

Introduction

Ethical *Conflicts in Psychology*, now in its fifth edition, still maintains the same primary purpose propounded by its founding author, Donald N. Bersoff: “to help readers develop sensitivity to the ethical aspects of their work as present or future psychologists.”

However, much has changed across ethical practice in psychology, particularly with regard to the American Psychological Association’s (APA’s; 2017) *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (the “Ethics Code”), since the first edition of this book was published in 1995. At that time, psychologists were still determining how to incorporate into their practices sweeping changes in a document that had been revised twice in the preceding five years—more than doubling in length during that period—to include not just “Principles” but an enforceable “Code” as well.

In 2003, the third edition of *Ethical Conflicts in Psychology* surfaced in the wake of very substantial 2002 Ethics Code revisions that, for example, added “gender identity” and “culture” as foci for nondiscrimination, made distinctions between “test data” and “test materials” that greatly affected the ability of third parties to access them both, and simply deleted a slew of Standards pertaining to forensic psychological services.

In recent years, there have been some minor but nonetheless impactful changes to the Ethics Code. Perhaps the most visible of these has been the revision of Standard 3.04, Avoiding Harm, which now mandates that “psychologists do not participate in, facilitate, assist, or otherwise engage in torture.”

There has also been a steady increase in the number of “guidelines”—aspirational in nature, and not, like the Ethics Code, enforceable—since the first edition of *Ethical Conflicts in Psychology*. Currently, there exist 23 APA guidelines that address general practice, clinical practice, and further guidelines development. Many of these are reproduced, in whole or in part, in this fifth edition.

This book contains a collection of both recently published and recognizably classic sources of ethical guidance. Some sources—for example, the latest version of the APA’s aforementioned Ethics Code—appear in their entirety, while others are excerpted for critical content. In every instance, readers receive full citation information for the original document, which can be retrieved via the APA PsycNET online research tool. Each of the accompanying commentaries is augmented with five of the most up-to-date references on a given topic, so that readers can quickly supplement their newly acquired knowledge.

Special care has been taken to cater in a balanced fashion to the overlapping interests and professional identities of clinicians, researchers, and teachers. For this purpose, retaining the prior overall format of this book has been particularly apt. First, in Chapter 1, readers learn what ethics codes actually are, how they are enforced, and how they are applied. Then, the process of learning ethics—and, by extension, teaching ethics—is explored in depth in Chapters 2 and 3.

From that point on, this book addresses in turn a series of standard notions in psychological ethics, including confidentiality, privilege, and privacy (Chapter 4), and multiple relationships (Chapter 5). Particular attention is paid to various professional service contexts, including assessment (Chapter 6), therapy (Chapter 7), research, academia, and clinical supervision (Chapter 8), and forensic settings (Chapter 9). Finally, the business aspect of psychology is examined in detail in Chapter 10.

Throughout this edition, there has been an attempt to focus more on “ethical” conflicts per se than on those having to do primarily with law, politics, or public policy—important considerations, to be sure, but ones that in a book of this nature are properly consigned to secondary status.

Just as psychological ethics are in a constant state of evolutionary flux, so has *Ethical Conflicts in Psychology* evolved over the years to become as much of a living document as possible. I hope this book will be responsive to your needs and inspire dialogue about the future of ethical practice in psychology.

REFERENCE

- American Psychological Association. (2017). *Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct* (2002, Amended June 1, 2010 and January 1, 2017). Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx>