

## Introduction to Ethics in Psychology: Historical and Philosophical Grounding

Richard T. G. Walsh  
Wilfrid Laurier University

I introduce 4 diverse position papers on ethics in psychology in which the individual authors present critical reflections on the standard ethical discourse in North American psychology and 3 commenters offer individual commentaries on these papers. After defining key terms in ethics in psychology I give a historical overview of the Codes of Ethics and their subsequent editions that have been adopted by the American Psychological Association and the Canadian Psychological Association respectively. Then I summarize 5 approaches to moral philosophy that have been applied to ethics in psychology generally and the Codes in particular. Although the 2 Codes differ in some respects historically and philosophically, they are quite similar in other respects. I conclude with a brief preview of the position papers and the commentaries.

*Keywords:* approaches to moral philosophy, critical positions on ethics, history of ethics codes

Ethical issues, as well as ethical problems and dilemmas, are applicable to all our activities *qua* psychologists, including scientific and educational practices. The literature suggests that ethical issues often are multifaceted, potentially posing significant intellectual, emotional, interpersonal, and societal challenges to us (e.g., Rossiter, Walsh-Bowers, & Prilleltensky, 2002). In addition, it is likely that the potential to act unethically and cause harm is present in all psychologists, not just, as the cliché goes, “a few rotten apples that spoil the barrel.” Although we might take for granted that our scientific and professional activities, by definition, are fruitful or helpful, sometimes they are not. Accordingly, to prevent any unethical action and harm that we might perpetrate, we should name and discuss the ethical issues that arise in workaday practice. The literature also suggests that our awareness of ethical values, principles, and standards facilitates sound ethical decision-making and practice, while ethical lapses result from our lack of consciousness or neglect (e.g., Pope & Vasquez, 1991).

The expectation in our discipline is that we practice ethical reasoning to inform and guide

our conduct. But the moral goals of raising consciousness concerning ethical conduct and preventing harm to others might be better achieved by centralizing in our conditions of work both a social climate of communicative ethics (i.e., an intersubjective process of ethical reflection in open dialogue with trustworthy colleagues) and a commitment to social responsibility and social justice (Walsh, 2015, p. 90). Within the spirit of critical psychology (Teo, 2015b), broadly speaking, the articles in this issue on ethics in psychology—four position papers and three commentaries on them—address ethics as understood and practiced in North American (i.e., Canadian and U.S.) psychology. The papers and commentaries are timely in light of recent publicity concerning psychologists’ involvement in activities related to national security, including torture of detainees, as well as emergent areas of practice such as coaching, use of digital technology, and “responding to complex international humanitarian disasters” (Behnke & Jones, 2011, p. 71).

The term “ethics,” however, has several meanings. Typically, ethics refers to a set of certain, aspirational moral values and principles that are intended to guide ethical conduct. A “code of ethics” represents the application of ethical “principles” and “values,” which are prescribed in concrete, enforceable behavioral “standards” for ethical action. An ethics code organizes into an accessible framework a given

---

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Richard T. G. Walsh, Department of Psychology, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, ON, Canada N2L 3C5. E-mail: [rwalsh@wlu.ca](mailto:rwalsh@wlu.ca)

national organization's expectations for ethical conduct in all aspects of a discipline. "Ethical guidelines," however, are distinct from standards, as guidelines only represent *recommended* action (Pettifor, 1996; Truscott & Crook, 2013). Philosophically, *normative ethics* deals with basic issues concerning an individual's moral obligations and duties, moral values, moral rights, and notions of justice (i.e., equity and fairness) and with the development of normative ethical principles from such explorations, whereas *applied ethics* deals with the application of those principles (Kitchener & Kitchener, 2011).

