A Conscience Sensitive Approach

To Ethics and Teaching Caring Attitudes
An
I.U. Conscience Project and HELP Collaboration

- Margaret Gaffney, M.D.
- Deborah Litzelman, M.D.
- Matt Galvin, M.D.
- Barbara Stilwell, M.D.
- Ann Cottingham, MA.
• Indiana University Conscience Project 1982

• Health-professional Ethics Leadership Program (HELP) 1997

• Teaching Caring Attitudes (TCA) 1998
Figure One: Great Expectations
Stressors

• Personal
• Interpersonal
• Professional
Stressors

- Professional
- Loneliness
Autonomous Coping Skills

• Deliberate self-reliance
• Defense mechanisms
Defense Levels and Individual Defense Mechanisms

High adaptive level. This level of defensive functioning results in optimal adaptation in the handling of stressors. These defenses usually maximize gratification and allow the conscious awareness of feelings, ideas, and their consequences. They also promote an optimum balance among conflicting motives. Examples of defenses at this level are

- anticipation
- affiliation
- altruism
- humor
- self-assertion
- self-observation
- sublimation
- suppression

Mental inhibitions (compromise formation) level. Defensive functioning at this level keeps potentially threatening ideas, feelings, memories, wishes, or fears out of awareness. Examples are

- displacement
- dissociation
- intellectualization
- isolation of affect
- reaction formation
- repression
- undoing

Minor image-distorting level. This level is characterized by distortions in the image of the self, body, or others that may be employed to regulate self-esteem. Examples are

- devaluation
- idealization
- omnipotence

Disavowal level. This level is characterized by keeping unpleasant or unacceptable stressors, impulses, ideas, affects, or responsibility out of awareness with or without a misattribution of these to external causes. Examples are

- denial
- projection
- rationalization
**Major image-distorting level.** This level is characterized by gross distortion or misattribution of the image of self or others. Examples are

- autistic fantasy
- projective identification
- splitting of self-image or image of others

**Action level.** This level is characterized by defensive functioning that deals with internal or external stressors by action or withdrawal. Examples are

- acting out
- apathetic withdrawal
- help-rejecting complaining
- passive aggression

**Level of defensive dysregulation.** This level is characterized by failure of defensive regulation to contain the individual's reaction to stressors, leading to a pronounced break with objective reality. Examples are

- delusional projection
- psychotic denial
- psychotic distortion

Competencies

Effective Communication
Basic Clinical Skills
Using Science to Guide Diagnosis and Therapy
Lifelong Learning
Self Awareness, Self Care and Personal Growth
Community Context of Health-care
Moral Reasoning and Ethical Judgment
Problem Solving
Professionalism and Role Recognition
Figure One: Great Expectations

Flourishing Practice

autonomous

coping skills

secure base

stressors

Competency Based Curriculum

Great Expectations
Figure Two: Lapses in Caring Attitude
Psychopathological Interferences in the Use of Adaptive Coping Skills

- Mood Disorders
- Anxiety Disorders
- Substance Abuse Disorders
- Immature Defense Mechanisms
- Maladaptive Character Traits
- Character Disorders
Virtuous Practice
vis à vis
The Hidden Curriculum

Laocoön Against Background Graffiti
Figure Three: Lapses in Caring Attitudes Management Model
Teaching Caring Attitudes
COMPETENCIES REVISITED

• Self Awareness/ Self Care/Personal Growth
  *plus*
• Moral Reasoning and Ethical Judgment
  *plus*
• ???
Moral Emotional Responsiveness Skill-Streaming

- Identification of moral emotions
- Recognition of moral emotional changes under varying conditions of approval and disapproval (Rings of Glaucon: an exercise in moral imagination)
- Overcoming defense mechanisms that dispose to care lapses or vitiate pro-social impulses (an exercise in moral volition)
- Preparations for harm (another exercise in moral imagination)
- Guilt Management
The ‘Enron’ Conscience
Conscience Sensitive Medical Education
Introduction to Clinical Medicine I
(ICM I)

ICM I and Children’s Bureau Retreat
A ‘Paired Learning’ Experience: ‘matching’
developing professionals of conscience
with young persons of conscience in adversity
Advantages to the Developing Professional

- Interactive experience illustrative of personal/social development in the early lifespan
- Introduction to making inquiries of a personal nature
- Promotion of non-judgmental inquiries into values, choices and moral emotional responses
- Promotion of self awareness
- A conceptual framework for professional conscience development
- Basic for ethical discourse
- Basic for life-long virtuous practice
CONSCIENCE
experienced
Communicated
to and by
Conscience
Mind

Body

Conscience

Soul (spirit)
Good

Right

Wrong

Bad

Moral & Ethical

Making Choices
Composite Conscience
Moralized Genogram

Triple Pass Genogram

Biological connections

- male
- female
- union
- issue
- deceased

Moral connections

Emotional connections

- strong bond +valence
- disconnection
- conflicted
Value Matrix

“Do engage in acts harmful to one's self.”

Abide | Ignore
---|---
Best Reasons
Base Motives
Repertory of Moral Emotional Responses

• To Maleficence
  – Recognition of harm
  – Owning harm done
    • Contributory dysvalue: unaccountable harms done within a health care system
  – Expression of remorse
  – Forgiveness
  – Reparation and Amends
Repertory of Moral Emotional Responses

• To Beneficence
  – Recognition of help received
    • Contributory value: cooperative beneficence
  – Expression of gratitude
Retrieval of Healing Values

- Traditional Bioethical Principlism
  - Non-maleficence
  - Beneficence
  - Autonomy
  - Justice

- Intrinsic Values in the Professional of Conscience
  - The Value of Moralized Attachment (Connectedness)
  - The Value of Moral Emotional Responsiveness (Equanimity)
Survival Strategy

• Heteronomous Coping Skills
  – When self-sufficiency isn’t sufficient and unconscious defenses aren’t conscionable
  – Cultivating Help-Seeking skills
    • Expansion upon traditional help seeking
Figure Four: Care Lapses Prevention Model
An Evanescent Spring