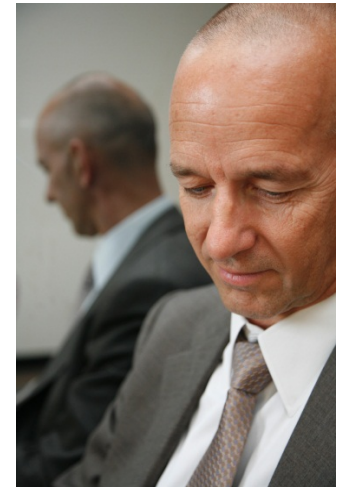# Ethical competence – experiences of teaching and assessing on an initial school psychology training programme

Ethics Committee Symposium @ International School Psychology Association Conference
Amsterdam 2016

Dr. Emma Kennedy CPsychol AFBPsS
Deputy Director Educational Psychology Training, Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation Trust
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Objectives

- Outline aspects of the current context in the UK as regards the **teaching and assessment of ethics**

- Explore the **learning approaches** highlighted by recent national professional guidance

- Describe an institutional perspective on **taking up the role** as a teacher and assessor of ethical competence

- Highlight **strengths and challenges** identified by tutors, including future developments

Current context

Broader societal context of questionable ethical conduct in many institutions e.g., banks

Concerns about the treatment of 'patients' in care homes and in hospitals, and how whistle-blowing/employee candour has been taken up / impact of the Francis Report

Significance of training within the National Health Service

Regulatory and professional guidance and standards

Training at the Trust – Group Relations, experiential group, nursery observation, Year 1 clinical placements in multi-disciplinary child and adolescent mental health teams

Traded services/ethical trading for school psychology services

hcpc health & care professions council

Your duties as a registrant

Standards of
conduct,
performance
and ethics

hcpc health & care professions council

Information for students and education providers

Guidance
on conduct
and ethics
for students

The
British
Psychological
Society

Code of Ethics and Conduct
Guidance published by the Ethics Committee
of the British Psychological Society
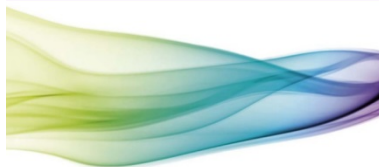
August 2009

SOCIAL DEFENCES
AGAINST ANXIETY
EXPLORATIONS IN A PARADIGM

EDITED BY
DAVID ARMSTRONG AND MICHAEL RUSTIN

THE TAVISTOCK CLINIC SERIES

KARNAC

Rest Model

Four component model which, taken together, identify the sequence of thoughts and actions that result in ethical behaviour:

- **Ethical sensitivity:** Interpreting the situation, and identifying the presence of an ethical issue

- **Ethical reasoning:** Formulating the morally ideal course of action by identifying the relevant ethical issues and using these principles to consider appropriate actions

- **Ethical motivation:** Deciding what one actually wishes and intends to do

- **Ethical implementation:** Executing and implementing what one intends to do

Reason "the slave of the passions"