Over recent decades some psychologists, exercising effective leadership, have done the discipline and the public an important service by fostering ethical relations in psychological research, education in psychology including student supervision, and applied and professional services and interventions. Yet, from diverse critical perspectives on the discourse on ethics in psychology, some persistent and unresolved issues have led the authors of the four position papers and the commentators on them to call into question not just past ethical discourse but current discourse as well. Given the contributors' critical orientation, some historical and philosophical context for the issues that the contributors raise might be helpful concerning the American Psychological Association's Code of Ethics (American Psychological Association [APA], 2010b; hereinafter, the APA Code) and the Canadian Psychological Association's Code of Ethics (Canadian Psychological Association, 2000; hereinafter, the CPA Code).

### A Historical Perspective on Codes of Ethics

It is customary in recent decades for psychologists to celebrate the practice of ethics as a moral endeavor that purports to show respect for human dignity and protection of human rights. However, our discipline flourished for nearly 70 years before the first statement of ethics from any organization of psychologists was produced by APA in 1953, and many nations with national associations of psychologists did not have a code of ethics until recently. Although the U.S. literature on ethics concentrates almost entirely on U.S. publications and APA policies and practices, psychology organizations elsewhere, such as Canada, also have

developed ethics codes and complementary literatures. In addition, a Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists was promulgated in 2008 to encourage nations, whose associations of psychologists did not have a code of ethics, to develop their own to guide conduct by universal moral principles (Gauthier, Pettifor, & Ferrero, 2010).

### APA Code

Before World War Two, APA had declined to develop a code, even though professional psychologists had initiated one in 1933, because scientific psychologists had been averse to addressing applied psychologists' practices (Joyce & Rankin, 2010). After applied psychologists rejoined a reorganized APA after the war, development of a code proceeded, as complaints to the APA ethics committee motivated psychologists to protect the public from quackery, charlatanism, and false advertizing perpetrated by some applied colleagues. In 1948, APA initiated a Committee on Ethical Standards for Psychology to develop a set of guidelines for ethical conduct (Pope & Vetter, 1992). The committee took the position, not surprisingly for U.S. American psychologists during the heyday of neobehaviorism (Walsh, Teo, & Baydala, 2014), that ethical standards derived from empirical research would yield a more practicable statement and more likely increase the probability of ethical behavior than a declaration of ethical principles and guidelines by a small group of APA members. Thus, the committee surveyed a representative sample of the APA membership regarding their professional activities and critical incidents involving ethical issues. The critical incident procedure, which some U.S. psychologists had employed in military research during the war, apparently lent the ethics project scientific credibility (Joyce & Rankin, 2010). APA members contributed more than a thousand examples of positive and negative ethical choices, which subsequently were factor-analyzed.

The survey findings led to the original Code, which contained brief statements about ethical standards for specific issues, such as confidentiality and informed consent, mainly concerning the conduct of research. Each area of content contained specific examples from the incidents submitted. Thus, psychologists' first code of

ethics was the result of a survey of APA members' behavior that represented disciplinary consensus on best ethical practices (Fisher, 2013), evidencing rather pragmatic and utilitarian foundations. In subsequent editions the Code's specific guidelines for ethical conduct were increasingly elaborated regarding research and professional practice; balancing costs and benefits of one's conduct was the prescribed behavior. However, the scientific-professional context also played an influential part in the emergence of the original Code in 1953. The APA document followed codes created by other professional and scientific associations in the wake of the revelations from the Nuremberg war trials concerning the crimes against humanity committed by Nazi-affiliated scientists and physicians. The development and promulgation of codes were intended, in part, to ensure public confidence in the competency, integrity, and social legitimacy of the presumably beneficial work in which biomedical scientists and medical professionals, for instance, engaged (Hobbs, 1965).

By the 1992 edition the Code constituted a significant shift from the original version and its subsequent revisions in that at this point APA introduced six General Principles that represented moral aspirations along with practical Standards representing enforceable rules of conduct (Fisher, 2013). However, the ethical values that appeared in the 1992 Code—autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice—originated in the development of federal regulatory regimes for the ethical conduct of biomedical research (Kitchener & Kitchener, 2011).

