UW Applied Behavior Analysis Program Ethical Principles and Preamble

The University of Washington Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) program is committed to preparing students to be competent, inclusive, ethical, and professional behavior analysts who work with persons with developmental disabilities and their families. Our ABA program has established a core set of ethical principles to help meet this commitment. These principles assist ABA students and program faculty to make ethical decisions and disseminate our organization's ethical ideals.

An ethics workgroup comprised of four ABA faculty and staff members established our ABA program's first set of core ethical principles with input from other faculty, doctoral students, and supervisors. The ethics workgroup will review the principles annually with consideration of the latest ABA findings and practices to ensure that they remain relevant and functional to our program and the broader field of ABA.

Program faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to practice cultural humility when interpreting and applying these principles. Cultural and societal considerations, along with other contextual variables, should inform all ethical decision-making.

Definitions

Principles are defined as broad statements that help individuals transform conceptual and philosophical beliefs about ethics into ethical behavior.

Client is broadly defined as any individual, group of individuals, organization, or community receiving ABA services by a Board Certified Behavior Analyst. These services may include ABA instruction, supervision, research, or professional practice.

The University of Washington ABA program puts forth and promotes the use of five core ethical principles to supplement the *Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts*. Principles are listed alphabetically; no ranking is implied.

Principles

Beneficence. Behavior analysts have a responsibility to engage in practices that maximize their clients'[1] well-being and avoid those that cause harm. We understand that behavior analytic services are most likely to benefit our clients when they are provided in the context of a trusting and compassionate relationship. Where conflicts of interest arise between consumers of behavior analysis, we prioritize outcomes for the most vulnerable clients.

Inclusion. Behavior analysts have a responsibility to provide clients of all backgrounds and abilities access to and authentic participation in meaningful activities that promote relationships, a sense of community, and an improved quality of life.

Professional Excellence. Behavior analysts have a responsibility to be honest and transparent. We engage in ongoing professional development and analyze our own practices. Professional excellence requires respectful and effective collaboration with individuals from other disciplines, while maintaining a commitment to data-based decision-making. Analyzing evidence from different methodologies is encouraged as a way of collaborating with others and improving practice.

Self-Determination. Behavior analysts respect clients' rights and promote client dignity, privacy, and autonomy. We assist clients to set and achieve their own goals, develop their own agency, and make decisions about their own lives.

Social Justice. Behavior analysts have a responsibility to attend to injustice where they see it, avoid perpetuating inequitable systems, and advocate for equitable systems change. We are uniquely qualified to identify controlling and contextual variables that contribute to inequitable educational and service-delivery systems and develop solutions to supplant them.

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