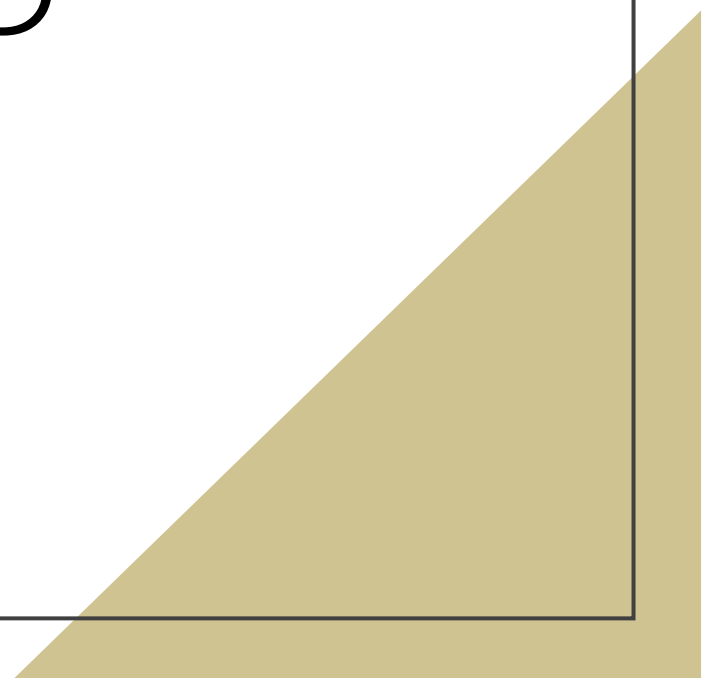# ETHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF PROFESSIONALISM AND WELLBEING

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Disclosures
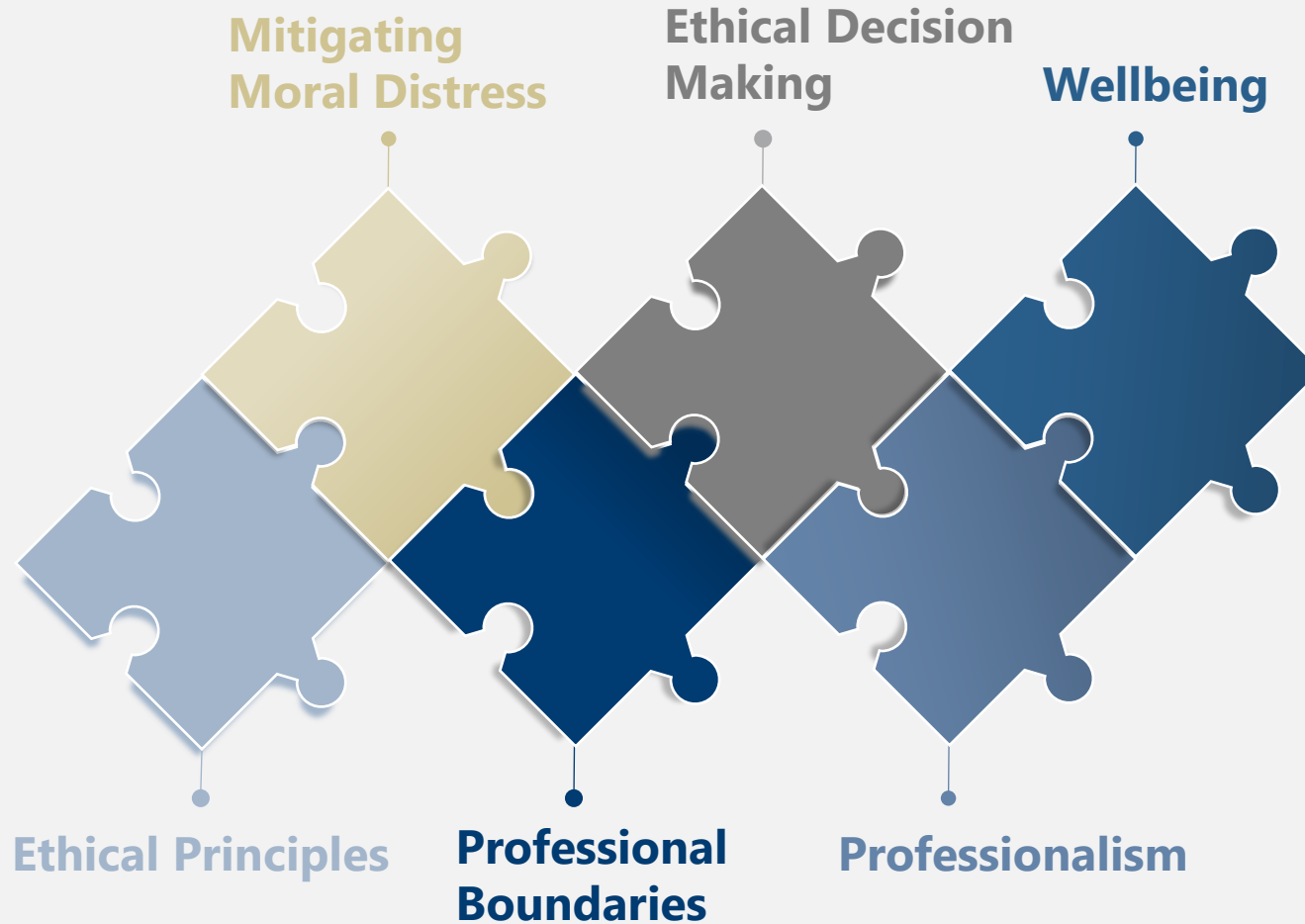
None

