

# **Caution Signs for the Intersection of AT and Ethics**

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# Learning Objectives

1. Participants will be able to list three ethical best practices for assistive technology assessments.
2. Participants will be able to list three ethical best practices for assistive technology for vendors and trainers.
3. Participants will apply AT service provision criteria and how they are covered by the CRC Code of Ethics



# Why Worry About Ethics?



# \ '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

# Ethics Further Defined

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

# Legal vs. Ethical

- Legal standards are primarily developed through political processes
- Norms of etiquette are primarily developed by historical precedent

(Haas & Malouf, 1995)

# Basic Assumptions

- The majority of counselors and therapists are conscientious, dedicated, caring, and 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 and therapists repeatedly encounter ethical dilemmas for which a clear ethical response is elusive

(Pope & Vasquez, 2007)

# 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 of Ethics

- 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

[\(CRC Code of Ethics\)](#)

# RESNA Standards

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

[RESNA Standards and Ethics](#)

# 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

# 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
- Ethical code versus legal system
- Two or more codes?
- Code vs. Personal Value?
- Code versus Employer?

# Best Practices - Wisconsin

## 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](http://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.

# 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

# Referral Done Wrong

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Referral for Heidi for rehab tech assessment. She doesn't hear well.  
Address 111 Main St. Smalltown, WI.  
Authorizing 6 hours.

# Referral Done Right

Referral for Heidi for rehab tech assessment. She's hard of hearing. She has a lot of anxiety about leaving the house for work, meetings, etc. due to this. She's 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 says she feels off balance when she wears two. She is starting a training program in Jan. for Health Info. Tech. and is very nervous about it. The referral is to determine what assistive devices and accommodations you recommend for school and work. Sue hopes to obtain employment in medical records (billing, coding, etc.). She's wondering about Real Time Captioning while in the classroom? She has good typing/computer skills. The PO is for 6 hrs. Where is the best place to meet? She lives close to Tech but does not have transportation. She 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



How is it going with the new iPad  
that we bought you for your birthday?



# Unsafe Technology and Poor Use of Funding



# 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



# Consumer Rights and Protection



# AT Ethics and Decisions



# Decisions

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



# Models

- Corey Model
- Feminist Model
- Good Reason Approach
- Hybrid – what most use
- [Chart of Models](#)



# Corey Model

- Identify the problem or dilemma
- Identify the potential issues involved
- Identify the ethical principles and prioritize
- Review relevant ethical guidelines (policies, codes, and laws)
- Obtain Consultation
- Consider possible courses of action
- Consequences of the possible actions
- Decide and document reasons behind the decision

# Feminist Model

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- Recognize that there is a problem
- Define the problem
- Develop solutions
- Choose a solution
- Review the process
- Implement and evaluate
- Continue to reflect

# General Aspects of Models

- Recognizing there is a problem
- Collaborating with the client to define the problem
- Developing solutions with the client
- Choosing a solution
- Reviewing the process with the client and re-choose
- Implementing and evaluating with the client
- Continue to reflect

# **RAD Process for Service Provision (WI)**

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- What is the need, goal, problem?
- Does it relate to consumer's assessment, service plan, or desired outcomes?
- How could the need be met?
- What policy guidelines apply?
- What is the preferred option (consumer)?
- What is most cost effective and efficient?
- Explain, dialogue, negotiate

# Good Reason Approach

- Known as the Golden Rule
- What would you want someone to do to you, your spouse, sibling, parent, etc.?
- Which choice would be the least harmful?
- 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 took the device away since it was not being used for communication

# Hearing Aids

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



# Sensitive Information

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- 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

- While setting up an at-home workstation for arthritis I learn that the consumer also has a vision loss.
- I don't have much experience with vision loss but decide to "wing it."
- What ethical principles apply and what would/should your next steps be?

# Caregiver / Consumer Conflict

- Consumer is on the Autism spectrum, has a profound hearing loss and splits his time between his two parents' homes. Age 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? Services are being paid by VR.

# 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 that the employer is looking to let the employee go
- Solutions exist and will be successful
- Employee asks if he/she should continue to fight for the job.
- What would you do/say?

# Home Environment

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- You are asked to provide AT services in a less-than-desirable home environment
- How will this impact the services you provide?

# VR Case

- The state VR 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?



# Equipment Sales

- You are conducting an AT Assessment for a specific type of AT.
- One vendor has the equipment you are recommending AND provides your agency with “credits” for sales that you generate.
- Do you tell the consumer?
- Does it influence your recommendations?

# Questions?



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