



# Ethical Considerations

## Ethical Principles

Any decision about a professional boundary can be evaluated based on the ethical premises of:



### Autonomy

- Respect for free will
- Noninterference



### Justice

- Fairness
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Consistency



### Nonmaleficence

- Doing no harm or risk of harm
- Weighing potential risks and benefits



### Fidelity

- Faithfulness to duties or obligations
- Loyalty



### Beneficence

- Responsibility to do good
- Preventing or removing harm



### Veracity

- Honesty
- Full disclosure
- Confirming facts

## Questions to Consider: The Ethics of Working With Sensitive Information



### Privacy (People)

Privacy is about people. It allows for a sense of being in control of the access that others have to us. It is a right to be protected, viewed through the patient's lens.

When thinking about the privacy considerations associated with working with individuals who may be experiencing trafficking, ask yourself...

- What do you do when a client sends you personal information via email?
- Can you complain about or celebrate a client on social media, even if you don't say their name?
- Does email communication fall under HIPAA protection?
- Should you disclose personal information to a client?
- How will disclosure impact the client-professional relationship?
- Can you use information obtained through Google or open source data searches? If so, how? When?
- Is there any stigma for a client who enters your facility?

## Confidentiality (Data)

Confidentiality is about data. It is an extension of privacy and serves as an agreement about maintaining and accessing personal data. HIPAA regulates access to protected health information.

There are additional considerations and risks to think through when working with data, particularly when it is stored or accessed through an online server. Ask yourself...

- How will confidential information be stored, transmitted, used, or maintained?
- What is captured in your notes?
- How will you document informed consent or notify clients of records release?
- How will you ensure the accuracy of records?
- How will e-record information be provided to clients?
- Do you record an ICD-10 code for suspected trafficking in your patient's file?
- Are there times when disclosure is unavoidable? If so, how do you handle it?
- Do you use confidentiality agreements when conducting group treatment?

## References

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