PRESENTATION BREAKDOWN

- Why are we here?
- Why do ethics, professionalism and wellbeing matter?
- How do ethical principles apply in the work I do?
- What are professional boundaries?
- How do I demonstrate professionalism?
- How can I achieve professional and personal wellbeing?
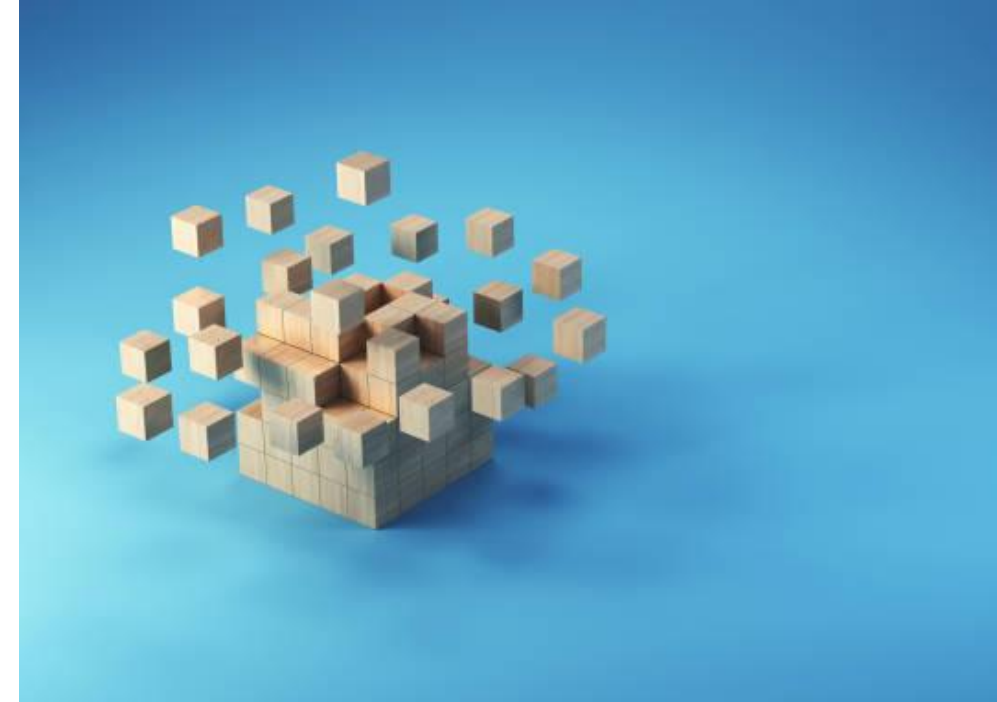
PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

Integrity
—
Choosing courage over comfort; choosing what is right over what is fun, fast, or easy; and choosing to practice our values rather than simply professing them.

Brené Brown

CHARACTERISTICS OF INTEGRITY

Doing the Right Thing, even when it's difficult, or when no one is watching

- Honesty
- Accountability
- Consistency
- Reliability
- Fairness

A PERSPECTIVE...

Ethics of care is a theory created to explain how individuals who are vulnerable should be helped to make decisions. They should also be protected against harm. This care should be performed based on compassion and human relationships.

Care ethics recognizes that human dependence on others is universal.

All people depend on and require care from others to flourish and meet their needs. This is perhaps most obvious when people grow up, grow old, become sick, or experience a disability.

