Ethical Concerns in Programs for Infants, Young Children and Families

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Ethics-Not a Cookbook

How do we do the right thing?

How do decisions/clinical and programmatic get made?

How do we avoid ethical errors?
MINDFULNESS EXERCISE
Internal pressures or the speed of life can impede our ethical decision making ability.
Kinds of situations that can cause ethical dilemmas

- Personal pulls or beliefs
- Cultural differences and practices
- Individual needs in families and dyads
- Differences of opinion
- Solomon’s choice
- Discipline driven emphases
Holding an interpersonal and inclusive center in ethical decisions

Holding a Picture that Includes the Here and Now and the Future
The Individual and the Group
What Helps with Ethical Concerns?

- Acceptance that we have limitations in our own judgment and power

- Exercise of responsibility to consult, seek supervision, seek a reflective (not reactive) partner
Reactive?
Reflective
In Action and On Action

• It is important to reflect both “in action,” i.e., while doing something, and “on action,” i.e., on something that has occurred.

• What is the bigger meaning of what has happened or implications of each choice I have?
Beth
Before Supervision
Beth
After Supervision.
• Ethical mandate for self care in a demanding profession
• Decision making around reunification, domestic violence and babies and children with medical and developmental vulnerabilities requires complex thinking and careful decision making.

• Vulnerability of the families and children as well as safety needs often pull for direct action rather than more reflective process that considers all angles.
• Collaboration with others who may not be as aware of confidentiality requirements creates a need for careful discussion of boundaries and information sharing.

• Delicate dance of intervening in worrisome or dangerous situations and the weight of decision-making is too hard and important to bear alone.

• Providing services in non-traditional settings (e.g., home) can be isolating and more demanding because of potential boundary and role confusion.
- Legal and ethical issues are more complex as the work is child-focused as well as family focused.

- Children 3 and under are more vulnerable, e.g., higher rates of abuse.

- Confidentiality issues are more complex because of the multidisciplinary nature of work.
• Internal pressures that can get in the way of ethical decision making or that can cloud choices or actions.
Urge to Take Over – Or Have The Parent/Staff Do It “Right”
Sense of Fall from Competence – Feeling of “Dropping the Ball”
Desire for Approval and Appreciation
Unconscious Competition
Fear of Exposure