or implicit

Non maleficence

Beneficence

Autonomy

Justice

Fidelity (trust)

Current context within which we work

Two dichotomous movements with different language: fear-based vs relationship-based, each with its own language: Experience-distant vs experience-near.

Relational ethic of care

Different category developed in last 25 years – influences: Carol Gilligan's research that showed a gender difference in ethical reasoning; Feminism; (relational continental philosophy – Martin Buber, Levinas etc.

Proposed model for ethical decision making:

Three nested circles: Relationship – care – principles

Relational ethics, which transcends and includes other approaches such as a principle-based ethic and an ethic of care, is about actual relationships in actual situations with actual consequences. (See figure on page 2)

3Step model of ethical decision making:

Step 1- What is the issue? (Focus) – **whose** issue is it? **Who** is responsible for **what**?

Step 2 – How do I decide what is the right action? (Reflection, process)

Explore the context. Unpack the situation by looking at how all players are affected in terms of relationship as well as the four principles. Step outside your own frame of reference into that of the other, using whatever reflective methods you think will help you: discussion, roleplay, constellation, using items from your handbag or pocket to represent the different players, you choose.

Step 3 – What will I do now? (Outcome)

Having selected your preferred course- if you have the time, do a role-play , see what this action is like for all players concerned.

Having carried out the action it is useful to evaluate the outcome in order to find out whether it was the right thing to do? If not, ask yourself ‘what have I learnt from it? How might I do it differently in the future?’

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