PROFESSIONALISM:
DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'VE GOT TILL IT'S GONE
(DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS TILL IT'S NOT)

Professionalism remains vague for many because it bridges two seemingly unconnected quantities – the evidence-based rational science we learn and the emotional, psychosocial beings we touch. It has gotten so naturally hardwired into our societal values that *it goes undetected when we practice it but shows blaringly well when we fall short of it* – and is labeled as unprofessional.

8

Mahajan, et al. (2016)

FACTORS IMPACTING WELLBEING

Studies have shown that almost 30% of Americans feel stressed from work-related issues, and over 40% are also stressed from personal problems.

Health, wellbeing and work have a dynamic cause-and-effect relationship. Health issues detract from work excellence, and stressful work deteriorate health.

Research shows that successful organizations create a climate of well-being not by providing perks or benefits, rather they create a culture where people feel acknowledged, supported and connected.

Barriers to professional wellbeing arise from a complex interplay of organizational, individual, and societal factors

https://carey.jhu.edu/wellbeing-at-work

https://www.workhuman.com/blog/types-of-wellbeing

HOW DOES ETHICS APPLY?

- Principles of Ethics
- NASW Code of Ethics
- Applying Ethical Standards to Care
- Moral Distress
- Ethical Decision-Making

PRINCIPLES OF CLINICAL ETHICS

- Dignity of Persons
- Respect for Diversity and Varying Perspectives
- Autonomy
- Beneficence
- Nonmaleficence
- Justice

"The principle that human beings bear inherent, intrinsic, and unconditional worth, in, and of themselves, and should be valued as such; that is, all persons should be treated with respect simply because they are persons" (ANA, 2015).

- A basic human need that is essential for promoting health and wellbeing.

- Deep respect

- Underlies all ethical principles

- Foundational for those with diminished capacity

DIGNITY OF PERSONS

RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY & VARYING PERSPECTIVES

- Different cultures approach healthcare and decision-making differently

- Sometimes people make decisions based on their own beliefs and perspectives that are different than we would make, or would want made for us

RESPECT FOR AUTONOMY

Individual's right & responsibility to make decisions that impact one's life in accordance with one's values

Essential to informed consent and shared decision making

Allows competent adult to refuse treatment

Duty to respect autonomous decisions of others

Western culture places great value in rights of the individual & freedom to choose

BENEFICENCE

Acting for the benefit of others

Going above & beyond obligation

Treating others as we would want to be treated (Golden Rule), or as *they* would want to be treated (Platinum Rule)

NONMALEFICENCE

Primum non nocere: "First do no harm" (Hippocratic Oath)

When harm is unavoidable, ensures the good achieved is greater than the harm inflicted

Preventing or reducing the risk of unintentional harm

In some instances, doing nothing may result in the least harm

JUSTICE

Acting according to right conduct, including fairness, nondiscrimination, integrity, consistency, and responsibility of resources.

Treating all patients equally, regardless of their background, and providing a uniform standard of quality.

Advocating for patients who may need extra assistance.

Recognizes that healthcare resources are limited, and decisions how to allocate them must be made in a fair and equitable manner.

Best argued in the public square, not at the individual bedside (ie policies, eligibility, laws).

NASW CODE OF ETHICS - CORE VALUES

Service

Social workers draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address social problems

Social Justice

Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

Dignity and Worth of the Person

Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity

Importance of Human Relationships

Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process. They seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

Integrity

Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

Competence

Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise. They continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice.

https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English

APPLYING ETHICAL STANDARDS TO CLIENT CARE

Autonomy

- **Self-determination**: respect and promote the right of clients to self determination and assist clients in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals.

- **Advocacy**: with other members of the interdisciplinary team and within the organization to promote clients' and families' decision making and quality of life

- **Informed Consent**: A fundamental principle of healthcare. "The document a patient signs to verify that s/he has engaged in a dialogue with a health care practitioner about a proposed medical treatment is commonly referred to as an 'informed consent'.
  - ❑ *However, it is the dialogue itself that constitutes the actual informed consent process".*

Nonmaleficence

- **Competence**: Knowledge and skills align with essential practice and core values in the care of persons with disabilities: the individual needs of the client, respect for the client's choices, and the elimination of medical and institutional bias.

APPLYING ETHICAL STANDARDS TO CLIENT CARE

Beneficence

- **Screening and Assessment:** The foundation of client care planning is the comprehensive assessment, which requires engaging clients in identifying their needs and strengths and supporting clients in establishing priorities and goals.

Justice

- **Social Justice:** Care providers must promote and advocate for social, economic, political, and cultural values and institutions that are compatible with the realization of social justice. The ecological perspective recognizes that systematic injustice and oppression underlies many challenges faced by clients.

- **Health Equity:** People living in poverty and communities of color continue to experience disproportionately higher rates of acute and chronic illness, due to unequal access to health care services, lack of health insurance coverage, poverty, discrimination, and other social determinants of health. Reducing health disparities can only be accomplished by addressing the biopsychosocial–spiritual needs of individuals and families, as well as the systemic issues that contribute to poor health outcomes;

APPLYING ETHICAL STANDARDS TO CLIENT CARE

Dignity of Persons

- **Cultural competency:** and affirmation of the dignity and worth of all people: treating each person in a caring and respectful fashion. Maintain an understanding of the history, traditions, rituals, values, family systems, and communication patterns of major client groups served, as well as an understanding of the influence of culture on help-seeking behaviors and perceptions of health, illness, health care treatments, and the intersectionality of culture and disability.

Respect for Diversity & Varying Perspectives

- **Person –in-Envrionment:** understand that each individual experiences a mutually influential relationship with her or his physical and social environment and cannot be understood outside that context. This underlies the impact of SDoH. They bring this perspective and experience to their interactions with the healthcare team and health systems.

- **Interdisciplinary and Interorganizational Collabortion:** The client is the center of the health care team. Teamwork and good communication among health care practitioners result in better patient outcomes. The care provider plays an integral role in fostering, maintaining and strengthening collaborative partnerships, facilitating communication to ensure all voices are heard, and all perspectives are respected.

NAVIGATING MORAL DISTRESS

WHEN YOU KNOW THE RIGHT COURSE OF ACTION, BUT YOU CAN'T TAKE IT

MORAL DISTRESS OCCURS WHEN:

- A *healthcare* provider is confronted with *competing and conflicting expectations* when making decisions.

- When *ethics and values are compromised*.

- When there is a *lack of meaningful ethical discussion* that includes the perspectives of all stakeholders.

- When *satisfying one expectation, you fail the expectations of others.*

- When the *moral conflict is not, or is inadequately addressed* by the treatment team.

Adapted from: Kenneth E. Christianson, PhD, "Moral Distress and Professional Ethics" presentation.

CONSEQUENCES OF MORAL DISTRESS

How it Feels

ANGER	FRUSTRATION
GUILT	DEPRESSION and ANXIETY
TRAPPED (unable to make a decision without negative consequences)	FUTILITY and HOPELESSNESS
DEPLETION and POWERLESSNESS	LOSS of INTEGRITY

CONSEQUENCES OF MORAL DISTRESS

What it Leads to

STAFF BURNOUT and ATTRITION

DETERIORATION of MORALE and TEAMWORK

INCREASED LEVELS of CONFLICT AMONG STAFF

DECREASED PRODUCTIVITY

DIMINISHED PHYSICAL and EMOTIONAL ENERGY (to fully address clients' needs)

DECREASE in QUALITY of CARE

CHALLENGES RELATED to CLIENT SAFETY

WHAT TO DO…

MITIGATING MORAL DISTRESS

Develop and exhibit	Develop and exhibit "moral courage" to speak up and do the right thing. ▪ If your work setting doesn't support that, find ways to help change the culture so that it does
Learn and practice	Learn and practice good communication ▪ With colleagues and clients/families
Articulate	Articulate a sense of concern (in a way that's not accusing) ▪ When something doesn't seem right
Work	Work to create an environment in which people support one another ▪ Create a "moral community" not just a group of people who occupy roles (a systemic culture)
Understand	Understand that it will happen (nature of care environment) so have a plan for how to deal with it quickly, and in a healthy way.

Elements of Professionalism in the Workplace

PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF PROFESSIONALISM

- Some attributes and behaviors of professionalism are accountability, altruism, commitment to excellence, compassion, organization, integrity, respect, responsiveness, sensitivity to diversity, and sound ethics.

- Professional behaviors and attitudes that demonstrate a high level of competence, integrity and respect

- Professionalism helps to:
  - Build good relationships
  - Avoid misunderstandings and communicate effectively
  - Focus on work
  - Make decisions that benefit employers and clients
  - Maintain professional boundaries

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES ARE...

- Guidelines for Professional Behavior

- Client-centered

- The responsibility of the professional
  - We can make choices our clients cannot
  - Our clients are dealing with difficult issues

- Impacted by our positions of authority

- Require recognition and respect for what your purpose is for being in the care setting.

