

Title – Applying Ethical Codes, Laws, and Regulations to Minors

Program of Study – Clinical Mental Health Counseling

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Mentor(s) and Mentor Email - Dr. Denise Daniel (ddaniel@liberty.edu)

Student name(s) and email(s) – Ketluimar Vallecillo-Samot (kvallecillosamot1@liberty.edu)

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Abstract

Minors are the individuals of society with a minimal voice when it comes to their rights. Minors succumb to the same standards as adults when it comes to ethical guidelines and laws, though equally human they are on their own category altogether. The purpose of this paper is to examine the rights of minors in the mental health field. Minors, those under the age of 18, have no rights, the rights belong to the parents through informed consent. Informed consent is the legal form that parents are introduced to before the counseling sessions begin. According to the law parents have the right to receive the information for the counseling session and minors are supposed to abide by their parents expectations for them. The American Counseling Association (ACA) Ethical Codes are for everyone, but are not translated to minors. The Supreme Court laws and regulation are for everyone but are limited to understanding when it comes applying them to minors. The ethical codes, laws, and Virginia regulations will be compared and deciphered to be more understandable to how they can be applied to the minors being served in the field of mental health.

Christian worldview integration

My Christian worldview has influenced my research to continue the love that God has for children. Minors are undermined in society, they are always held back from their rights and potential because of the adults they have to subject to in this world. Minors are supposed to submit themselves to the same laws, ethical codes, and regulations but it is difficult to translate

something that is for an adult into a child's perspective. I know that God wants everyone to enjoy their rights and be treated equally. Psalm 99:4a states, "The strength of the King loves justice." God voice for minors echoes through the Earth in search of ears who will hear what He has to say and be doers of His justice. I want to be that doer for minors.

This research is impactful for the culture at large because right now minors do not have a voice strong enough to hinder the authority of adults. Counselors need to learn how they can adapt the ethical codes, regulations, and laws and apply them to the minors they serve. For example, the ACA Code of Ethics A.2.a states, "...need adequate information about the counseling process and the counselor (2014)," right now there is limited, to no, resources of this being translated to minors. Secondly, the Virginia Board of Counseling regulation states, "inform clients of the purpose, goals, techniques, procedures, limitations, potential risks, and benefits of services to be performed, limitations of confidentiality, and pertinent information when counseling is initiated." Parents sign the consent form but there is no informing the minors as to what the consent form entailed. Breaking down laws, ethical codes, and regulations for counselors to know how to apply them to minors allows for a better understanding of how to serve minors.