Knowledge of the codes of ethics, conduct and professional standards

Knowledge application

Be sensitive to ethical issues and problem-solve effectively…

…in a developmental context of acculturation to the profession of psychology…

…whilst attending to cognitive bias and heuristics…

…and acknowledging and processing the 'affect' component

Approach includes…

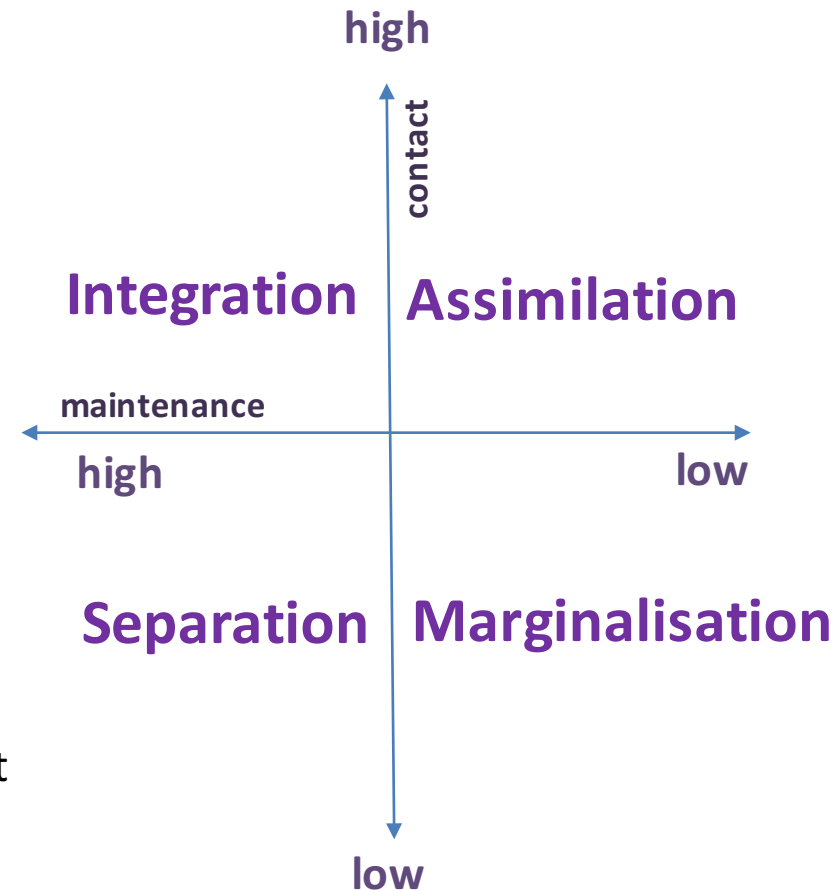Adopting the **Ethics Acculturation Model** (Berry, Handelsman and others)

Assumes:
- a developmental process
- several strategies may be used to adapt to ethical context
- own moral values on entry, confronted with new ethical principles and rules

Introducing EAM during induction (ethics autobiography)

Explicit teaching on the use of the Rest Model as part of 'professional in context'; not separate from it

Use of codes and frameworks as teaching tools to apply to practical challenges – e.g., ethical trading

high

contact

Integration   **Assimilation**

maintenance

high   **low**

Separation   **Marginalisation**

low

Teaching as critical companionship

The Tavistock and Portman
NHS Foundation Trust

Supportive challenge in context of work discussion groups/reflecting teams

Using ethical autobiographies to support trainees noticing personal values and where such values have come from

Application of problem solving models to case studies/vignettes

Using specific papers (e.g., ethical trading) and exploring in small groups sensitivities to ethical principles

Use of Moodle for a

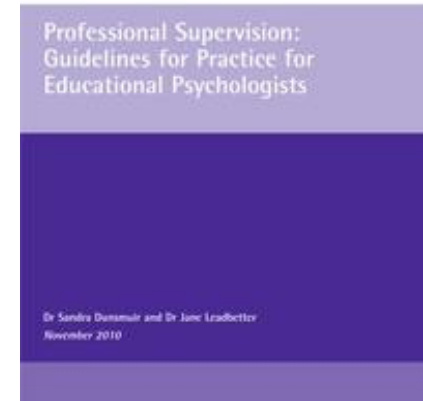Analytic and evaluative reflective discussion in tutorial/taught seminars

Supervision

Place of supervision in professional training at the Trust

Potentially a space to reflect on:

- Integrating positions – self-in-role-in-relationship
- Both/and positions regarding ethics and legal requirements
- Timing, pacing and prioritisation of action (where required)

Professional Supervision:
Guidelines for Practice for
Educational Psychologists

Dr Sandra Dunsmuir and Dr Jane Leadbetter
November 2010

Framework to elicit reflection on ethical issues explicitly in supervision e.g., one supervisor's development of the Rest Model for use in supervision with trainees on clinical placements

Need for guidance and professional development for supervisors as regards trainee implementation (and quality/effectiveness thereof) of ethical codes with service users (children, young people, families, school staff, other practitioners in human services)

Assessment of ethical competence

"...ethical sensitivity includes an affective, motivational or virtuous component because committing oneself to ethical behaviour requires integrity, honesty, responsibility, compassion and courage..."