Meyer, M., 2011

WHAT ARE PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES?

A boundary is like the fence between your house and your neighbor's house. It helps each of you to see where the property line (boundary) is.

- To make sure you are maintaining proper boundaries with clients, you need to learn about your roles and responsibilities on your side of the fence, and your clients' roles and responsibilities on their side.

THE DOS AND DON'TS OF BOUNDARIES

DO:

- Treat clients with dignity and respect

- Politely decline any offer of gifts, goods or services

- Make general, pleasant conversation with your clients/families

- Keep relationships with your clients at a professional level

- Keep client information confidential

- Protect your privacy on social media
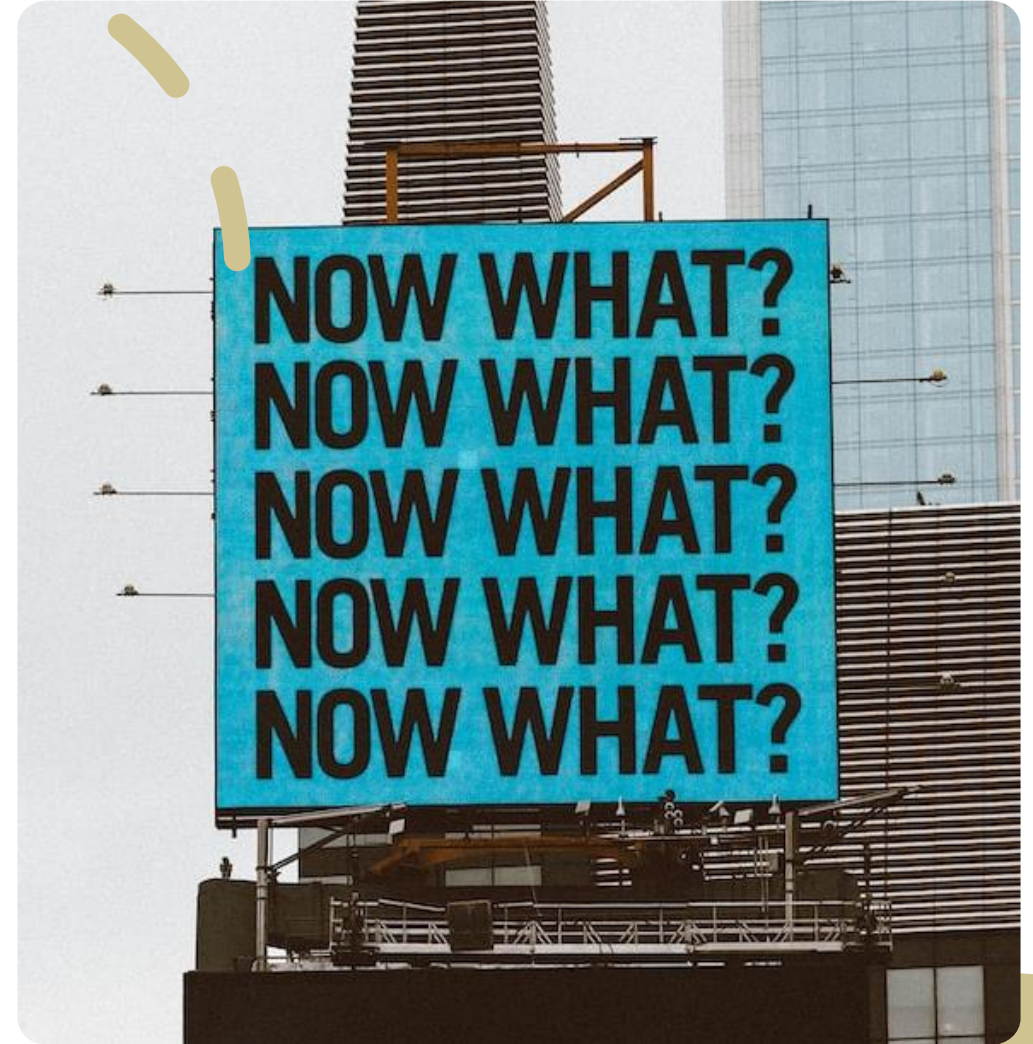
THE DOS AND DON'TS OF BOUNDARIES

DON'T:

- Participate in dual relationships with clients and families

- Provide goods or services (clothing, toys, transportation, gifts or money)

- Disclose personal information

- Discuss other clients or other staff members with your clients

- Promote your personal beliefs with your clients (i.e. politics, religion)

- Date, flirt or engage in sexual innuendo or activity with clients/family members

32

WHAT DO I DO?

