



Ethical and Legal Issues in Professional Practice with Families

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Ethical and Legal Issues in Professional Practice with Families Imagine how much simpler your professional life would be if therapeutic efficacy was the sole criterion against which professional ethics were measured. For better or worse, that isn't the case, and every therapist--regardless of how gifted, well-trained, or "centered"--needs help in safely navigating the minefields of personal beliefs, professional ethics, federal and state laws, and the best interests of clients. Should a therapist report one spouse's infidelity to another? How about a suicide threat? How should one behave in a custody dispute? What about domestic violence? Ethical and Legal Issues in Professional Practice with Families arms couple and family therapists with the up-to-the-minute information and analytical tools needed to answer the crucial ethical questions that arise in the course of daily practice. Featuring contributions from 20 recognized experts in couple and marital therapy, ethics, government policy, and family law, this book provides family clinicians with much needed guidance on how to balance often conflicting ethical standards against legal responsibilities. Designed for easy reference, Ethical and Legal Issues in Professional Practice with Families is divided into four sections. The first section offers wide-ranging coverage of such general concerns as professional ethics, legal issues, gender concerns, and multicultural competence in couple and family practice. This section also features a proven model for ethical decision-making. The second section focuses on practice with specific populations, including children and adolescents, couples, families with custody problems, and gay and lesbian families. In the following section, the authors take a look at a number of timely ethical and legal issues, including child maltreatment, domestic violence, recovered memories, patient confidentiality, and obligations to nonclient family members. The fourth section addresses crucial professional issues, such as liability, risk management, confidentiality in the managed care era, and the "diagnosis dilemma" (i.e., how to cope with the managed care requirement of assigning DSM-IV individual diagnoses to family problems). Ethical and Legal Issues in Professional Practice with Families is a valuable resource for couple therapists, family therapists, and all other mental health professionals, as well as attorneys specializing in family law. This valuable guide helps couple and family therapists balance their often conflicting ethical standards and legal responsibilities. In addition to covering all important recent changes in professional codes and family law, the authors provide decision-making models and practical guidelines that assist you in analyzing and resolving the knotty ethical dilemmas that may arise when working with couples and families. They provide advice and guidance on how to comply with federal and state laws, reduce liability, and improve risk management. And they explore the varying legal and ethical standards across many different clinical settings and professional roles. Readers will find comprehensive coverage of ethical and legal issues of vital concern to today's family and couple therapists. Chapters treat ethical problems related to gender, multicultural competency, and a wide range of specific client populations. Other timely issues covered in detail include child maltreatment, domestic violence, recovered memories, confidentiality, and the "diagnosis dilemma."

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