

Dan's Talking Points Memo



COUN 231 • H. Dan Smith, EdD, MFT
Wilcoxon, Remley, Gladding, & Huber; Chapter 1
(for discussion on September 3, 2009)

1. Understand the assertion by Bergin (1985) that “trying to avoid a particular value choice by being noncommittal amounts to taking a value position.” (p. 2)
2. Kaplan says family counselors need to be “in touch with their values.” Strodbeck (1961) suggests there is “a great similarity among predominant values orientations found in diverse cultures.” Do these statements suggest that in order to establish an ethical base for therapy, we must all share the same values? (p. 3)
3. I am wondering how we can have a collective value and our individual values and ever get this “ethics” thing right. (p. 3)
4. Have an understanding of the several views on “culture” and “values,” and the shaping of our values through our world of experience. (p. 3-4)
5. After the authors’ discussion of gender, race, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, disability, religion, worldview, and psychosocial identity, please note the figure on page 7 that shows how they all contribute to a “core identity.” This is interesting stuff.
6. What differentiates an *etic* and *emic* perspective on culture? (p. 8)
7. The authors note that “institutional representatives of society” (there is a list of them in the text) espouse perspectives and values for a given profession. I guess we are here to learn what is held out as important to these “institutional representatives” for our profession. (p. 8)
8. Note there a couple of definitions of “values,” the most attractive to me is that which “determine efforts to make discriminations among alternative courses of action.” This is what our ethics class is about, to clarify and instill these values so that YOU will take a considered “course of action” among the alternatives.
9. I rather liked the distinction between a client’s “crisis of values” and another client’s “crisis of outcomes.” Which do you prefer to counsel? I know which I prefer! (p. 9)
10. Understand Napier and Whitaker (1978) as they delineate the “battle for structure” (which must be won by the therapist) and the “battle of initiative” (which must be won by the client). (p. 9)
11. I am particularly fond of Baruth and Manning (2003) who warn that “counseling effectiveness will be diminished when the counselor places value judgments on clients’ cultures and judges events and situations through his or her identity expectations.” Does this sound just a bit like “respect” among the Core Conditions? (p. 9-10)

12. Per the section on Values Clarification . . . there is a distinction here for us. Our goal is to process issues by reflecting on beliefs and attitudes rather than merely knowing a blatant “rule” to be applied. I’d like you understand the inappropriate nature of having sex with clients from a values and even a moral basis, and therefore not do that behavior . . . rather than to just know it is wrong. The outcome may be the same, but the process is much different. (p. 10)
13. Know the author’s application of the term “epistemology” to our work. Do you have a “systemically oriented” epistemology? (p. 11)
14. Note how Alponete (1985) states that marriage and family therapy is one of the “means societal institutions have identified to assist people in more successfully negotiating” the evolution of society. Given the context of this paragraph, will our work (or the need for our services) be increasing or decreasing with the evolution of society?
15. The authors note that our professional values (ethics) should emerge from a dynamic (or process-oriented) basis rather than a static (content-oriented, “right” v. “wrong”) one. What say you?
16. What do you think about the assertion that “resistance” in therapy may be merely a wall between therapist and client values rather than opposition, per se? (p. 13)
17. What do you think, is MFT an *art* or a *science*? Our language says “science,” our behavior says “art.” What gives? (p. 13-14)
18. Note the perspective of Dell (1983) on the notion of pathology. If closed and rigid, we see aberrant behavior as “sick,” more open perspectives would view it as “ineffective” and the like. (p. 14)
19. What does Dell (1983) imply by stating that “objectivity is impossible”? (p.14)
20. I like this idea of taking personal responsibility (Dell, 1983). After all, that is what we have to do to “be” in the world. We are responsible for our behaviors, and we help clients when we encouraged this from them. How many people behave in a manner they presume will be acceptable to others, although they are miserable with their own actions? (p. 15)
21. I we “accept what is” rather than demand what we want, the world might function a little better, huh?
22. I am pleased to see Fritz Perls mentioned in this text. What do you think of his “Gestalt Prayer”? (p. 17)
23. Know about "Acknowledgment" and "Claim" (p. 18). This is probably a new way to frame something you’ve known for a long time.
24. Notice how frequently the authors use the term “balance” in this chapter. That seems to be the goal in a number of areas. Balance. (p. 19). Note the term “rejunction” (Boszormenyi-Nagi, 1981) as persons seeking to rebalance their relationships.