

Society of Indian Psychologist

The APA Ethics Code Through an Indigenous Lens:

**Introduction to the SIP Commentary on
the American Psychological Association's
(APA) Ethical Principles of Psychologists
and Code of Conduct**

Carolyn Morris, Ph.D.

Kee Straits, Ph.D.

Violette Cloud

The SIP Commentary Dissemination Committee

June 2017

Agenda

- Why Should You Care?
- History- “In the Know”
- SIP Commentary Overview
- Areas of Growth for APA Ethics Code
- Indigenous Shared Values
- 3 Activities and Reflection on the SIP Commentary
- Barriers & Resolutions to Use
- Benefits of SIP Commentary
- Next Steps: How Will You Radiate?

Why Should You Care?

- Increasing clinician cultural competence will:
 - increase treatment effectiveness
 - Reduce disparities in mental health care
- Increasing awareness and ability to navigate ethical dilemmas will:
 - Reduce clinician and clinic risk
 - Increase client participation and adherence to treatment

Why Should You Care?

- Increase cultural responsive knowledge, skills and abilities with Native and other diverse populations
- Frequently encountered ethical dilemmas for psychologists
 - Confidentiality
 - Relationships
 - Payment sources
 - Academic settings/training/teaching

History – “In the Know”

- ❖ Society of Indian Psychologist Conference members have had annual conference discussions about “American Psychological Association (APA) Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (2010).
- ❖ The discussions focused on APA Ethical Principles and its implicit values reflecting a lack of understanding of cultural responsiveness.
- ❖ Psychologist practicing in Tribal communities were facing challenges and ethical dilemmas.
- ❖ Native American psychology trainees faced similar challenges and ethics dilemmas.

History – “In the Know”

- These ethical concerns resulted in an invitation to APA representatives to attend SIP’s annual conference in 2011.
- This marked the beginning of a collaboration and partnership between representatives of SIP, APA Ethics Committee and Ethics Office as a result of discussions and findings on ethical dilemmas.

History - "In the Know"

- At the 2013 SIP Conference, a session was sponsored to provide an opportunity to document ethical dilemmas with APA Ethics code.
- The attendees were given time to write about experiences.
- Society of Indian Psychologist (SIP) gathered stories from attendees for a period of 2-years.

History - “In the Know”

- The Society of Indian Psychologist’s Commentary on the American Psychological Association’s (APA) Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (2014) [*SIP Commentary*] was developed.

SIP Commentary Overview

- It is interesting!!
- Unique story-based format
- 98-page document
- Documents the need for Indigenous values in ethics

SIP Commentary Overview

- Represents 120 different tribes
- Contains:
 - Introduction
 - Values Statement
 - Point-by-Point commentary on APA Ethics Principles and Standards
 - References

APA Ethics Code: Areas for Growth

- Clearly state the underlying values
- Demonstrate how differing cultural perspectives can lead to ethical dilemmas
- Integrate a concept of “community” and how to effectively navigate ethical dilemmas

What are Indigenous Shared Values?

- Emphasis on Shared Values that are common to Indigenous people of the Americas and Hawaii.
- Values reflect a holistic and inter-relational view of health
- Healing is transpersonal.
- Healing extends beyond the physical person to the environment and society

Activities and Reflection on the SIP Commentary

- Activity 1: Explicit and Implicit Values Underpinning Ethics
- Activity 2: Academic Scenario, 3.04 Avoiding Harm
- Activity 3: Clinical Scenario, Standard 10 Therapy

SIP Commentary

Statement of Values

(Thomas & Morse, 2017, p. 2)

- 1. All things are sacred and have spirit.
- 2. Life and development occur in cycles.
- 3. Everything is connected (people, land, and past, present, and future events).
- 4. Life events are lessons.
- 5. Respect and honoring are essential to relationship.
- 6. Social, historical, and political contexts shape the lives, experiences, and perceptions of Indigenous people and are essential considerations in healing.

SIP Commentary

Statement of Values

(Thomas & Morse, 2017, p. 2)

- 7. Balance and harmony strengthen resiliency.
- 8. Collaboration is more important than competition.
- 9. Sustainability is essential for survival. Individual actions must be considered in terms of
 - their impact on the seventh generation yet to come.
- 10. Mystery, awe, wonder, intuition, and miracles occur in everyday life.
- 11. One's identity and place evolve in the context of one's community through consideration of
 - past, present, and future.
- 12. Consideration of the whole is paramount.

Reflection Questions

- How are your values, assumptions, and beliefs reflected in or different from the 12 values described in the SIP Commentary?
- What are some of the values implicit in the APA Ethics Code?
- How does it help or hinder ethical decisions if the underlying values are implicit?

Academic Setting Example

- Standard 3.04(a): Avoiding Harm
- Psychologists take reasonable steps to avoid harming their clients/patients, students, supervisees, research participants, organizational clients and others with whom they work, and to minimize harm where it is foreseeable and unavoidable. (APA, 2016, p. 6)

Story: Avoiding harm

(Garcia & Tehee, 2014, p. 46)

- During my externship, I worked therapeutically with a young woman during the entire rotation. Among her many symptoms, this client used to cut herself. At the end of our time together, she gave me a gift for helping her through rough times. The gift I was given was a tool the client used to cut on herself. I attempted to process this with the clinical supervisor but was told, “Throw it away.” I wanted to process the meaning of a gift I thought was highly significant to the client, but could not as a result of the psychologist’s incompetence.