In the 2002 revision of the Code the Principles were revised and reduced to five: Beneficence and Nonmaleficence, Fidelity and Responsibility, Integrity, Justice, and Respect for People's Rights and Dignity. The Principles were organized alphabetically, not hierarchically, because, as the 2010 Code explained, only the Standards should be the basis for ethical decision-making (APA, 2010b). Nevertheless, the conclusion of the Preamble stated:

The development of a dynamic set of ethical standards for psychologists' work-related conduct requires a personal commitment and lifelong effort to act ethically; to encourage ethical behavior by students, supervisees, employees, and colleagues; and to consult with others concerning ethical problems. (APA, 2010b, Preamble)

The 2010 revision amended two sections – 1:02, Conflicts between Ethics and Law, Regulations, or Other Governing Legal Authority, and 1:03, Conflicts between Ethics and Organizational Demands. The final sentence of each section now reads “Under no circumstances may this standard be used to justify or defend violating human rights” (APA, 2010a, p. 493). The context for the amendments was the debate on psychologists' participation in torture (see Teo, 2015a, p. 78). By 2009 APA ruled any justification of such participation is indefensible (see Behnke & Jones, 2011, for a more detailed account of recent developments re: the APA Code).

### CPA Code

Canadian psychologists had no ethics code until 1963, when CPA formally adopted the APA Code (Truscott & Crook, 2013). Although previous attempts to develop a Canadian Code had been unsuccessful, in 1978 a CPA committee restarted the development of a code for Canadian conditions, which was published in 1986 (Sinclair & Pettifor, 2001; Dunbar, 1998). The committee asked CPA members to explain in written form their responses to a questionnaire concerning hypothetical ethical dilemmas that were derived from the extant APA Code (Sinclair, 2011). The 59 psychologists who participated responded to six reflective questions for each of any two dilemmas that they selected from 37 diverse situations that depicted conflicting ethical principles. Content analysis of the written responses yielded four categories that were—and remain—interpreted as all-encompassing ethical principles: I: Respect for the Dignity of Persons, II: Responsible Caring, III: Integrity in Relationships, and IV: Responsibility to Society, as they subsume common ethical values of compassion and justice. The resultant *Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists* and its revised versions describe a set of values and corresponding standards for specific ethical issues within each principle (CPA, 2000).

In the CPA Code, the hierarchy of the four ethical principles begins with Respect for the Dignity of Persons, which emphasizes the foundational point that the moral rights of individuals is the first principle to invoke when considering applications to particular situations

requiring ethical deliberation. In circumstances when ethical principles are in conflict, psychologists are encouraged to place greater weight on the ordering of the principles. Interestingly, a random sample of APA members showed that they regarded other ethical principles as more important than Social Responsibility, which corresponds to its status as the lowest ranked principle in the CPA Code (Hadjistavropoulos, Malloy, Sharpe, Green, & Fuchs-Lacelle, 2002). However, the Code cautions that its hierarchy of ethical principles should not be interpreted rigidly; rather, given the complexity of some ethical situations, balanced ethical decision-making requires reflecting on the applicability of all principles to a particular situation (CPA, 2000).

In tracing the social origins of the CPA Code from the association's early days to the Code's first incarnation Dunbar (1998) observed that its development "increased the collective professional power of psychologists in Canada" (p. 184). It seems likely that a principal function of the Code remains its enhancement of the discipline's societal status. In fact, the nature of psychologists' relationship with society was addressed in the 1991 revised edition, which included explicit mention in the Preamble of a previously implicit notion, namely, a social contract with society. According to the revised statement, "each member will place the welfare of the society and individual members of that society above the welfare of the discipline and its own members" (CPA, 2000, p. 15). Also added to the 1991 revision was a model for ethical decision-making and elucidation of the role of individual personal conscience in such decision-making. However, although specific changes were made within the four principles, each principle, its accompanying values, and the hierarchy of the principle remained substantively the same.

Concerning the most recently revised 2000 edition, again, although no essential changes were made, there were some key additions. First, a concluding sentence was added to the Preamble regarding the social contract: "By virtue of this social contract, psychologists have a higher duty of care to members of society than the general duty of care that all members of society have to each other" (CPA, 2000, p. 33). Second, the concept of psychologists as a moral community was introduced. This term means "a

group of persons who have a genuine commitment to a socially responsible ethic and who are actively accountable for their activities" (Sinclair, 2011, p. 154). Third, regarding the Uses of the Code, it advocates the practice of both proactive and reactive ethics. As of this writing, a new edition is near completion.

