Ethics and the Practice of Forensic Science 2nd edition Bowen Solutions Manual

SKU: 9781498777131-SOLUTIONS

Chapter 2: An Ethical Approach to Forensic Professionalism

Objectives

- Recognize how forensic scientists learn ethics specific to the profession
- Discuss recommendations suggested by the National Academies of Science report

Assessment Questions

Multiple Choice:

1. Which of the following should be part of training forensic scientists in ethics?
    a. Experience
    b. Writing
    c. Nothing, scientists do not need to be trained in ethics
    d. Following a mentor
2. Loaded language is _____.
    a. Eliminated by using neutral, descriptive words
    b. Communication used to manipulate a person's view point
    c. Exaggerating points
    d. All of the above

T/F

1. Training in ethics is done informally. **False- formal education is also needed.**
2. Forensic scientists have similar education, regardless of discipline. **False – training varies.**

Short Answer:

1. What is the downfall of not having formal training in ethics for forensic science?
2. What is it meant by competence and credibility?
3. Explain the difference between cognitive bias and confirmation bias. Give an example of each.

Essay Questions:

1. What are the necessary components that should be covered in a forensic science ethics course? Explain these in detail, including significance.
2. Discuss the NAS report recommendations to reduce ethical issues for forensic science. Please state pros, cons, and feasibility/considerations of each.
3. How is awareness an important component of ethical behavior?

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Discussion/Critical Thinking

1. Where should formal ethics be taught?
2. How do ethics relate to religion?
3. Should laboratories assure that all employees receive ethics training upon hire? Should agencies be required to update employees every so often? Why/why not?
4. Some people believe that the scientist should have no details of a case, whereas others think that the details are necessary for examinations. *What do you think? Explain your perspective.*
    a. *Do you think that this is different for every scientist?*
    b. *Do you think that this is different for the various disciplines in forensic science?*
    c. *Do you think the type of case delineates the amount of information needed?*

Class Activity/Exercise

1. Compare and contrast the NAS and PCAST reports. Determine if there has been progress toward the recommendations. If so, what has been done. If not, what are the limiting factors?

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ETHICS IN THE PRACTICE OF FORENSIC SCIENCE

CHAPTER 2: AN ETHICAL APPROACH TO FORENSIC PROFESSIONALISM

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Forensic Science
Law Enforcement
Judicial System

EDUCATION

- Learn morals from the time we are children
  - Dependent on factors such as culture, region, family, nationality, religion, etc.
  - Informal education - may have downfalls
  - How do your ideas compare to your colleagues?
    - Who is “right”?

EDUCATION

- Formal education is needed
  - Most classes are “general” and more philosophical
  - Nature of the field should be addressed
  - Not intended to teach right from wrong
  - Should include discussion and scenarios

GOALS

- Steps to study ethics
  - 1. Awareness of issues
  - 2. Critical thinking skills
  - 3. Become personally responsible
  - 4. Recognize how the system works

IDEALS

- Profession needs to be trusted as a truth
  - High stakes in justice system
  - Large impact
- Data collection
  - In cases, when issues arise, better understanding
- Consistency
  - Policies, procedures, methods

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GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF FS

1. Professionals should be technically competent and use reliable methods
2. Honest about qualifications & area of expertise
3. Honest about data & basis for exams, conclusions, and opinions
4. Objective in review of evidence and testimony

LEARNING ETHICS IN FS

- Reading, writing, discussing
- General in nature
- "Safe" environment
- Use questioning
- Goal
  - shape thoughts about proper conduct
  - avoid future issues
  - Open lines of communication/awareness

MENTORING

- Mentor/Trainer
  - Trusted friend, advisor, and/or teacher
  - Administrators of scientific integrity
  - Responsible for guidance
  - Role model
  - Combination of formal and informal lessons
    - Formal: topic specific
    - Informal: how the topic relates to the job

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INCOMPETENCE

- "lacking necessary ability or skills"
- not legally qualified
- inadequate to or unsuitable for a particular purpose
- lacking the qualities needed for effective action
- unable to function properly

INCOMPETENCE

- Do you think incompetence is an ethical issue?



COMPETENCE

- Varied training and experience
  - Inconsistent
  - Creates public uncertainty
- Who decides?
  - Other professionals
  - Judges – expert?
  - Jury – believable?
  - Self-determined – less credible

COMPETENCE

- Pressures
  - Accuracy
  - Efficiency
  - Speed needed
  - Training (budget, time, availability)
  - Completely objective analysis?
  - Reasonable?
  - Straightforward?

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IMPORTANCE

- So why is ethics important?
  1. Learn standards and guidelines
     - Basis for personal and professional behaviors
     - boundaries
     - What is/is not acceptable
     - Consequences

IMPORTANCE

2. Professional cultures influence one another
    - Awareness of differences
    - Potential impact
    - Decrease pressures
3. Prevention!
    - Recognizing issues, or potential issues
    - Understanding what to do
    - Learning from mistakes
    - Not allowing mistakes to grow

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STANDARDS

- Quality Assurance
- Codes of Ethics
- Management
- General ideals of science
- No universal standard for ethics

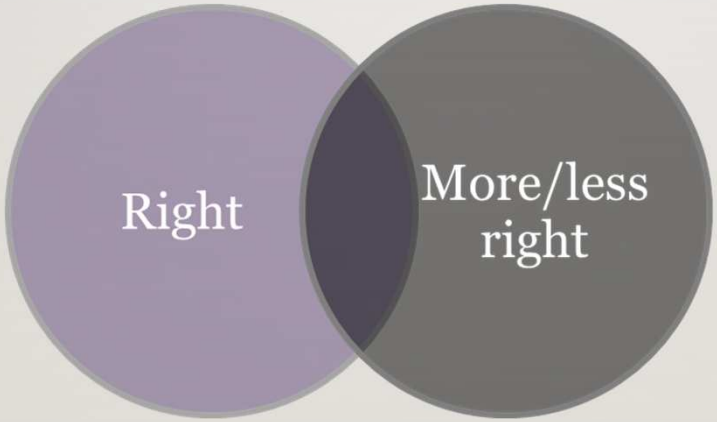
NAS REPORT

- National Academies of Science (NAS)
  - "Strengthening FS in the US: A Path Forward"
  - Feb 2009 report
  - Accounts for various disciplines
  - Standards, ideas, structure, problem areas
- Recommendations 4 and 9

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GREY AREA

- When there is more than one answer



- Following standards does not assure the right behavior

GREY AREA

- Various policies, procedures, goals
  - In disciplines
  - in sub fields
  - In professional orgs
  - In jurisdictions, agencies, departments
- Having one source of info reduces this
- Codes try to lessen the burden