

Ethics In Action: Courage, Advocacy, and Justice in a Multicultural World

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ASSIGNMENT: ETHICAL ANALYSIS

Read the clinical vignette below carefully. Using concepts and frameworks from this session — including the APA Ethical Principles (Beneficence, Nonmaleficence, Autonomy, Justice), the advocacy continuum, and considerations of positionality — respond to each of the five questions that follow. Be specific and reflective in your analysis.

CLINICAL VIGNETTE

Ms. Justice, a former aide to a prominent local figure, reports a history of sexually motivated harassment and assault by her former employer. She describes a pattern of behavior that included leering, inappropriate physical contact, and pressure to meet outside of work under personal pretenses. She also reports specific traumatic incidents, including being trapped in a closet and assaulted, and being implicitly threatened with professional retaliation if she did not comply with his advances.

Ms. Justice is seeking psychotherapy to address the trauma resulting from these experiences. She is now considering her options, which may include making a public statement, pressing criminal charges, or filing a civil lawsuit. She is seeking guidance on whether to proceed.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This situation raises several important considerations. Please respond to each question below.

1. How should the psychologist respond to her request for guidance?

2. What is the appropriate role of advocacy in this therapeutic relationship?

3. What ethical considerations (e.g., beneficence, nonmaleficence, patient autonomy) are involved?

4. How might the psychologist's personal history or biases influence their response?

5. If the psychologist encourages her to come forward and she subsequently experiences a professional or public backlash, could this damage the therapeutic alliance through patient blame?