### Congruence of the Codes

Although as explained below, the APA and CPA Codes appear somewhat distinct from each other philosophically, there is also substantial congruence between their ethical principles and respective standards. CPA Principle I: Respect for the Dignity of the Person pertains to the APA principles of Autonomy and Justice; CPA Principle II: Responsible Caring to the APA principles of Beneficence and Nonmaleficence; CPA Principle III: Integrity in Relationships to the APA principle of Fidelity; and CPA Principle IV: Responsibility to Society to the APA principles of Beneficence and Justice.

Practically, the heart of ethics consists of making decisions about appropriate conduct in a particular situation, often in relation to dilemmas in which ethical principles appear to compete. The APA and CPA Codes differ on whether behavioral standards or ethical principles ought to inform decision-making. The CPA Code states that we are to rely on a reasoned understanding of the relevant ethical principles in relation to particular situations. Indeed, this Code's original intention was to "reflect explicitly the most useful decision rules (ethical principles) for ethical decision making" primarily in those cases in which active reflection is required, namely, a dilemma where ethical principles seem to conflict (Sinclair, 1998, p. 167). Thus, the CPA Code prescribes that ethical actors should resolve an ethical dilemma by discerning which principle overrides all others. Yet, some of the Code's language appears to evince "a strong authoritarian tone . . . that [does] not provide the addressee with opportunities for discretionary decision-making" (Malloy et al., 2002, p. 246); consequently, it seems to limit opportunities to interpret the ethicality of potential conduct.

The CPA Code mandates that psychologists consider the ordering of ethical principles rather than relying on standards when making ethical decisions. The rationale is that making deci-

sions on the basis of a hierarchy of principles rather than on concrete standards might enhance the ethicality of decisions (e.g., Hadjistavropoulos & Malloy, 1999). The APA Code takes the reverse position, prescribing standards only. In fact, field research showed that some professional psychologists regard ethical principles either as vague and distant abstractions that are minimally relevant to their work or construe them as concrete directions for avoiding disapproval or censure from peers or supervisors (Prilleltensky, Rossiter, & Walsh-Bowers, 1996; Rossiter et al., 2002). Thus, pragmatic application of normative standards might motivate ethical decision-making more than reflection on ethical principles, which complements the APA Code's expressed stance. Nevertheless, the Codes and the ethics literature agree on the advisability of a problem-solving model approach to ethical decision-making. As I discuss in my position paper (Walsh, 2015, p. 90), the recommended model does not correspond to the literature on cognitive and conversational processes. Both Codes, of course, rest on certain philosophical foundations, which I summarize next.

### **Philosophical Foundations of Psychology's Ethics Codes**

Five perspectives on moral philosophy and their ethical applications feature in the psychology literature (Kitchener & Kitchener, 2011): virtue ethics, deontology, consequentialism, relationality, and communitarianism. Two intersecting continua—social (observable)—personal (introspective), and analytical (deductive)—experiential (inductive)—capture the primary focus that each perspective takes (Truscott & Crook, 2013). Overall, the two salient perspectives in the APA and CPA Codes are consequentialism and deontology.

#### **Virtue Ethics**

This perspective, which represents the personal and experiential domain, stresses one's natural, rational potential to discern and take ethical action. Associated with Aristotle and elaborated by Aquinas, "Virtue ethics focus on the ideal rather than the obligatory and on the intentions of the actor rather than the consequences of actions" (Truscott & Crook, 2013, p.

6). Strengthening one's moral character and maintaining personal integrity are primary. Hence, the ethical actor's moral motivation determines an action's ethicality, not its consequences or its fit with ethical principles. Although necessary, ethical principles and standards are insufficient.

