

Best Practices for Success

Assistive Technology and Ethics

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Learning Objectives

- Participants will identify three key components for the best practices of assistive technology assessments.
- Participants will work through at least three real-life examples and apply the CRC Code of Ethics to brainstorm solutions.
- Participants will identify three key components for the best practices of assistive technology assessment and vendor sales.



\ 'e-thik \

- the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation
- the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group
- a guiding philosophy

(Merriam Webster)



Defining Ethics

- Ethics are ‘**moral frameworks**’ developed through rational processes
- Ethical standards focus on **behavior** and **motivations** that aim at the highest **ideals** of human behavior

(Merriam Webster)

Legal vs Ethical

Legal standards are primarily developed through political processes

Norms of etiquette are primarily developed by historical precedent



"It doesn't *matter* that you never got caught!"

(Haas & Malouf, 1995)

Ethical Principles

- **Autonomy**
- **Beneficence**
 - **Fidelity**
 - **Justice**
- **Nonmaleficence**
Veracity
- **Do No Harm**
 - **Faithful**
 - **Respect**
 - **Fair**
 - **Truth**
 - **Do Good**



Basic Assumptions

- The majority of counselors & therapists are conscientious, dedicated, caring, & committed to ethical behavior
- Its easier to question the ethics of others rather than ourselves
- It can be easy to question ourselves in areas where we are uncertain
- Counselors & therapists repeatedly encounter ethical dilemmas for which a clear ethical response is elusive

Ethical Codes

“a set of standards and principles that organizations create to provide guidelines for their members to follow in working with the public & each other”

“a system of **principles** governing morality and acceptable conduct”

(Gladding, 1999)

CRC Code

- The Counseling Relationship
- Confidentiality, Privileged Communication, and Privacy
- Advocacy and Accessibility
- **Professional Responsibility**
- **Relationships with Other Professionals**
- **Forensic and Indirect Services**
- Evaluation, Assessment, and Interpretation
- Teaching, Supervision, and Training
- Research and Publication
- Technology and Distance Counseling
- Business Practices
- Resolving Ethical Issues

http://www.crccertification.com/pages/crc_ccrc_code_of_ethics/10.php

RESNA Standards

- Welfare of those served
- **Scope of competence**
- Appropriate range of assistive technology
- Direct assessment and evaluation of needs
- Professional Development

<http://resna.org/dotAsset/11598.pdf>

Counseling

Professional Membership Organizations

- American Psychological Association (APA)
- American Counseling Association (ACA)

Professional Credentialing Bodies

- National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC)-
NCC certification
- Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor
Certification (CRCC)-CRC certification

Best Practices - Wisconsin

- <http://www.wisconsinwistech.com/about/best-practices/>

Key Components of an ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT

Assistive Technology (AT) assessments may be obtained from rehabilitation providers who are employed in settings such as medical facilities, universities, schools, non-profit agencies or in a private practice. While certification is not required, it can be beneficial. The most common certification is the Assistive Technology Professional (ATP) (www.resna.org). Assessments provided by medical equipment dealers, manufacturer representatives, and private sales agents should adhere to the *Vendors of Assistive Technology Expectations for Best Practices*.

Providers of assistive technology assessments are expected to meet the criteria outlined in this document.

An assessment is generally requested by a consumer and/or the payer of the service (e.g. DVR, school district, long term care organization, etc.) to provide comprehensive information about the assistive technology options available to the consumer.

There are many reasons to make a referral for an assistive technology assessment. These reasons might include:

- Determining appropriate workplace or school accommodations
- Determining appropriate assistive technology to facilitate independent living

Before the Assessment is Requested – Payor’s Responsibilities

The referral source should supply the following information to the assessment provider:

- What are the consumer’s goals?
- Why are you referring this person?
- What is the functional outcome desired?
- What is the consumer’s disability or disabilities?
- What is the impact of the disability or disabilities on functional skills?
- What are the relevant environmental concerns?
- Have appropriate releases of information been signed and has any relevant documentation been included with the referral?



VENDORS OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY Expectations for Best Practices

Assistive technology devices may be obtained or purchased from medical equipment dealers, manufacturer representatives, private sales agents or non-profit agencies. Assistive technology devices:

- May have been recommended through a professional assessment
- May be consumer selected as a result of an equipment demonstration/loan
- May have been selected from product literature or a website

Providers of assistive technology products and services are expected to meet the criteria outlined in this document.

Qualifications of Vendors

Vendors must have sound knowledge of anatomy, physiology, disabling conditions and disease processes relevant to the technical aspects of the equipment they provide. In order to gain and maintain this knowledge, vendors will regularly engage in self-guided study and/or attend courses, seminars, trade shows, and other continuing education activities.

Sound knowledge can be defined as having the educational background, professional or personal experience or a combination thereof to provide comprehensive information and services to the consumer. This may be in the form of formal education, professional certification or in-depth training by a product manufacturer.

General Responsibilities of Assistive Technology Vendors

- Gather comprehensive background information about the individual’s disability, functional limits and needs, as well as the individual’s goals related to assistive technology.
- Explain the range of options that could meet the needs of the consumer, including free technology, no-tech to high tech options, commercially available technology or custom-fabricated technology.
- Be transparent: scope of products, services and manufacturer relationships.
- Remain objective when providing comparisons of the technology options.
- Use appropriate tools and measurements to assure proper fit and function of the equipment.
- Provide delivery, fitting and adjustment of equipment.
- Provide complete instruction of proper use.
- Provide maintenance and repair information, including who can provide these services and who pays for these services.
- Provide information about when the consumer may be eligible for an equipment update from a funding source, where applicable.



