

Review of Clinical Ethics Consultation - A Practical Guide

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Article abstract

In this guide to conducting clinical ethics consultation, Bashir Jiwani notes that the success of ethics interventions often relies on the personal skills of the particular consultant involved. Therefore, he wrote this volume to articulate the elements of clinical ethics consultation to help foster integrity in those who may not have these inherent skills. By focusing on fostering integrity, this book provides a fresh perspective and process for how to approach clinical ethics consultation without necessarily having to rely on the teaching of others or the advice to simply do what we have seen mentors do.

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COMPTE RENDU / REVIEW

Review of *Clinical Ethics Consultation - A Practical Guide*



Julia Gill^{1,2}

Résumé

Dans ce guide portant sur la conduite d'une consultation en éthique clinique, Bashir Jiwani note que le succès des interventions en éthique repose souvent sur les compétences personnelles du consultant concerné. Par conséquent, il a écrit ce volume pour articuler les éléments de la consultation en éthique clinique afin d'aider à favoriser l'intégrité chez ceux qui ne possèdent pas ces compétences inhérentes. En mettant l'accent sur la promotion de l'intégrité, ce livre offre une perspective et un processus nouveaux sur la façon d'aborder la consultation en éthique clinique sans nécessairement avoir à se fier à l'enseignement ou aux conseils des autres pour simplement reproduire ce que nous avons vu les mentors faire.

Mots-clés

consultation en éthique clinique, intégrité, soins de santé

Abstract

In this guide to conducting clinical ethics consultation, Bashir Jiwani notes that the success of ethics interventions often relies on the personal skills of the particular consultant involved. Therefore, he wrote this volume to articulate the elements of clinical ethics consultation to help foster integrity in those who may not have these inherent skills. By focusing on fostering integrity, this book provides a fresh perspective and process for how to approach clinical ethics consultation without necessarily having to rely on the teaching of others or the advice to simply do what we have seen mentors do.

Keywords

clinical ethics consultation, integrity, healthcare

In this guide to conducting clinical ethics consultation [1], Bashir Jiwani reflects on his own experience in healthcare institutions in Alberta and British Columbia beginning in the 1990's. He notes that the success of ethics interventions often relies on the personal skills of the particular consultant involved, therefore he embarked on a project to articulate the elements and processes of ethics consultation to help foster integrity in those who may not have exceptional personal qualities or inherent skills. This volume is the culmination of that project. By focusing on fostering integrity, this book provides a fresh perspective on how to approach clinical ethics consultation without necessarily having to rely on the teaching of others or the advice to simply do what we have seen mentors do. The intended audience is ethicists who are looking for a clear and well-developed method for their practice, and perhaps a different perspective on the processes that already exist. It would suit a reader who is trying to develop or refine their unique style of conducting clinical ethics consultation.

The first half of the book begins with a comprehensive overview of the background necessary to successfully navigate the world of ethics consultation. It walks the reader through the goals of ethics consultation and how to live and practice with integrity. It introduces the reader to the different types of consult requests and consult support, as well as the different models of ethics consultation services that are available in Canada. In the second half of his book, the author then introduces his proposed process of ethics consultation, including Stage 1: Pre-Consult; Stage 2: Interviews; Stage 3: Mid-Consult (including initial ethics analysis and planning next steps); Stage 4: The Consult Meeting; and lastly, Stage 5: The Post Consult. The elements of the Post-Consult include documentation, follow-up support plan, evaluating the ethics consult, and identifying systematic issues. Interestingly, the author seeks to describe but not necessarily defend his model.

In the background sections, Dr. Jiwani argues that ethics is not a discrete area of activity, and in fact, all decisions involve ethics. In the words of the author, "Ethics is not an area or compartment of life; it is a way of looking at life – a lens through which to see any and all of our experience." Therefore, we should not just ask whether an issue is ethical, but instead and more importantly, whether the position taken in response to an issue is ethically justified. This is what his book strives to achieve. This work references the companion piece, *The Clinical Ethics Consultation Toolkit* [2], and is designed to be used in tandem with documents contained in this toolkit.

The process the author puts forward is based on the foundational values of trust and respect, with a unique emphasis on living and practicing with integrity. The author emphasises that living with integrity is a lifelong struggle to deepen and refine our understanding of what life is about, and although facing difficult situations is part of the moral life of all individuals, ethicists are often well placed to help people think through these issues. He argues that people with different convictions can all find a place under the umbrella of integrity.

In his thought-provoking discussion, Dr. Jiwani argues that living with integrity requires both understanding our own values and understanding how we see the world. We must be able to understand all the values we are demonstrating to the world and be able to critically examine what should matter in life. He emphasises that integrity, in life and in ethical practice, requires being able to articulate and then challenge our own beliefs. Since our beliefs about reality and our values are intimately connected, we need to be able to talk openly with others about them in order to further the ethical discourse. Such sentiments are the underpinning of the process that follows.

While not significantly divergent in terms of content, this guide to clinical ethics consultation provides a different lens and a distinct process through which to navigate the world of ethical issues. Although the process and consult description sections are useful and practical, the real strength of this book lies in the moral analysis. By advocating to ground clinical ethics consultation in the integrity of the consultant and the consultee, the author has created a work that is holistic and refreshing in its honesty and breadth of discussion. The process described in the second half of the work is the logical extension of the

deeper analysis that goes before, and is well worth reviewing in order to improve one's own capacity for integrity and proficiency at clinical ethics consultation.

Conflit d'intérêts

Aucun à déclarer

Conflicts of Interest

None to declare

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1. Jiwani B. Clinical Ethics Consultation: A Practical Guide. Toronto: Springer International Publishing; 2017.
2. Jiwani B. The Clinical Ethics Consultation Toolkit. Toronto: Springer International Publishing; 2017.