#### **Deontology**

Associated with Kant, this perspective represents the personal and analytical domain. Deontology states that "the rightness of an action depends upon whether we perform it in accordance with, and out of respect for, absolute and universal ethical principles," which oblige moral duties on individuals (Truscott & Crook, 2013, p. 6), "independent of their good or bad consequences" (Kitchener & Kitchener, 2011, p. 14). The key moral principles are (a) beneficence, meaning doing good, preventing harm, and remediating evil; and (b) justice, meaning treating others with full respect. The assumption is that all normal adults can recognize and follow universal moral absolutes by employing the moral capacity of a categorical imperative directing the moral agent to perfect oneself and foster the well-being of others, while treating others as he or she wishes to be treated and not using others for one's own purposes. Accordingly, deontology stresses the means and intentions of duty-bound ethical actions prescribed by authoritative sources; it denies that ends can justify means.

#### **Consequentialism**

The consequentialist or teleological perspective, which falls within the social and analytical domain, is concerned with the consequences or ends of ethical actions. Here the ends justify the means used to achieve desired ends, as captured by the colloquialism, "if it works, it's good." Utilitarianism, a common type of consequentialism, privileges consequences of certain actions over universal moral duties. For utilitarians, society imposes moral conventions on its members that become the basis for a social contract of seeking the greatest good for the most people. In an older form, known as act utilitarianism and associated with Bentham and J. S. Mill, ethical actors choose actions that maximize benefits for the most and minimize the costs of the intended action. In a more

modern form, rule utilitarianism, ethical actors adhere to “rules that, all other things being equal, produce or are likely to produce the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of people in most circumstances” (Truscott & Crook, 2013, p. 5). In effect, rule utilitarianism blends consequentialism with deontology.

### Relationality

Located in the social and experiential domain and associated with feminist scholars, the relational perspective stresses an ethic of care for the quality of the relationships in which we engage. The focus is on the integrity of relationships in concrete situations. According to the relational approach, ethical “knowledge, reasoning, and action . . . [occur] within a complex, never completely predictable, relational context” (Truscott & Crook, 2013, p. 7). Ethical actors consider that whatever action is taken in a particular relationship will have consequences for both parties; in this sense, then, the two moral agents are interdependent. Moreover, as psychologists, our obligation is to nurture the empowerment of those whom we serve. Thus, resolution of ethical conflicts and dilemmas occurs by means of dialogical consensus. In its revised version, an ethic of care embraces social justice and social responsibility (Kitchener & Kitchener, 2011).

### Communitarianism

A fifth perspective, communitarianism, also is socially and experientially focused and is associated with the work of Etzioni. It holds that ethical action flows from community values and traditions, which it aims to promote. Thus, “a caring community of psychologists balances individual responsibilities with community obligations” (Johnson, Barnett, Elman, Forrest, & Kaslow, 2012, p. 557) and provides mutual support to maintain competence and accountability. At the heart of the communitarian perspective is “a commitment to care as an undergirding ethical principle, a character virtue, and an abiding community custom” (Johnson et al., 2012, p. 564). Communitarianism agrees with relational approaches that because humans share a common humanity with one another, the development of “emotion and relationship-based virtues (e.g., care, friendship, mercy, benevolence, sensitivity) and interdependence are essential when

engaging in moral reasoning and ethical decision making” (Johnson et al., 2012, p. 563).

### Reflections on Philosophical Foundations

How do the Codes show their philosophical foundations? The APA Code, 1992 edition, introduced a statement of ethical Principles that, together with the Code’s revised Standards, presume a consequentialist, rule-utilitarian standpoint by which psychologists rely pragmatically on cost-benefit analysis of potential ethical conduct. According to the principles of Beneficence and Nonmaleficence, for instance, psychologists strive to maximize positive consequences and prevent negative consequences of their actions. At the root, it appears, psychologists’ ethical judgment primarily depends on consensus derived from normative practices, not from basic conceptions of moral conduct (Hobbs, 1965). However, although moral reasoning rooted in cost-benefit deliberations might be appropriate for young children (Kohlberg, 1984), justifying adults’ ethical conduct on a cost-benefit basis detaches reasoning from moral values (Gilligan, 1982).

