

Instructor Manual for
Ethical, Legal, and
Professional Issues in
Counseling by Robert Casares

**Ethical, Legal, and
Professional Issues in
Counseling**

Seventh Edition

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Chapter 1

Introduction

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- 1. Assuming that you are a moral and responsible person (as are most counselors), why do you think it is important for you to study ethical and legal principles and the decision-making process?**

Points instructors may want to make:

- The counseling profession has a written code of ethics. The code's guidelines for practice must be read and understood. Simply acting as you think is right and moral may not lead to your being compliance with the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics (or other counseling codes, as well).
- Although counselors often have good intentions, if they violate an ethical principle or a law, they can get into serious trouble.
- It is important to understand that there are few *right* answers when making ethical decisions. Furthermore, consultation with other mental health professionals is very important.
- It is vital that counselors understand that when they are facing a legal issue, they should request and obtain legal advice.

What are the differences among legal standards, ethical standards, and best practice?

Points instructors may want to make:

- Legal standards are the minimum behavior society will tolerate from a professional. Legal standards are created by society to protect citizens from bad professionals.
- Ethical standards are the minimum behavior other counselors will tolerate from counselors. Ethical standards are created by counselors themselves to ensure that counselors practice in a way that helps clients and does not hurt them.
- Best practice represents the ideal for counselor practice. It may be difficult to get a group of counselors to agree upon what best practice would be, but all counselors want to strive for best practice, not just meeting minimum ethical or legal standards of practice.

- 2. What resources can you use when you need help in resolving an ethical dilemma?**

Points instructors may want to make:

- The best approach counselors can use to resolve ethical dilemmas is to consult with colleagues. If a counselor's supervisor is a mental health professional, that person