If you sense that boundaries are becoming blurred in any client care situation:
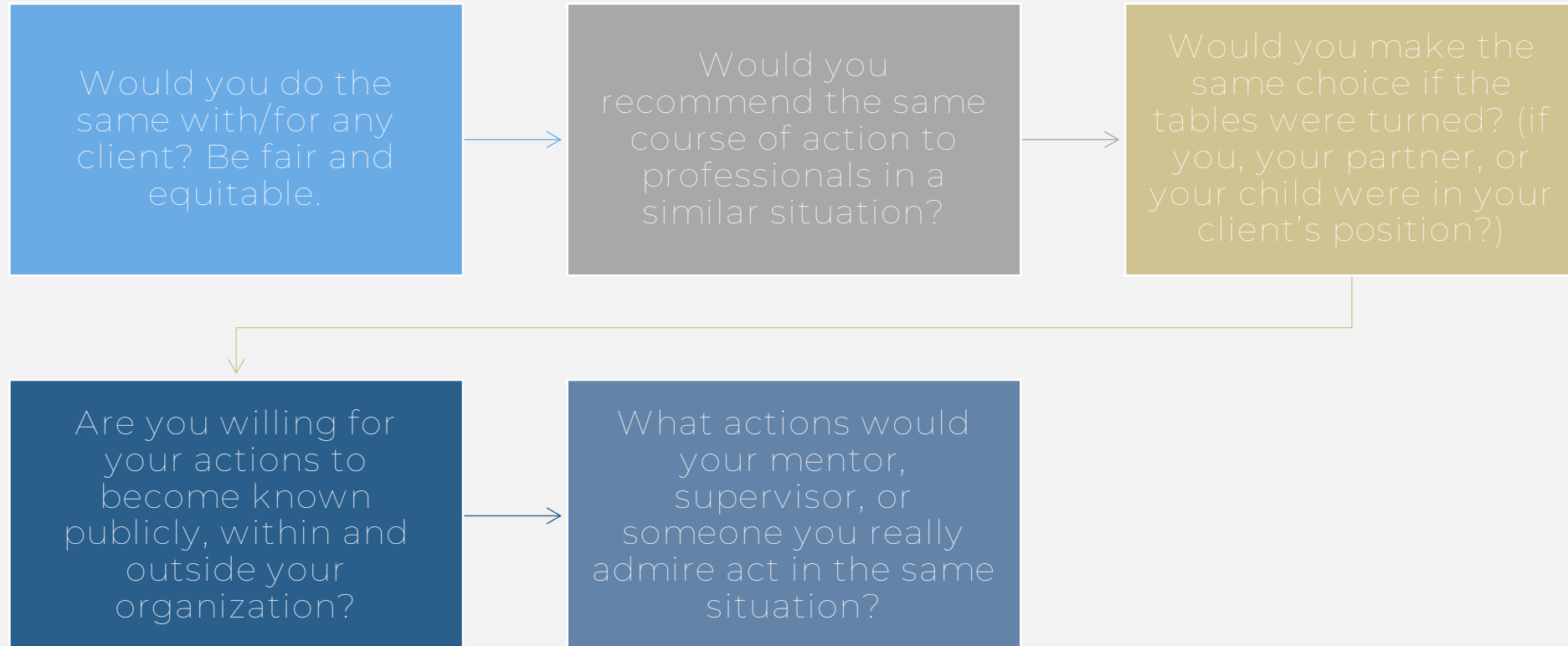
- Seek guidance from your supervisor

- As yourself, "Will this intervention be of overall benefit to the client, or does it satisfy some need in myself?"

- If you find yourself distancing yourself or showing disinterest in an assigned client because of perceived or threatening boundary issues, seek out support!

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER FOR ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING

TEST YOUR DECISIONS...

Would you do the same with/for any client? Be fair and equitable.

Would you recommend the same course of action to professionals in a similar situation?

Would you make the same choice if the tables were turned? (if you, your partner, or your child were in your client's position?)

Are you willing for your actions to become known publicly, within and outside your organization?

What actions would your mentor, supervisor, or someone you really admire act in the same situation?

ETHICAL ASPECTS OF WELLBEING

ETHICAL ASPECTS THAT IMPACT WELLBEING

- Ethical Leadership: fostering a supportive, fair and inclusive work environment

- Stigma Reduction: addressing the stigma surrounding mental health is crucial for promoting wellbeing and ensuring that people have access to the care and support they need.

