

CRITICAL INCIDENT PAPER ASSIGNMENT- SARAH DEVOE

Purpose: The purpose of this assignment is to identify and apply the American Counseling Association's (ACA) and/or American School Counselors Association (ASCA) code of ethics to group work. CEFS/COUC students should focus on the ACA code, while COSC students should focus on the ASCA code.

Directions: To complete this assignment, you will need to access the ACA/ASCA code of ethics. Choose **one** of the scenarios below, and after reviewing the facts, divide your paper into 3 headings, writing one paragraph response for each question:

- Identify: What is the issue?
- Summarize: Briefly summarize the ACA/ASCA code(s) that address this situation. Make sure to include the code numbers. (Example: "ACA code B.2.3 states....").
- Act: What is the best course of action now and why?

Each section should be one paragraph. Simply answer the questions above in the space provided below. (No title page, abstract, or reference page). Your response should be no longer than 300 words total. DO NOT ADD FLUFF as you will lose points.

Scenario 2:

Jane is starting a group for teenage girls who are struggling with self-esteem issues. Jane, wanting to get the group started right away, and worried that she won't have enough participants, opens the group to all girls ages 13-15. Jane does not worry about screening potential participants though she does obtain written consent from all the girls' guardians. Alice is a 15-year-old participant in the group who has struggled with depression in her past. This information is not known to Jane, as she did not screen for it. After one particularly difficult group session, Alice goes home and attempts suicide. Alice's mother calls Jane angry and upset, blaming Jane for her daughter's suicide attempt.

Identify

In scenario two, group counselor Jane made a number of mistakes and violated ethical code in setting up her group. Jane should have screened a specific grade for students who were particularly struggling with her selected topic. The topic that Jane selected- self-esteem issues, may have been inappropriate for a school-age group setting and more suitable as an individual counseling topic. Due to Jane's lack of screening, she does not realize that fifteen-year-old participant Alice has struggled with depression in the past and does not take proper steps to protect her from potential triggers.

Summarize

In failing to screen students for her group, Jane went against ethical code for both the American Counseling Association (ACA) and the American School Counselor's Association (ASCA). In section A.9.a. of the ACA's code of ethics, it is stated that counselors must screen group participants, selecting individuals whose needs coincide with group goals, and whose well-being will not be put at risk by participating in the group (ACA, 2014). In section A.9.b., the code also states that counselors take precaution to protect clients from experiencing trauma in the group setting. In ASCA's ethical standards, section A.7. provides guidelines for groupwork- including the need for counselors to screen students to ensure that the group is appropriate for them, use data to inform topics, and select topics suitable for groups in schools (ASCA, 2016).

Act

The best course of action for Jane to take is to follow ASCA ethical standard A.7.1. in providing follow up, referrals, and resources for her group members to ensure their ongoing safety (ASCA, 2017). The group should be terminated as it was not set up in a safe manner, but should be done so delicately, following ethical guidelines for termination. Going forward, Jane should take steps to not repeat her mistakes by becoming familiar with both ASCA and ACA code for setting up groups using screening, assessing student needs, and determining an appropriate topic.

Resources

American Counseling Association. (2014). 2014 ACA *code of ethics*. <https://www.counseling.org/Resources/aca-code-of-ethics.pdf>

American School Counselor Association. (2016). *ASCA ethical standards for school counselors*. <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/getmedia/f041cbd0-7004-47a5-ba01-3a5d657c6743/Ethical-Standards.pdf>