

LIFE



WITHOUT  
BARRIERS

*There's a community for everyone*

# National ASSID Conference



## *Conceptualising the ASSID Code of Ethics*

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# ETHICAL THEORIES



There are three main ethical theories:

1. Utilitarianism ( or Consequentialism)
2. Deontology
3. Virtue Ethics

# Consequentialism



Principle of Utility is the only basic principle of ethics.

Principle of Utility = an individual ought to produce the maximal balance of positive value over disvalue, or the least disvalue if only undesirable value can be achieved.

However what is good or of value?

# Consequentialism



The Principle of Utility incorporates these 3 concepts:

- Theory of Value - is value a single or plural concept?
- Consequentialism - an act can be determined right or wrong according to its consequences
- Impartiality - all consequences must receive equal and considered thoughtfulness for each person(s) who may be affected by the actions.

# DEONTOLOGY



There are three features to an obligatory action:

- (i) An action is right *if and only if* the motive rests on duty which is validated by pure reason;
- (ii) ‘Categorical Imperative’ - act in such a way that everyone will want to act in this way; and
- (iii) People must be treated as an end rather than a means to an end.

# VIRTUE ETHICS



Virtue = a pattern of behavior and feeling, a tendency to act, desire and feel in particular ways in appropriate situations.

Virtue = an informed judgment about how to make the appropriate response.

Virtue = acquired by participating in actions.

# VIRTUE ETHICS



Motivation for Action is important and has three character dimensions:

- (i) The person is disposed to do what is right;
- (ii) The person intends to act; and
- (iii) The person acts.

Therefore an individual's *character* is essential to the conduct of good action(s).

# VIRTUE ETHICS



Why Virtue Ethics are important for Codes of Ethics:

1. Support Professionals to develop personal integrity;
2. Enables Professionals to understand what action should be performed; and
3. Provide Professionals with a set of moral ideals.

# VIRTUE ETHICS



Virtue	Experience
Courage	Acting with confidence when the course of action is difficult, uncertain, or painful without being overcome by fear.
Justice	Acting, in proportion to the particular circumstance you are faced with, to do and wish for what is just, that is lawful and fair.
Generosity	Noticing and highlighting the good in people.
Greatness of Soul	Acting with the knowledge of what our own personal attributes and their limitations are.
Mildness of temper	Acting and having a robust attribute in respect to negative slights that are directed to our character.
Truthfulness	Acting with honesty, without malice and not gossiping
Goodwill	Acting always with a positive attitude in professional and social associations.

# SUMMARY



Consequentialist	Deontologist	Virtue Ethicist
A person believes pleasure is the highest good and the value of an action is judged by the consequences that it brings about.	A person who believes that adherence to duty and rules makes an action morally excellent.	A person believes that it is the qualities of one's character that makes oneself and one's actions morally excellent.

# VIRTUE ETHICS & CODES



Virtue Ethics is a viable methodology because:

- (a) Considers individual character and conduct;
- (b) The motivational structure is the *person*;
- (c) Common education and work practice framework;  
and
- (d) Offers a series of statements about expected actions of Professionals.

# ASSID CODE OF ETHICS



1. Make sense as a set of actions that can be expected of Professionals;
2. Developed over 4 years after extensive consultation;
3. Reinforce the underlying values of the Society.
4. Research indicates that Code of Ethics have a long term positive impact upon the culture of an organisation.

# ASSID CODE OF ETHICS



Code of Ethics = a set of principles that enable Direct Support Professionals to exercise judgment and accept personal responsibility for their decisions.

Code of Conduct = provide specific guidance on how to act, on what to do, when to do it and what actions are prohibited.

To deliver quality services, organizations need both a Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics.

# NATURE & ROLE OF DSP



1. People come from diverse backgrounds;
2. People have complex, multi-faceted, frequently challenging and interrelated needs;
3. Impossible to provide an exact prescription on how to act in all circumstances of direct support; and
4. Quality of Life frameworks are useful for program planning and evaluation.

# NATURE & ROLE OF DSP



A Professional has:

- ✓ Specific training;
- ✓ Extended practice and continuing education;
- ✓ Provides services based on knowledge and skills;  
and
- ✓ Accountable for actions to peers and community.

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McVilly, K., T. Martin-Nixon & C. Neville 'Professionalising Support Work: towards a Code of Ethics for Australia' *Intellectual Disability Australia*, **24**, 1, 2003, pp6-9.

# NATURE & ROLE OF DSP



A Professional has the ability to judge one's actions:

1. Have I conformed to all legal and/or administrative requirements?;
2. Do my actions adhere to widely accepted principles such as autonomy?; and
3. Are my actions virtuous:
  - A: Do my actions express genuine regard for the welfare of persons; and
  - B: Can my actions extend beyond the normative standards to achieve the highest standard of justice?

# ASSID CODE OF ETHICS



*'Asked to be ethical and honest, yet the system is not fair. We sometimes have to make decisions that greatly affect a person's quality of life,... We support people in their lives, and we support them in their final days... We strive to create social change and make a society that values the lives we work with, always with the goal that one day society will be at a point where our jobs become obsolete'*

C. Brophy 'Empowering and Respect: Developing and Empowering Philosophical Framework for work in the Support Industry' *Intellectual Disability Australia*, 2007, pp3-5

# ASSID CODE OF ETHICS



*'In a real sense all life is inter-related. All men are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality... whatever affects one directly affects one indirectly... I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you are what you ought to be, any you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be'*

Martin Luther King

# VIRTUE ETHICS



## 3 Positive Assertions to guide service delivery:

1. All people, regardless of limitation, race or creed are important and valuable and are to be respected;
2. The greatest tragedy for a person is to experience the contempt of another person as this can lead to domination and repression of human life; and
3. Supporting people to reach fullness of life includes people being having a need for each other.

# VIRTUE ETHICS



*'Until the concept of disability disappears and is replaced by a society that is structured to support everyone's life relatedness and contribution - until that day my life an opportunities and the lives of every other person who carries the label 'disabled' depends upon the goodwill of people in the human service system. Goodwill is no substitute for freedom'*

*Australian Government Shout Out: The Experience of People with Disabilities and their Families in Australia, Canberra, 2009, p1.*

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