- Data Security, Privacy and Confidentiality: Workplaces and individuals need to take steps to ensure data security, privacy, and safety of personal information in pursuits of wellbeing. Leaders must ensure that individuals feel safe sharing information related to their wellbeing, and seeking support if needed.

- Justice and Equity: Wellbeing initiatives should be designed and implemented to promote fairness and equity, ensuring all individuals have access to opportunities and resources to support wellbeing.

When employees feel understood, supported and empowered to prioritize their wellbeing, it fosters and environment where ethical decision-making flourishes.

BARRIERS TO WELLBEING

- Heavy Workloads and Stress

- Organizational Culture

- Lack of Resources and Support

- Lack of Self-Care

- Poor Work-Life Balance Strategies

- Social and Cultural Barriers

Barriers to professional well-being arise from a complex interplay of organizational, individual, and societal factors

6 STEPS TO IMPROVE WELLBEING

There are some easy steps you can take in order to improve how you feel, personally and professionally, each day:

- Use the Buddy System

- Connect

- Be Active

- Keep Learning

- Give to Others

- Take Notice

USE THE BUDDY SYSTEM

- Identify someone in your workplace or a professional peer that you can check in with

- Make a plan to check in regularly

- Commit to being open and honest with yourself, and your buddy about how you're doing:
  - Highs and lows
  - On a scale of poo to flowers…
  - Provide supportive feedback to each other

CONNECT

- Being around other people can help to boost our mood and helps us feel connected to the wider world.

- Putting aside time to develop relationships can improve how you feel:
    - Pick up the phone instead of sending an email
    - Make a point to speak to someone new
    - Catch up with a friend (ideally, face-to-face)
    - Join a club or social activity
    - Volunteer in the community

- Other ways to connect:
    - Connect with yourself with a quiet moment alone
    - Connect with nature, animals or pets
    - Connect in a religious or spiritual sense

BE ACTIVE

- Evidence shows that improvements in physical health can help improve mental health.

- Try to find an activity you enjoy that gets you moving:
  - Take the stairs instead of the elevator
  - Join a walking group (also helps with "connection")
  - Set an activity goal: so many steps a day, training for a 5K, going to the gym a few times a week
  - If you have mobility challenges, utilize adaptive exercise options
    - AdaptiveFit, TruFit, Accessercise, Bloom Fitness
  - Commit to starting each day with movement
    - Stretching, Yoga, walking, Tai Chi

KEEP LEARNING

- Learning new skills can boost confidence and give you a sense of achievement.
- It can be formal or informal
- Find a learning opportunity that interests you:
  - Sign up for a course you've been meaning to do for your professional growth and development
  - Take on a new responsibility at work such as a learning a new software or process
  - Go to EdX.org and choose an online class (for free) that you wouldn't take otherwise.
  - Learn a new hobby or skill – photography, gardening, knitting, cooking.
    - YouTube has instructional video series on almost anything
  - Pick up a musical instrument

GIVE TO OTHERS

- Carrying out acts of kindness can improve your self-esteem and your emotional health

- It can stimulate the reward areas of the brain (creating positive feelings) and give a sense of purpose and feelings of self-worth.