The CPA Code largely balances deontological and consequentialist perspectives. Yet a philosophical analysis of its content showed that the Code’s foundations shift from deontological in the paramount first principle, by which psychologists’ duty is to adhere to the discipline’s code of prescribed conduct, to consequentialist in the second, third, and fourth principles, by which psychologists balance the costs and benefits of their intended ethical action (Malloy & Hadjistavropoulos, 1998). According to a second philosophical analysis, the deontological perspective is expressed at more than twice the level of the relational and consequentialist perspectives respectively in the Preamble, Preface, and Value Statements, whereas in the Standards deontology is present at nearly twice the rate as consequentialism but relationality is entirely absent (Malloy et al., 2002). As the authors observed, “At the core of the ethics of care [relationality] is an understanding of how ethical behavior is grounded ultimately in mutual, reciprocal interpersonal relationships. This important dimension of ethics should be reflected in our standards of practice, not just in our aspirations” (Malloy et al., 2002, p. 251). The exclusion of an explicit

statement of caring and compassion in its Preamble, Principles, and Standards also characterizes the APA Code (Johnson et al., 2012). Although Kohlberg (1984) claimed moral reasoning grounded in notions of connectedness with others, compassion, and responsible caring is less mature than reasoning based on justice understood in terms of individual rights, from virtue, relational, and communitarian perspectives, an integration of justice and compassion appears more humane and virtuous. Moreover, ethical conduct would seem to require open-ended negotiation of the relationships in which psychologists engage, a disposition that complements the practice of communicative ethics (see Walsh, 2015, p. 90).

In sum, rule utilitarianism is evident in the pragmatic rationale employed in both Codes “for understanding our ethical obligations and for regulating professionals ∴ society follows almost exclusively the deontological and teleological systems in its social and legal decisions” (Truscott & Crook, 2013, p. 9). Yet, if rule utilitarianism suits these disciplinary and societal functions of ethic codes, what are the prospects for incorporating relational, communitarian, and virtue perspectives in our discipline’s practice of ethics? Furthermore, what cognizance of the intrinsically social and societal nature of ethics do the extant Codes convey?

### The Position Papers and Commentaries

The purpose of the four position papers and the three commentaries on them is to discuss some relatively undeveloped historical, philosophical, and social–contextual issues that the authors discern in the APA and CPA codes of ethics. As valuable as they have been, codes of ethics are like all things psychological—imperfect constructions. Overall, the papers and commentaries identify gaps in the psychologists’ codes of ethics, suggest points of moral resistance to conventional conceptions of ethics for psychology, and advocate alternative conceptions and practices of ethics and psychological science that might more directly reflect the moral goal of human emancipation than codes of ethics have done thus far. Given space-limitations, of course, we can only be selective in our coverage.

In the first article, relying on the social philosophy of Habermas, Thomas Teo (2015a) dis-

cusses three cases that reflect traditional practices by North American psychologists that they have tended to overlook: the phenomenon of epistemological violence in psychological investigations, incursions on ethics codes stemming from psychologists’ rationalizations for employing dehumanizing interrogation techniques, and financial conflicts of interest that affect professional practice. These moral challenges prompt suggestions concerning how psychologists might articulate ethical principles in the respective national Codes of Ethics.

Next, I compare the approaches to ethics taken in the APA and CPA Codes in terms of the Codes’ respective approaches to social-contextual matters affecting ethical decision-making, professional-personal boundaries, and psychologists’ relationship with society (Walsh, 2015). Then drawing from Habermas and critical reflections on social justice, I propose both centralizing communicative ethics in ethical decision-making and privileging the principle of social responsibility and the aspiration of social justice within the Codes.