- Moffett, Becker & Patton, 2014, p. 230

Supervisor judgements/assessment of placement practice

- supervision once per week on all placements
- termly meetings with the CAMHS Supervisors in Year 1
- six weekly meetings with the EPS fieldwork tutors in Year 1
- mid year formative placement evaluation and end of year summative placement evaluation

Assessment of written work

- 3 portfolios of professional practice
- assignments on consultation, assessment, research protocol, etc.

Comprehensive appraisal system

- Annual progress meeting/supervisory boards (Y...
- Drawing ether various sources of evidence
  (includes self-reflection)

Assessment questions to test understanding of ethics and ethical practice

- No formal summative stand-alone assessment of this nature
  currently included in the course
- BPS notes the weakness of such an assessment approach [in isolation] in terms of those *"who understand how to think and behave ethically and those who know how to answer assessment questions"* (p. 19)

Outcomes

Commended by the BPS during 2015 accreditation for *"...ethical approaches to practice are well integrated into the training programme. In addition to formal ethics teaching, ethical considerations are a theme throughout..."*

The British Psychological Society
Promoting excellence in psychology

Other extracts regarding ethics on the programme:

"The placement providers, in particular, commented that what distinguishes Tavistock and Portman trainees is their self-reflection and their ethical awareness, which are important attributes for the role"

"Ethical approaches to practice are well integrated into the training programme. In addition to formal ethics teaching, ethical considerations are a theme throughout and feature in tutorial sessions too. Ethical considerations include those that directly relate to trainee experiences on placement"

"The trainees were aware of relevant professional codes of practice and standards (BPS, DECP and HCPC), which can be accessed via Moodle, and they are encouraged to make good use of those as part of their assignments. Moodle is actively used to post any further information regarding current ethical matters"

"There is also good preparation for the process of gaining ethical clearance for their research thesis"

Reflections

Resource constraints

Ethical approval for research in the context of NHS protocols

Timing and content of taught aspects of the course as attuned as possible to the developmental stage of the trainee

Psychological safety of the supervisory space and how containing the relationship needs to be to bring ethical issues 'in' – power, authority, control, fear, anxiety, culture of blame and risk aversion

Promoting ethical sensitivity – what happens when the ethical issue is 'us'?

What becomes stirred up for us as tutors and supervisors…

What we assume about roles…

Not static, normative and prescriptive, but…

- Dynamic and changing
- Without a hard and fast distinction between 'role' and 'person' (identity)

Organisation-in-the-mind: emotional experiences of tasks, **roles**, purposes, boundaries rituals, accountability, competence, failure and success

Needed to find my role: i.e.,
- understand systems boundaries/system aim and purpose
- experience becomes an 'organisation-in-the-mind' and the role emerges as a personal mental construct

Needed to 'make' my role: i.e.,
- examine system conditions, purposes, culture, resources and constraints
- understand how the system functions, changes, variation in context, etc.
- my own aspirations, feelings, etc.
- not defined in advance but through interacting with circumstances

Tutor-in-role-in-relationship

- Personal ethics acculturation / on-going development of ethical identity

- Sitting with uncertainty/not rushing to judgement

- Responses to changes in the system/profession

- Living ethical principles – cast as expert, being the 'best example'

- Importance of relationships and relating-in-role: the tutor team

- Example experiences:
- *'they won't want a Black EP'*
- *'she must wear specific clothing when she comes or she will not be allowed in'*
- *'if the child does not consent to the observation, I don't proceed'*
- *'if there is no outcome monitoring, we won't get paid'*
- *'are they well enough to continue training?'*

Plenary

Questions, comments

Interest in collaboration regarding research, training and practice with other training programmes/services

Further correspondence:

EKennedy2@tavi-port.nhs.uk

Thank you!

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