

Professional Code of Conduct

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Introduction

Someone once said, “Responsibility, honesty, integrity, ethical behavior, fairness, hard work, charity, service, salesmanship. These are the things that never change, and are the foundation of all success.” As a future dietitian, I will have to, and most importantly I will want to follow most of the above-listed things to achieve the success in my profession. Some of the items like responsibility, honesty or charity might fall under the ethical behavior, so the most important is to follow the ethic, and the success will come. The American Dietetic Association created the Code of Ethics for the profession of Dietetic which I will have to follow when I become a registered dietitian. I agree to all point listed in the code; however, some rules gained my attention particularly. In the following paper, I will present the top five ethical practices that I will follow and explain which ethical theory fits under each practice.

- The dietetics practitioner conducts himself/herself with honesty, integrity, and fairness (AND).
- The dietetics practitioner considers the health, safety, and welfare of the public at all times (ADA).
- The dietetics practitioner provides professional services with objectivity and with respect for the unique needs and values of individuals (AND).
- The dietetics practitioner with draws from professional practice when unable to fulfill his or her professional duties and responsibilities to clients and others (ADA).
- The dietetics practitioner does not invite, accept, or offer gifts, monetary incentives, or other considerations that affect or reasonably give an appearance of affecting his/her professional judgment (ADA).

Kantian Ethic

The first ethical practice that I would like to follow in my future practice is to conduct myself with “honesty, integrity and fairness” (AND). I believe that this practice fits the Kantian Ethics, which states that “we do what is right not because it makes us happier, is convenient, or makes money, we do it because it is the right thing to do, regardless of the consequences” (Zimdahl, p.63). Dietitians need to be honest and fair in respect to the patient regardless of consequences.

Another practice falls into this category of ethical theory too, namely that of providing professional service with “with objectivity and with respect for the unique needs and values of individuals” (AND). I need to supply my clients with the best service they could receive, no matter of my beliefs and liking or disliking certain things. As their health care provider, I need to respect their religion, their race, or their culture. Also, the practice that does not allow me to accept any gifts that could change my professional decision might be linked to the Kantian Ethics. None of the gifts should modify the decisions that apply to my client health. I need to behave according to the knowledge I gained and make every effort to improve my patients’ health no matter what. Their health should make me happy, not the gifts or money I could get.

Utilitarianism

Another practice that is important for me is to “consider the health, safety, and welfare of the public at all times” (AND). Being a dietitian will obligate me to “fight” for the health of each person. Having a good health is one of the most precious things an individual can have, and I should make sure that the health and the safety of my clients and their families are my priority. According to the Utilitarianism, I should create “the greatest balance and happiness or pleasure over pain or suffering for all affected by an act” (Zimdahl, p. 64) If I discover that another dietitian is working against the safety of human health, I need to perform and record her/his

inappropriate behavior (ADA). Also, by creating the greatest happiness I mean providing help and my advices not only for individual patients but also the whole family. At the same time, I will have to remember that when I am unable to fulfill my duties as a dietitian, I need to withdraw from my practice (ADA). I am aware that as a beginner dietitian, I might not be able to solve all my clients` problems. However, at the situation when I will not know the answer, and will not know how to address the problem, I need to ask for help. At the same time, I need to make and promise myself that I will improve my knowledge and learn all my life. The researchers release current information about food, health, and their correlations, so I need to know the newest, freshest information to be able to help my patients (ICDA).

Ethical Egoism

All above practices fit under Kantian Ethics, Utilitarianism, or both. The acts I am going to do as a dietitian should lead to health improvement, lifestyle enhancements, and possible disease-free life. If my behavior and decision are concentrated on the good of my clients, there will not be room for ethical egoism according to which my action would be right just because they would best promote my self-interest (Shafer-Landay, p.107). All the practices that fit into Kantian Ethic and Utilitarianism are against the Ethical Egoism theory. I believe that any profession that is related to the health, and helping others cannot be connected to the egoism. As a passionate dietitian, I will care about others and make sure their goods are the most important.

Social Contract Theory

All the principles I picked can also fall under Social Contract Theory, and they can be applied to any profession related to health. According to Zimdahl, the practices listed in the Professional Code of Conduct for Dietitian can be applied to other businesses. Thus, the same principles will govern all professionals regardless of their profession (p.59). People who care about the health of

their patients will probably agree to all above-listed policies. No matter if the professional is a nurse, a doctor, a dentist, or a dietitian, all will make sure that their safety and health of the patient is the most important. Health care providers will put the good of the patients in front of own beliefs regarding the differences in culture, or other social opinions.

Conclusion

Knowing Professional Code of Conduct in the future profession is very important. It makes you follow the rules that everyone in your environment is abiding too. At the same time, the practices that are included in the Code are very similar to the rules most people obey in everyday life.

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