In the third article, Jeff Sugarman (2015) situates reflections on psychologists’ conceptions and practices of ethics in the relationship between disciplinary knowledge and professional practice, on the one hand, and the socio-political structures and policies to which psychologists are bound ethically through their code, on the other hand. Employing Foucault’s concept of governmentality, he argues that manifestations of neoliberal socioeconomic ideology, which has suffused economic, political, and social life in North America, seem to shape psychologists’ ethical regimes and conduct. Sugarman gives three examples—psychologists’ approaches to social anxiety disorder, positive psychology, and educational psychology—that aptly illustrate his point.

Lastly, Henderikus Stam (2015) addresses the ethics of psychological inquiry, not in the sense of ethical principles and standards for research conduct, but in terms of how the language of historically constituted psychological categories, to be effective, must be applicable to real life. That is, the language used to describe psychological categories is shaped by and shapes ordinary living. Psychological categories, which pervade our psychologized society, codify optimal human being. On the other hand, the difficulties of shared understandings of oth-

ers, even the potential for ethical violence, Stam argues, are also present in the pervasive categories of scientific and professional psychology.

In his commentary William Smythe (2015) discusses six themes that link the position papers: ethical decision-making, the social embedding of the ethical, the ethical implications of neoliberalism, epistemological and ethical violence, the ethics of social justice, and the limitations of professional ethics codes. He sounds a sceptical note about revising current Codes.

In response to the articles Wendy Pullin (2015) raises sociopolitical issues that affect her professional duties as educator, clinician, and academic colleague and that undergird ethical matters that psychologists typically construe in terms of formal Codes of Ethics. In so doing she confronts personal challenges embedded in her own social location from which others can learn.

Like Smythe (2015) and Pullin (2015), Kieran O'Doherty (2015) both reflects on the issues raised by the position papers and pushes the ethical discourse in a challenging direction. He addresses the implications for ethics of the epistemological foundations of natural-science psychology, which remain as problematic as psychologists' ontological and ethical-political foundations have been historically (Walsh et al., 2014).

My colleagues and I offer these philosophical essays for your own reflections on ethics.

## References

- American Psychological Association. (2010a). 2010 Amendments to the 2002 "Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct." *American Psychologist*, 65, 493. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0020168>
- American Psychological Association. (2010b). *Ethical principles of psychologists and code of Conduct (2002, Amended June 1, 2010)*. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx>
- Behnke, S. H., & Jones, S. E. (2011). Ethics and ethics codes for psychologists. In S. J. Knapp, M. C. Gottlieb, M. M. Handelsman, & L. D. VandeCreek (Eds.), *APA handbook of ethics in psychology: Vol. 1. Moral foundations and common themes* (pp. 43–74). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Canadian Psychological Association. (2000). *Canadian code of ethics for psychologists* (3rd ed.). Ottawa, Canada: Author.
- Dunbar, J. (1998). A critical history of CPA's various codes of ethics for psychologists (1939–1986). *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne*, 39, 177–186. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0086806>
- Fisher, C. B. (2013). *Decoding the Ethics Code: A practical guide for psychologists* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gauthier, J., Pettifor, J., & Ferrero, A. (2010). The universal declaration of ethical principles for psychologists: A culture-sensitive model for creating and reviewing a code of ethics. *Ethics & Behavior*, 20, 179–196. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10508421003798885>
- Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hadjistavropoulos, T., & Malloy, D. C. (1999). Ethical principles of the American Psychological Association: An argument for philosophical and practical ranking. *Ethics & Behavior*, 9, 127–140. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15327019eb0902\\_4](http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15327019eb0902_4)
- Hadjistavropoulos, T., Malloy, D. C., Sharpe, D., Green, S. M., & Fuchs-Lacelle, S. (2002). The relative importance of the ethical principles adopted by the American Psychological Association. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne*, 43, 254–259. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0086921>
- Hobbs, N. (1965). Ethics in clinical psychology. In B. B. Wolman (Ed.), *Handbook of clinical psychology* (pp. 72–89). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Johnson, W. B., Barnett, J. E., Elman, N. S., Forrest, L., & Kaslow, N. J. (2012). The competent community: Toward a vital reformulation of professional ethics. *American Psychologist*, 67, 557–569. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0027206>
- Joyce, N. R., & Rankin, T. J. (2010). The lessons of the development of the first APA Ethics Code: Blending science, practice, and politics. *Ethics & Behavior*, 20, 466–481. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10508422.2010.521448>
- Kitchener, R. F., & Kitchener, K. S. (2011). Ethical foundations of psychology. In S. J. Knapp, M. C. Gottlieb, M. M. Handelsman, & L. D. VandeCreek (Eds.), *APA handbook of ethics in psychology: Vol. 1. Moral foundations and common themes* (pp. 3–42). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/13271-001>
- Kohlberg, L. (1984). *The psychology of moral development*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Malloy, D. C., & Hadjistavropoulos, T. (1998). A philosophical value analysis of the Canadian Code of ethics for psychologists. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne*, 39, 187–193. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0086807>
- Malloy, D. C., Hadjistavropoulos, T., Douaud, P., & Smythe, W. E. (2002). The codes of ethics of the Canadian Psychological Association and the Canadian Medical Association: Ethical orientation