- Giving can take many forms:
  - Volunteer in your local community (school, shelter, food pantry)
  - Sign up to be a mentor
  - Join a service organization
  - Send a thank you note to someone for something they've done
  - Offer to help a stranger who's struggling with something (carry bags, open a door, give directions)
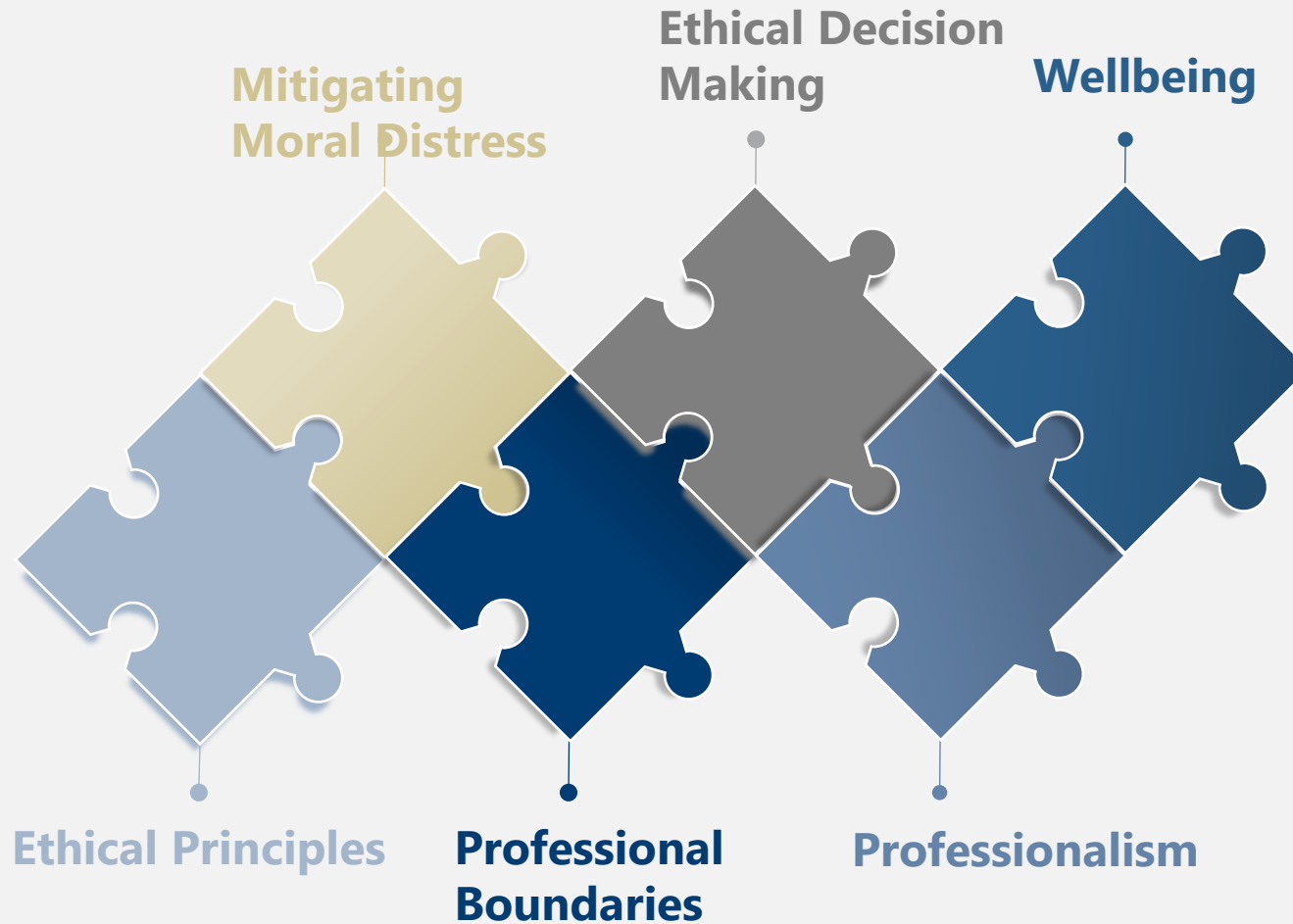 - Bring dinner to a friend or loved one who is ill

TAKE NOTICE

- Take time to appreciate the world around you.

- Being aware of the present moment and your own feelings and thoughts *(mindfulness)* can impact how you feel about and approach life.

- Opportunities for Mindfulness:
  - Take photos of the world around you, focusing on what's right in front of you
  - Take a different route on your way to/from work
  - Have a 'clear the clutter' day
  - Take five minutes out of your day to sit quietly and reflect
  - Each day, take time to focus on your breath and survey your five sense
  - Listen to a new piece of music and note how it makes you feel
  - Get a plant for your home or workspace

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

Working as a Human Services Provider

Mitigating Moral Distress

Ethical Decision Making

Wellbeing

Ethical Principles

Professional Boundaries

Professionalism

Goal: Professional and Personal INTEGRITY

"Peace is your home. Integrity is the way to it, and everything you long for will meet you there."

- Martha Beck

"The time is always right to do what is right."

–Martin Luther King Jr.

PARTING WORDS...

RESOURCES

- NASW Code of Ethics 2017 – *socialworkers.org*

- NASW Standards for Social Work Practice in Health Care Settings. *socialworkers.org/NASWHealthcareStandards.pdf* (2016)

- Seek Ethics Education
  - Hastings Center Bioethics Briefings - https://www.thehastingscenter.org/publications-resources/hastings-center-bioethics-briefings/
  - AMA Journal of Ethics Articles - https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/articles
  - Center for Practical Bioethics - https://www.practicalbioethics.org/resources/

- The Moral Distress Education Project - http://moraldistressproject.med.uky.edu/

- "Coping with Moral Distress" ebook - https://csupalliativecare.org/moral-distress-ebook/

QUESTIONS?

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