

# CASE STUDY

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What's Ethical?

Dilemmas of Career

Guidance Practitioners

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### Abstract

This case study is designed as a method for exploring Ethics in Career Guidance Counselling. It is broken into two parts which help to highlight the ethical conflicts that guidance practitioners can experience in their daily work. The case study is designed to raise awareness of each practitioners own set of values, attitudes and perceptions which can affect the guidance process.

### Foundation Competences: Ethical Practices

#### Case-study Part One: Ethics and Shadow side

**PRACTITIONER:** Thank you both for coming today, I am very grateful that you have agreed to this interview. I will ask you first to tell me a bit about yourselves. Ethics, would you like to go first?

**ETHICS:** My name is ethics and I am sure as a guidance practitioner you have heard quite a lot about me before now. I am the value framework for which all good practice in guidance is drawn up. You can draw on me anytime the need arises to ensure you are respecting the rights and dignity of your clients at all times, that you are only carrying out duties that are within your training and competence, that you are working in a professional manner with all who access your support, and that you are remaining

honest (with your client and yourself), showing at all times, integrity within your position.

**PRACTITIONER:** Ok well thanks ethics, while I feel you may have a lot to offer me through-out my career, I would like to know a little bit more about where you come from? Who decided on these codes, where do they come from?

**ETHICS:** Many writers state the theory, which underpins ethical principles, is in fact moral philosophy. Moral philosophy is the area of philosophy concerned with theories of ethics, which helps us decide how to act and how to decide what is good or bad. There are different models that influence me - the code of ethics, some concentrating

on characteristics and traits, some on the act being performed and some on 'intrinsically good' outcomes. I am often constructed as a code of ethics of which you maybe aware of as a guidance practitioner.

**PRACTITIONER:** Thank you Ethics for that. Ok so hello, I am guessing that you are my shadow side?

**SHADOW:** Yes I am.

**PRACTITIONER:** Can you tell me a bit more about yourself, who you are, what you do?

**SHADOW:** Sure, that's no problem. I am your shadow side; I'm part of you and who you are. You may have heard about me before through theories such as Jungian psychology - I am the repressed, the undeveloped. Everyone has a shadow side I am a thing like projection, transference, and the blind spot in your psyche. There will be times when you will want to deny me to keep your self-image and what's very interesting about me is that others around you may see me long before you ever do.

**PRACTITIONER:** That's actually quite remarkable and you do sound familiar to me but I am wondering how it benefits me to have you here, at this interview – how can you help me decide what to do with the issue I face in my work as a guidance practitioner?

**SHADOW:** Remember I am in the unconscious. I can tell you much more about how you feel about the presenting issue, your client, and any other factors that you may be experiencing difficulty with. I will base this information on your past experiences. I can show you your values and your prejudices. It is then your choice to admit I am there, or you can choose to deny the knowledge I am presenting to you.

**PRACTITIONER:** That's very interesting, I am intrigued by both of you, if not a little apprehensive about how you may view the dilemmas I face when working with clients.

## Case-study Part Two: Scenario One: Mental Health

Joe works in a job centre as a guidance practitioner. Joe's personal values include a belief in working in a client-centred way and to take the interest of the client into account when supporting them in making decisions regarding their progression. From his past experience Joe also has a fear of mental health and the challenges that this brings. Joe is referred a client (Anne) for career guidance. Anne is aged 28, is a single parent and is out of work for three years. She has low levels of education and skills. After three months of working together, meeting once per week, for one hour of career guidance, Joe has concerns about the Anne's mental health. A lot of these concerns are related to interpersonal contact between Joe and Anne. It is noticed that Anne can be quick to anger and has made vague threats against people.

Anne can also be paranoid at times, tending to display irrational thinking and attributed thoughts to others. At times Anne would speak very rapidly, without logical connections between sentences.

Joe is under pressure from his manager to achieve placement targets into employment, education or training as the job centre funding and his salary is dependent on achieving placement targets.

Anne is interested in taking up a work experience/training scheme. This is designed to help people who are long-term unemployed to get back to work by offering part-time and temporary placements in jobs based within local community organisations. Joe has doubts about Anne's stress coping levels for this type of scheme.

## Case-study Part Two:

### Scenario Two: Welfare Fraud

Mary works in a job centre as a guidance practitioner. Mary comes from a disadvantaged area with high levels of unemployment. She left school early but returned to education in later life. She has strong values of honesty and fairness. She also has a value of client centered approach. Mary and her partner have two children and because of the economic down turn her partner has been unemployed for the past two years. Mary works in a job centre which receives its funding from the Department of Social Welfare.

Mary is referred a client who is looking for work and who informs her that he has spent the last year working in another country. When Mary looks up the client's welfare record she notices that the client's social welfare claim is still open and has been for the year the client was working in another country. On further investigation it turns out that a relative of the client was claiming the unemployment payment while the client was working abroad. At her next meeting with her client Paul, Mary challenged him on this new information. Paul then disclosed that he went abroad to try to seek work to support his partner and their four young children but was unsuccessful. He then went on to explain how his relative was claiming his payment during his time abroad as attempt to keep his partner and his four children out of serious poverty as they had no other income available to them at that time.

# THE GUIDE

# PROJECT

GUIDE was realized by MetropolisNet and its network. This network is made up of organisations working in metropolitan areas to promote social inclusion, employment and urban development.

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