- and functional grammar analysis. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne*, 43, 244–253. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0086920>
- O'Doherty, K. C. (2015). Social justice, psychology, and outdated epistemologies: Commentary on Sugarman, Stam, Teo, and Walsh. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, 35, 135–139. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/teo0000017>
- Pettifor, J. L. (1996). Ethics: Virtue and politics in the science and practice of psychology. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne*, 37, 1–12. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0708-5591.37.1.1>
- Pope, K., & Vasquez, M. (1991). *Ethics in psychotherapy and counselling*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Pope, K. S., & Vetter, V. A. (1992). Ethical dilemmas encountered by members of the American Psychological Association: A national survey. *American Psychologist*, 47, 397–411. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.47.3.397>
- Prilleltensky, I., Rossiter, A., & Walsh-Bowers, R. (1996). Preventing harm and promoting ethical discourse in the helping professions: Conceptual, research, analytical, and action frameworks. *Ethics & Behavior*, 6, 287–306. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15327019eb0604\\_1](http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15327019eb0604_1)
- Pullin, W. M. (2015). Personal political commentary on a range of visible and invisible ethical challenges. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, 35, 132–134. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/teo0000016>
- Rossiter, A., Walsh-Bowers, R., & Prilleltensky, I. (2002). Ethics as a located story: A comparison of North American and Cuban clinical ethics. *Theory & Psychology*, 12, 533–556. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0959354302012004298>
- Sinclair, C. (1998). Nine unique features of the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne*, 39, 167–176. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0086805>
- Sinclair, C. (2011). The evolution of the Canadian Code of Ethics over the years (1985–2011). *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne*, 52, 152–161. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0024471>
- Sinclair, C., & Pettifor, J. (Eds.). (2001). *Companion manual to the Canadian Code of ethics for psychologists* (3rd ed.). Ottawa, Canada: Canadian Psychological Association.
- Smythe, W. E. (2015). An ethics of engagement. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, 35, 128–131. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/teo0000014>
- Stam, H. J. (2015). The historical boundedness of psychological knowledge and the ethics of shared understandings. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, 35, 117–127. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/teo0000018>
- Sugarman, J. (2015). Neoliberalism and psychological ethics. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, 35, 103–116. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0038960>
- Teo, T. (2015a). Are psychological “ethics codes” morally oblique? *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, 35, 78–89. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0038944>
- Teo, T. (2015b). Critical psychology: A geography of intellectual engagement and resistance. *American Psychologist*, 70, 1–12.
- Truscott, D., & Crook, K. H. (2013). *Ethics for the practice of psychology in Canada* (Rev. ed.). Edmonton, Canada: University of Alberta Press.
- Walsh, R. T. G. (2015). Bending the arc of North American psychologists’ moral universe toward communicative ethics and social justice. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, 35, 90–102. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/teo0000011>
- Walsh, R. T. G., Teo, T., & Baydala, A. (2014). *A critical history and philosophy of psychology: Diversity of context, thought, and practice*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Received March 14, 2015

Accepted March 16, 2015 ■