

“ETHICS IN DISASTER BEHAVIORAL HEALTH”

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Ethics

Take a few minutes to discuss with a few people around you, when do you recall the first time seeing someone do something ethical?

When was the first time you seen someone do something unethical?

Ethics

According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary ethics is defined as-rules of behavior based on ideas about what is morally good and bad. (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ethic>)

Ethical Behavior

Acting in ways consistent with what society and individuals typically think are good values. Ethical behavior tends to be good for business and involves demonstrating respect for key moral principles that include honesty, fairness, equality, dignity, diversity and individual rights. (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/define/Ethical-behavior.html>)

Fundamental Principles of Professional Ethical Behavior are:

- ❑ *autonomy*, or fostering the right to control the direction of one's life;
- ❑ *nonmaleficence*, or avoiding actions that cause harm;
- ❑ *beneficence*, or working for the good of the individual and society by promoting mental health and well-being;
- ❑ *justice*, or treating individuals equitably and fostering fairness and equality;

Fundamental Principles of Professional Ethical Behavior are:

- ❑ *fidelity*, or honoring commitments and keeping promises, including fulfilling one's responsibilities of trust in professional relationships; and
- ❑ *veracity*, or dealing truthfully with individuals with whom counselors come into professional contact.

(<http://www.counseling.org/docs/ethics/2014-acacode-of-ethics.pdf?srsltid=AfmBOopK1wG0Xp3R1a81t434Qv5Bz112>)

Ethical Decision Making Model

- Step 1*-Identify the ethical concern within the context of the disaster
- Step 2*-Consider personal self beliefs and values, skills and knowledge
- Step 3*-Identify codes of ethics involved
- Step 4*-Determine possible ethical traps
- Step 5*-Frame a preliminary response

Ethical Decision Making Model

- Step 6*-Consider the consequences
- Step 7*-Prepare an ethical resolution
- Step 8* – Get feedback/consultation from other crisis counselors
- Step 9*-Take action
- Step 10*-Review the outcome

Scenario

- ❑ Pagers started ringing around 3 AM on June 18th in the small community of Cozad Nebraska for the volunteer fire department members. Four train cars carrying hazardous material derailed and caught fire forcing the evacuation of some residents of Cozad. Most of the community was awakened by the explosion, many stepping out of their homes only to be overcome by fumes causing many to have respiratory issues.
- ❑ Firefighters were unable to fight the blaze due to the intense heat caused by the chemicals. As many as 1,400 people were evacuated from their homes. The community Nursing Home was evacuated and nearby Assisted Living facility was also evacuated.

Scenario

- ▣ Forty eight people were transported to the Cozad and Lexington hospitals for related respiratory issues including 5 first responders attempting to evacuate residents within a block of the derailment site. A long time retired elementary school teacher was transported and later died from respiratory complications. Pets that lived outside were overcome by fumes or heat and died on the scene.
- ▣ A temporary shelter was put in place in the Lexington High School for the displaced residents. No estimate was given to when residents can return to their homes.

Scenario

- ▣ Nearby community volunteer fire departments were called in to assist in fighting the blaze. Nebraska State Patrol called in additional troopers to assist in closing down Highway 30 that runs along the rail line.
- ▣ Region 3 Behavioral Health has been on the scene and Region 2 will also provide assistance to residence and first responders for anxiety, confusion, grief, as well as farmers and merchants near and in the community as the evacuation area has expanded.

Small Group Discussion

Using the ethical decision making model, in your groups work through the steps of the model.

Large Group Discussion

What areas do you see residents and first responders dealing with in the scenario?

How might you use the steps in the ethical decision making model?

Appreciative Inquiry

If you had three wishes granted to enhance state-level capacity to respond to mental health and substance abuse needs in the event of an emergency or disaster, what would they be?

Questions????

References

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