



Ethical Decision Making Process Worksheet

Step 1a: Identify the ethical dilemma.

Step 1b: If applicable, decide who is/are your client(s). Do you need to establish a hierarchy of parties (BACB Code 2.02)? Who is the “primary ultimate beneficiary of services”?

Step 1c: List relevant BACB guidelines. Are there also laws, regulations, or policies you need to consider?

Step 1d: Identify personal values or biases that may influence your decision making on this issue.

Step 2a: Brainstorm: What solution(s) to the dilemma does the BACB code suggest?

Step 2b: Brainstorm: What are other possible solutions?

Step 3: Evaluate solutions: Consider what issues, conflicts, or tensions might potentially influence each solution. Also consider the following factors when evaluating solutions:

- Client safety
- Client dignity and self determination
- Client outcomes
- Impact on your relationships with other parties
- Family preferences

Step 4: Have you found an acceptable solution? If so, write it down. If not, go back to Step 2.

PRACTICE SCENARIOS

Practice Scenario 1: Use of Edible Reinforcers

Jimmy is 14. He has been on medication for several years for aggressive/impulsive behavior and the medication (along with the fact that Jimmy is very inactive) has caused him to be about 15 pounds overweight.

You are providing ABA services for Jimmy, both at home and at school. Unfortunately, the only thing that motivates Jimmy is food. When you use food as a reinforcer, he learns very fast; when you don't use edibles, he doesn't learn. Thus, for you to make progress on Jimmy's program goals, you are using edibles at both home and school. Is this ethical? How should you ethically proceed?

Practice Scenario 2: Parent Non-Participation

You are working with a family of a child with autism. It is a family with three young children, so understandably a rather chaotic environment. You work with the child several times a week in the home. When you work directly with the child, the child is doing great. His problem behaviors are greatly reduced, and he's acquired numerous skills.

The problem is that none of it is generalizing outside of sessions. The parents are asked to attend your sessions with the child, but they are very inattentive, typically spending the time interacting with their devices or leaving the room to attend to their other children. You attempted some parent training on how to generalize the skills at home, but the parents attended sporadically. Although the parents agree with the need for follow through, they rarely do so and although they agree to collect some data at home, they don't do this either. You are empathetic about the situation but wonder if you can ethically continue to provide services when none of behavior change is transferring outside of your sessions with the child.

Practice Scenario 3: Multiple Relationships

You live in a small town. You are the only professional providing ABA services in the town. A family contacts you, desperate for help with their young child's challenging behaviors. The child, who is four years old, has been kicked out of several day care programs. He is also exhibiting aggression towards both his parents and his younger sibling. The family doesn't know where to turn. Unfortunately, this family also attends the same church you do. You not only see them at church every Sunday, but you also serve on several committees with the mom and see the family at church social events. What is the ethical path in this situation?