

Ethics of Psychological Treatments

**via One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest
& Girl, Interrupted**

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Introductions

- **hello!** intros for me, ruth, you all
- **outline:**
 - themes to keep in mind
 - APA Code of Ethics
 - relevant treatments
 - DSM-5 portrayals
 - films deep dive
 - ethical discharge



Themes to Keep in Mind

- societal **norms** & cultural zeitgeist
- **intersection** of: race, gender, wealth, education, religion, sexuality
- **consent, autonomy, & privacy**
- **coming of age & identity** development
- **isolation**, dehumanization, & **reintegration**
- patient vs. provider **boundaries**
- mental health **stigma**
- **group** dynamics

A Note About Language

try to say this

instead of that

die by suicide

commit suicide,
kill him/her/themself

self-harm,
non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI)

cutting

antisocial personality disorder (ASPD)

sociopath

person-first language
e.g. “person with schizophrenia”

disorders as adjectives or nouns
e.g. “a schizophrenic”

APA Ethics Code

Let's brainstorm key principles of ethics that therapists should abide by

APA Ethics Code

- **Principle A. Beneficence and Nonmaleficence:** strive to benefit those with whom they work and take care to do no harm
- **Principle B. Fidelity and Responsibility:** establish relationships of trust with those with whom they work; aware of their professional and scientific responsibilities to society and to the specific communities
- **Principle C. Integrity:** seek to promote accuracy, honesty, and truthfulness in the science, teaching, and practice of psychology; maximize benefits and minimize harm

APA Ethics Code

Principle D. Justice:

“Psychologists recognize that fairness and justice entitle all persons to access and benefit from the contributions of psychology and to equal quality in the processes, procedures, and services being conducted by psychologists.”

“Psychologists exercise reasonable judgment and take precautions to ensure that their potential biases, the boundaries of their competence, and the limitations of their expertise do not lead to or condone unjust practices.”

APA Ethics Code

Principle E. Respect for People's Rights and Dignity

“Psychologists respect the dignity and worth of all people, and the rights of individuals to privacy, confidentiality, and self-determination.”

“Psychologists are aware that special safeguards may be necessary to protect the rights and welfare of persons or communities whose vulnerabilities impair autonomous decision making.”

“Psychologists are aware of and respect cultural, individual, and role differences, including those based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status, and consider these factors when working with members of such groups.”

“Psychologists try to eliminate the effect on their work of biases based on those factors, and they do not knowingly participate in or condone activities of others based upon such prejudices.”

Relevant Treatments

	seen in film	not seen in film
empirically supported	electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), medication	cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT), acceptance & commitment therapy (ACT)
vaguely empirically supported	supportive psychotherapy	psychodynamic case formulation, therapeutic alliance
not empirically supported and/or highly unethical	psychoanalysis, lobotomy	none...obviously

Treatment Initiation

- **What factors contribute to a patient being “sent” to inpatient treatment?**
 - Individual?
 - Societal?
- **Impairment is key** - but whose impairment matters?
 - e.g. burden on client? on family? on society?

DSM-5 Portrayals

What diagnoses did you see portrayed (for better or for worse) in the One Flew & Girl, Interrupted?

DSM-5 Diagnoses

- **Borderline personality disorder** - instability in interpersonal relationships, self-image, and affects, and marked impulsivity
- **Major depressive disorder** - presence of sad, empty, or irritable mood, accompanied by somatic and cognitive changes that significantly affect the individual's capacity to function
- **Antisocial personality disorder** - disregard for and violation of the rights of others
- **Anorexia nervosa** - restriction of intake; intense fear of gaining weight
- **Trauma & stressor-related disorders** - following exposure to a traumatic or stressful event; most commonly manifests as fear/anxiety, but can manifest as anhedonic and dysphoric symptoms, externalizing angry and aggressive symptoms, or dissociative symptoms
- **Schizophrenia & other psychotic disorders** - symptoms include delusions, hallucinations, disorganized thought/speech, abnormal motor behavior, negative symptoms (e.g. flat affect, anhedonia)

One Flew (1975)

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Girl, Interrupted (1999)

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Reintegrating

(via Loch, 2014 review)

- “The type of disorder psychiatric patients have invariably affects their behavior and social functioning, increasing stigma and the difficulty of social reintegration. A vicious cycle is then created, in which maladaptation exacerbates stigma, the affected person refrains from seeking help because of shame (or because of inadequate support), symptoms get worse, self-esteem decreases, and finally the negative outcomes mentioned before take place; relapse and rehospitalization.”
- >50% of patients are rehospitalized or die by suicide in the long-term
- Suicide:
 - Highest risk immediately post discharge
 - Rates of suicide remain high for many years after discharge
 - Greatest likelihood of a repeat attempt is within the first three months

Gold Standard Today

- one example: McLean Hospital (Boston)
- step-down model:
 - inpatient
 - day treatment
 - intensive outpatient treatment
 - outpatient treatment

Ethical Discharge

- use of **step-down model**
- **clear expectations** and access to **resources**
- consistent and **collaborative follow-up agreement**, covering:
 - **social support, stress management, stability, means restriction** (if application), **removal of triggers** (if applicable)



Thank you!

If you have any questions about:

- any topics discussed today
- pursuing a career in psychology
- raising a horse-sized dog
- how to embarrass your grad school advisor in front of his students

please don't hesitate to reach out!