Reflection Questions

- Culture influences our definition of harm. How does the supervisee define harm? What is your definition of harm? How does the definition influence adherence to this standard?
- Who has greater power to define harm in this situation? What steps would you take to minimize harm if you were the supervisee? If you were the supervisor?

SIP Commentary on Standard 3.04

(Garcia & Tehee, 2014, p. 45)

- **This Standard is where it is important to note how value systems and biases can impact the definition of “harm.” Avoiding harm is related to cultural safety and how psychologists’ behavior communicates that safety to clients. Micro-aggressions destroy cultural safety. If a psychologist or supervisor does not recognize and accept their actions as harmful, they will not do anything to minimize the harm.**

Clinic Setting Example

(APA 2016, p.13)

- **10.01(a) Informed Consent to Therapy**
(a) When obtaining informed consent to therapy as required in Standard 3.10, Informed Consent, psychologists inform clients/patients as early as is feasible in the therapeutic relationship about the nature and anticipated course of therapy, fees, involvement of third parties and limits of confidentiality and provide sufficient opportunity for the client/patient to ask questions and receive answers.

Story: Therapy

(Garcia & Tehee, 2014, p. 90)

- I was asked by the uncle of a husband to do a family intervention for a couple who was experiencing trouble in their marriage. Twelve people representing three generations of this family were present for the intervention. It was clear to everyone that the reason that we were there was to support the couple. For that intervention, the couple gave the informed consent. It would have been considered disrespectful and a breach of trust on my part had I asked all the participants to sign papers for the intervention. This intervention was conducted in a way that was culturally appropriate for this family. It included prayer, ceremony, talking, silence, weeping, a break, and eventually, problem solving. It lasted six hours during a single day.***

Reflection Questions

- What are the salient ethical challenges and themes you observed?
- What might be some conflicts between the implied values of the APA Ethics Code Standard 10 and the explicit values of the SIP Commentary?

SIP Commentary on Standard 10.01

(Garcia & Tehee, 2014, p. 88)

- **Psychologists working in Native communities work in two worlds. They have to follow the rules from their licensing boards, state laws, insurance contracts, and funding agency mandates. Yet those rules may be alienating to Native clients and communities unless the psychologists can explain themselves in culturally appropriate ways.**

Benefits (Clinical Settings)

- Already serving Native communities and/or with Native clinicians on staff
 - Validate ethical challenges
 - Create a platform for discussion and local resolution within your clinic setting
 - Provide support for decisions that are inclusive of or derived from Native values when documenting your resolutions
- Serving Ethnically Diverse populations other than Native communities
 - Increases awareness of and sensitivity to ethical dilemmas coming from differing cultural frameworks
 - Provides a model for problem-solving and resolving APA professional ethics and community-based ethics

Benefits (Academic Settings)

- Expand student/trainee ethical thinking and problem-solving in working with diverse communities
- Enhance critical thought regarding underlying Western values of psychology as a profession and health impact on ethnic minority communities
- Increase student/trainee ability to be aware of and negotiate ethical dilemmas

Benefits (General)

- An opportunity for mental health programs to learn and broaden their views about the work “Native American Psychologist” to protect Native American people and communities.
- Psychologist working in Native American communities can *learn from the diverse individual and collective experiences and stories of Native Psychologist and graduate students.*

Benefits (General)

- *Encourage support to incorporate “SIP Commentary” in your programs to enhance understanding the importance of multicultural ethical issues.*
- *Increase learning of challenges impacting indigenous professionals, clients, supervisees, research participants, and communities.*

Benefits (General)

- *The information provides an opportunity for psychologists to reflect on the APA Ethics Code (2016) from a specific cultural lens*
- *Encourages awareness of challenges that psychologists may face in serving ethnic minority communities and seek consultation or help.*
- *Increase empathy to help others understand the important role of a community professional.*

Barriers to Active Use

- Access
- It's about Ethics
- How do I apply this?
- Lack of opportunities to use it
- Socialization/acceptability of use

Next Steps: How Will You Radiate?

- What is one significant idea you will you take away from this presentation?
- How do you plan to use the SIP Commentary in your work?
- With whom do you plan to share it?
- What is one reason it would be important for you to share or use?

References

- SIP Commentary on Ethics Code
- Instructor's Manual
- APA Ethics Code

Acknowledgements

- Society of Indian Psychologists:
<https://www.aiansip.org>
- SIP Commentary Dissemination Committee: Kee Straits (Chair), Alberta Arviso, Janet Thomas, Linda Forrest, Carolyn Morris, Amanda Blume, Violette Cloud, Carolyn Barcus, Melinda Garcia,
- Other SIP member support: Wendy Peters, Chris Morris, Art Blume, Gayle Morse, Syd Davies
- APA Public Interest Leadership Conference (PILC) Grant