

Ethics Interface

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The column is meant to be an educational forum for life care planners. It is not designed to offer an authoritative opinion from the editor or editorial board of the Journal of Life Care Planning, the board of the International Academy of Life Care Planners, or the board of its parent organization, the International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals, nor is it designed to represent or replace official opinions from the certifying body of other organizations associated with the practice of life care planning.

Dilemma

I recently participated in a research project with several people, and we want to publish the findings in our professional journal. One of the senior members of the group thinks the authors should be listed alphabetically, but individual efforts varied greatly. I invested a lot of time in the project and my name falls at the end of the alphabet. Are there ethical standards that address this issue?

Response

There are many ways one may contribute to research and the publications of the findings, and some activities are far more time and labor intensive than others. Journals vary in their approach and publication protocol, so one needs to know the procedures of the particular journal. Certain journals may mandate an author's CRedIT (Contributor Roles Taxonomy), which allows for detailed information on each author's contributions. It is expected that all contributors will have reviewed and approved the submission for accuracy. Other journals require written confirmation that all authors take responsibility for the contents of the submitted work.

The ethical standards from all our professional codes emphasize justice, beneficence, and honesty. However, the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification. (2017) code of professional ethics for rehabilitation counselors addresses this issue directly; the exact standards are listed below but in summary it states this issue should be dealt with in advance and principal contributors should be listed first.

From the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) Code of professional ethics for rehabilitation counselors (Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification, 2017)

I.2. Rights of Research Participants

- h. Agreement of Contributors. Rehabilitation counselors who conduct joint research establish agreements in advance regarding allocation of tasks, publication credit, and types of acknowledgment received, and incur an obligation to cooperate as agreed.

I.4. Research Publications and Presentations

- d. Contributor(s). Rehabilitation counselors give credit through joint authorship, acknowledgment, footnote statements, or other appropriate means to those who have contributed significantly to research or concept development in accordance with such contributions. Principal contributors are listed first and minor technical or professional contributions are acknowledged in notes or introductory statements

International Academy of Life Care Planning Standards of Practice (International Academy of Life Care Planners, 2015)

III. Standards of Performance

- 2 The life care planner shall practice in an ethical manner and follow the Code of Ethics of his or her respective professions, roles, certifications and credentials.

Measurement Criteria:

- a. Follows the Code of Ethics for his or her profession.
- b. Follows the Code of Ethics for his or her professional roles, certifications, and credentials.

From the CDMS Code of Professional Conduct (Certification of Disability Management Specialists Commission, 2019)

Preamble Certified Disability Management Specialists (certificants) recognize that their actions or inactions can either aid or hinder clients in achieving their objectives, and they accept this responsibility as part of their professional obligation. Certificants may be called upon to provide a variety of services and they are obligated to do so in a manner that is consistent with their education, formal training, and work experience. In providing services, certificants must demonstrate their adherence to certain standards. The CDMS Code of Professional Conduct (Code) has been designed to achieve these goals. . . .

The fundamental spirit of caring and respect with which the Code is written is based upon five principles of ethical behavior. These include autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, justice, and fidelity, as defined below:

Autonomy: To honor the right to make individual decisions. Beneficence: To do good to others. Nonmaleficence: To do no harm to others. Justice: To act or treat justly or fairly. Fidelity: To adhere to fact or detail.

A code of professional conduct cannot guarantee ethical behavior. Moreover, a code of professional conduct cannot resolve all ethical issues or disputes or capture the richness of complexity involved in providing professional input within a moral community. Rather, a code of conduct sets forth values, ethical principles, and ethical standards to which professionals aspire and by which their actions can be judged. Disability management specialists' ethical behavior should result from their personal commitment to engage in ethical practice. The Code reflects the commitment of all disability managers to uphold the profession's values and to act ethically. Principles and rules of conduct must be applied by individuals of integrity who discern moral questions and, in good faith, seek to make reliable ethical judgments.

Rules of Professional Conduct Section 1 – Relationship with All Parties RPC 1.09 – Reports Certificants shall be accurate, honest, unbiased, and timely in reporting the results of their professional activities to appropriate third parties.

RPC 1.12 – Misconduct Certificants shall not engage in professional misconduct. It is professional misconduct if the certificant: c. engages in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation. . .

From ICHCC-Practice Standards and Guidelines (International Commission on Health Care Certification, 2020)

Principle 1 - Professional and Legal Standards ICHCC certificants shall behave in legal, ethical, and professional manner in the conduct of their profession, maintaining the integrity of the Code of the Professional Ethics and avoiding any behavior which would cause harm to other entities and/or individuals.

Rules of Professional Conduct:

R1.4 ICHCC Certificants shall not engage in any acts or omission of a dishonest, deceitful, or fraudulent nature in the conduct of their professional activities.

R1.5 ICHCC Certificants shall understand and abide by the Principles and Rules of Professional Conducts which are prescribed in the Code of Professional Ethics.

R 1.6 ICHCC Certificants shall not advocate, sanction, participate in, and cause to be accomplished, otherwise carry out through another, or condone any act, which the ICHCC Certificants are prohibited from performing by the Code of Professional Ethics.

R1.9 ICHCC Certificants shall not write, speak not act in ways that lead others to believe Certificants are officially representing the ICHCC unless such written permission has been granted by the ICHCC.

References

- Certification of Disability Management Specialists Commission. (2019). *Code of professional conduct with disciplinary rules procedures and penalties*. [https://cdms.org/sites/default/files/docs/CCMC-19-CDMS-Code-Of-Conduct-Web%5C%20\(1\).pdf](https://cdms.org/sites/default/files/docs/CCMC-19-CDMS-Code-Of-Conduct-Web%5C%20(1).pdf)
- Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification. (2017). *Code of professional ethics for rehabilitation counselors*. https://www.crcrcertification.com/filebin/pdf/Final_CRCC_Code_Eff_20170101.pdf

- International Academy of Life Care Planners. (2015). *Standards of practice for life care planners* (3rd ed.). American Association of Nurse Life Care Planners. <https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/REHABPRO/Standards%5C%20of%5C%20Practice%5C%20for%5C%20Life%5C%20Care%5C%20Planners%5C%202020.pdf>
- International Commission on Health Care Certification. (2020). *Standards and examination guidelines*. <https://ichcc.org/images/PDFs/Practice-Standards-and-Guidelines-2020.pdf>