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2-2022

Law and Ethics in Counseling with the Deaf Community

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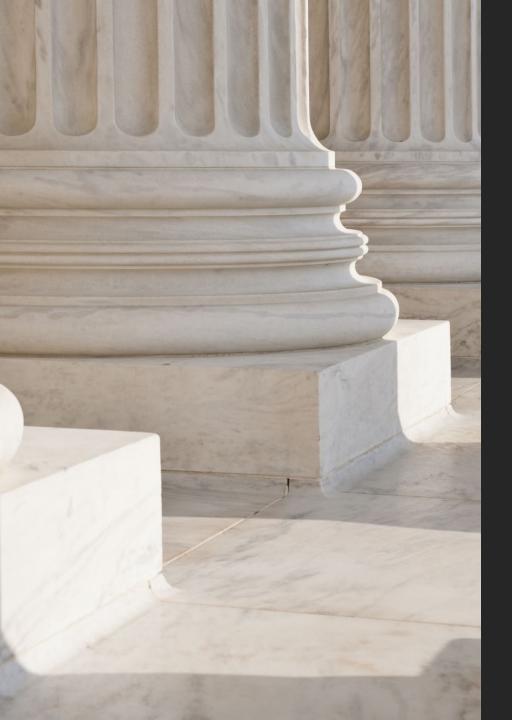


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Recommended Citation

Kuehne, Jessica Ellen; Joy Mwendwa; Deacon, Mary; Higgins, Brianna; and Roberts, Nathan, "Law and Ethics in Counseling with the Deaf Community" (2022). Faculty Publications and Presentations. 219. https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/ccfs_fac_pubs/219

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Law and Ethics in Counseling with the Deaf Community

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Learning Objectives

- Understand Deaf culture and the mental health needs in the Deaf community.
- Identify the ethical issues in providing deaf and hard of hearing counseling services.
- Identify strategies and resources for addressing ethical issues and challenges.
- Apply best practices for mental health counselors when working with the deaf and hard of hearing population will be discussed.

Deafness and Deaf Culture

- More than 28 million Americans have a broad spectrum of deafness (3 out of 1,000 infants).
- Deaf identity spectrum of individuals- linguistic-cultural and disability models
- Deaf = cultural term and deaf = medical/legal term
- Communication preferences
 - American Sign Language, cued speech, oralism, speechreading, Signed Exact English, and simultaneous communication

Deafness and Deaf Culture

- Deaf President Now (DPN)- one of the significant events in Deaf history
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990
- Collectivist characteristics in Deaf culture (close-knit community, advocacy, deaf ecosystem)

Counseling Services in the Deaf Community

- Sign language fluency is vital for clients who use ASL.
- There are a very few Deaf-owned counseling services and Deaf counselors in the US.
- Mental health services are challenging for d/Deaf and hard of hearing individuals to access due to a lack of communication accessibility and knowledge of Deaf culture.
- Cultural competence is required when working with d/Deaf clients.
- Counselors must be familiar with the ADA law and accommodation needs.

Ethical Concerns in Counseling Services

- "Small World" Deaf community
- · Lack of knowledge in deafness, Deaf culture, and mental health needs
- · Counselors who are fluent in sign language- takes a role as an interpreter
- Confidentiality and trustworthy issues
- Dual relationships- very common in the Deaf community

Best Practices for Counseling Professionals

- Counseling professionals need additional training, knowledge with Deaf culture, and ongoing supervision or consultation with experts on Deaf culture and deafness.
 - ACA, 2014, Standards C.2.b., C.2.c., C.2.d., C.2.e, and C.2.f.
- It is vital for counseling professionals to be aware of their ignorance, countertransference, and biases due to a lack of exposure to deafness and Deaf Culture. Counselors are more likely to sympathize their clients that may reinforce them to low self-esteem if counselors view deafness as pathological.
 - ACA, 2014, Standards B.1.a. and C.2.f.

Best Practices for Counseling Educators

- Counselor educators are strongly encouraged to develop a broad understanding of Deaf culture and deafness in two models (linguistic cultural and disability).
- Multicultural/diversity competency includes awareness, knowledge, and skills in working with students along the deaf spectrum.
 - ACA, 2014, Standards F.11.c

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