Code Limits

Some issues cannot be handled in the
context of a code

How is the code enforced?
Peer Review? Credentialing body?

Consumer representation in the appeal or
grievance process

Code Limits

Ethical code versus legal system

Two or more codes?

Code vs. Personal Value?

Code versus Employer?

Limited range of topics covered in the code

The world constantly changes

What Can Go Wrong?

- Limited Referral Information
- Referral too late in the process
 - Wrong equipment
 - Little or no training
 - Unsafe technology
 - Poor use of funding
 - Unscrupulous vendors
- Consumers without all the facts
- Is it an assessment or is it a sale?
- Working outside of competency area

Assessments...

Referral Example

Referring Sue for rehab tech assmt. She's hard of hearing. She has a lot of anxiety about leaving the house for work, meetings, etc. due to this. Is not all that comfortable asking others to repeat themselves and tends to nod when she's not really hearing what the person is saying. She only wears one hearing aid (I think) because she said she feels off balance when she wears two. She is starting training program in Jan. for Health Info. Tech. and is very nervous about it. Referring her to determine what assistive devices and accommodations you recommend for school and work. Hopes to obtain employment in medical records (billing, coding, etc.). Was wondering about Real Time Captioning while in classroom? She has good typing/computer skills. PO is for 6 hrs. Where is best place to meet? She lives close to Tech. She does not have transp. But can use special transit if needed.

Referral Too Late in the Process



Wrong Equipment



**Afte rread
ingth is,y
ou'l lknow
whati tfee
Isliketo be
illi tera te.**

Little or No Training

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nPGY2T9r1Ok>

Unscrupulous Vendors

- A vendor was asked to provide a wheelchair for a nursing home resident. In order to “eliminate the trip charge” for the assessment he measured the man’s twin brother rather than the user himself



AT Ethics and Decisions

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BatqV3B9hiU&feature=player_detailpage

Decisions...

- May be uncomfortable / may not feel good to make the right decision
- Frequently involves choosing between two unappealing options
- Requires counselors to think of how the profession is trusted and perceived by the public
- Means that counselors may have to deal with uncertainty and that there might not be a “right” answer

Thinking about a Decision

Descriptive: reports the “facts” “doesn’ t get us too far in resolving ethical dilemmas

Normative: concerned with questions of good/bad, right and wrong; allows us to make moral judgments

Prescriptive: We make assertions based on consideration of morality; concerned with what OUGHT to be the case; such assertions must not be random, it must involve a system of rules and values; prescriptive statements are generalizable

Decisions...

- Corey Model
- Feminist Model
- Good Reason Approach
- Hybrid – what most use
- RAD Process



Good Reason Approach

- Known as the Golden Rule
- What would you want someone to do to you, or your spouse, sibling, parent, etc?
- Which choice would be the least harmful?
- Other questions to ask:
- Would I want what I was doing published in the newspaper?
- Would I like my family to know?
- Will it make me proud?
- Is it legal?
- What effect will it have on the behavior of others?
- How will I feel?

iPad Purchase by MCO

- Consumer with minimal language skills
- MCO did an AT Assessment and provided an iPad with Proloquo2Go, task apps, etc.
- Consumer primarily used the iPad for games
- Doubtful how much time the group home manager put into the training or use
- Guardian plans to take the device away since it is not being used for communication

Hearing Aids

- As an Assistive Technologist you have recommended hearing aids as part of the final needs to DVR
- DVR has denied the hearing aids since they purchased a set 10 years ago for the same person
- Next steps?

Sensitive Information

- You find some very sensitive information on the office printer – personal in nature about a co-worker. Everyone has gone home for the day.
- What questions do you ask yourself and what are your choices?

Scope of Work

- An employee of a non-profit organization that deals with assistive technology has been asked to complete an AT Assessment for a consumer with a disability – a very technical, complex situation.
- Rather than turn down the referral (fee based) the employee moves ahead and does the assessment. Provides recommendations of only the AT they are comfortable with.
- What would have been other options?

Caregiver / Consumer Conflict

- Consumer is on the Autism spectrum, has a profound hearing loss and splits his time between his two parent's homes. He is 23.
- One parent sees no need for assistive technology such as a communication app or alerting devices
- The other parent wants to explore all options.
- How will you go about listing out your recommendations?

Speech Generation

- You are working with a consumer setting up his speech generating device (SGD) for augmentative communication. He requests that you program in a number of phrases that you find morally repugnant or extremely offensive.
- What should you do?

Employment

- Employer requests an AT Assessment (RN)
- It's clear during initial meeting – employer is looking to let the employee go
- Solutions exist and will be successful
- Employee asks if they should continue to fight for their job.
- What would you do/say?

Home Environment

- You are asked to provide AT services in a less than desire-able home environ.
- How will this affect the services you provide?
- What ethical principles address this?

VR Case

- The state voc rehab agency requests an assessment and recommendations for a consumer with a spinal cord injury for home based employment. The consumer needs a switch mounted to toggle between a computer and telephone headset for work.
- However, what he really wants is the ability to run his multimedia system independently. This will require a more complicated design.

Should you do it?

Smartphone

- An AT Assessment for a consumer who is Deaf and uses video relay interpreting
- Would benefit from a Smartphone
- He disclosed that since it's summer he is not really looking for work right now.
- DVR is funding the assessment and possibly the Smartphone.
- Considerations?

Questions?

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