

Ethical Openness in Value-Diverse Clinical Work: Lessons From RO-DBT - Ethics & Advocacy Vignettes

Discussion Questions for Each Vignette

1. Whose values are in conflict?
2. What threat responses might emerge (therapist, client, system)?
3. What would value-inclusive practice look like?
4. When does professional advocacy become ethically appropriate?

Scenario 1: The Refugee Family

A Syrian refugee family seeks treatment for trauma. The adolescent daughter wants greater independence and wishes to participate in school activities. Parents believe that family authority should supersede individual autonomy, and that Western culture threatens family cohesion. The therapist strongly values individual self-determination, adolescent autonomy, gender equality.

Scenario 2: Indigenous Community Partnership

A psychologist is invited to consult with an Indigenous community. Community members express skepticism toward evidence-based interventions. Historical experiences include: forced assimilation, medical exploitation, and government abuses. The therapist believes strongly in evidence-based practice.

Scenario 3: Disability and Neurodiversity

Parents seek treatment because they want their autistic teenager to appear "more normal." The adolescent expresses: "I don't want to change who I am."

Capstone Exercise: Advocacy Without Certainty

"Psychologists have an ethical responsibility to advocate for vulnerable populations."

Self-Enquiry

- What populations do I immediately think of?
- Which populations am I less likely to view as vulnerable?
- What assumptions drive those reactions?

Flexible Mind

- Can advocacy occur without ideological certainty?
- Can I advocate for dignity while remaining open to disagreement?

Professional Advocacy

- What distinguishes advocacy grounded in psychological science from advocacy grounded primarily in personal values?