

UNCLASSIFIED



# Managing Dual Relationships in an Embedded Environment: An Ethical Perspective

Air Force Lt Col Art Miller, Psy.D., A.B.P.P.

JSOC Deputy Command Psychologist

Fort Bragg, NC

June 23, 2022

0800 - 0900 ET

# Presenter

---

Air Force Lt Col Art Miller, Psy.D., A.B.P.P.

Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) Deputy Command  
Psychologist

Fort Bragg, NC

UNCLASSIFIED



*Medically Ready Force... Ready Medical Force*



# Air Force Lt Col Art Miller, Psy.D., A.B.P.P.

Air Force Lt Col Art Miller, Psy.D., A.B.P.P. commissioned in the US Air Force in 2003 after earning his graduate degree in Clinical Psychology from Pacific University in Oregon. After completing his Internship at Wright Patterson Air Force Base (AFB), he served as the Family Advocacy Officer at Pope AFB and then the Mental Health Officer in Charge (OIC) at Cannon AFB. In 2008, he went to the AF SERE School where he was the Chief of AF SERE Psychology and the Medical Flight Commander. He returned to Ft Bragg in 2013 as the Command Psychologist for the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) GSU and for the last four years he has served as the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) Deputy Command Psychologist. Lt Col Miller is the senior Operational Psychologist in the Air Force and the Director of the Air Force Operational Psychology Fellowship. He has multiple deployments in both clinical and operational roles to Afghanistan, Jordan, Qatar, and other locations.

UNCLASSIFIED



*Medically Ready Force... Ready Medical Force*



# Disclosures

---

- Lt Col Art Miller has no relevant financial or non-financial relationships to disclose relating to the content of this activity.
- The views expressed in this presentation are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense, nor the U.S. Government.
- This continuing education activity is managed and accredited by the Defense Health Agency, J-7, Continuing Education Program Office (DHA, J-7, CEPO). DHA, J-7, CEPO and all accrediting organizations do not support or endorse any product or service mentioned in this activity.
- DHA, J-7, CEPO staff, as well as activity planners and reviewers have no relevant financial or non-financial interest to disclose.
- Commercial support was not received for this activity.

UNCLASSIFIED



*Medically Ready Force... Ready Medical Force*



# Learning Objectives

---

At the conclusion of this activity, participants will be able to:

1. Define and discuss the complexities of managing dual relationships in an embedded setting.
2. Describe a deliberate thought process when considering potential involvement in a dual relationship.
3. Summarize ethical reasoning when it comes to managing dual relationships.

UNCLASSIFIED



*Medically Ready Force... Ready Medical Force*



# What would you do?



UNCLASSIFIED

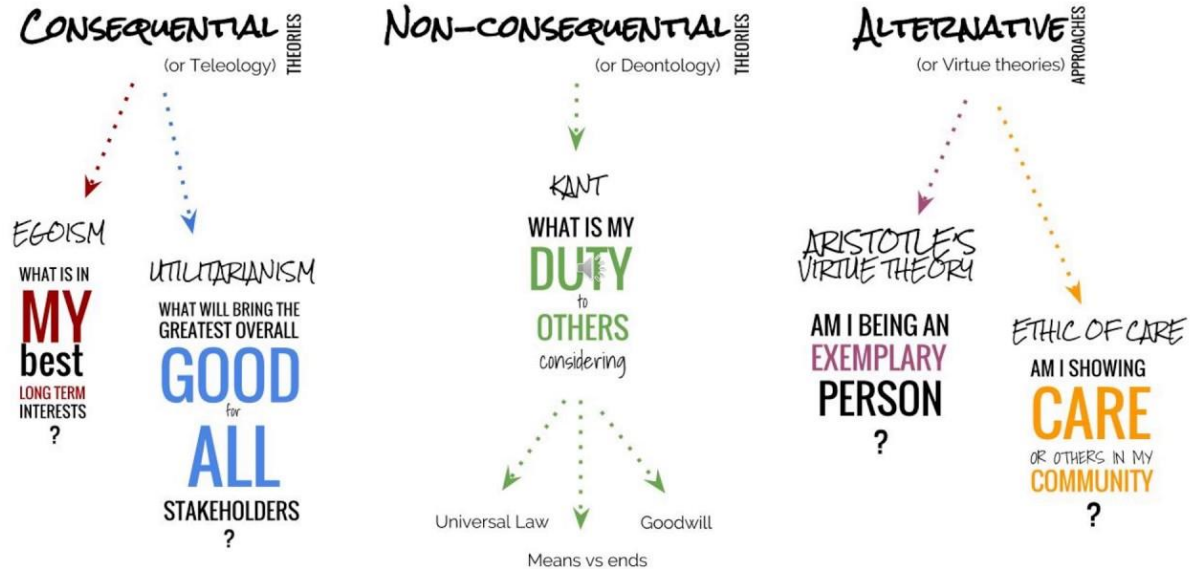
(Courtesy of Lt Col Miller)



*Medically Ready Force... Ready Medical Force*



# Let's talk about ethics



UNCLASSIFIED



Medically Ready Force... Ready Medical Force



# Consequentialist vs. Non-Consequentialist

You are walking in the woods and you have snake venom antidote in your backpack. You come across a person who has been bitten by a snake and you recognize the person as one proven to be responsible for a series of rapes and killings.

The Non-Consequentialist gives the antidote to the person because it saves a life;

the Consequentialist withholds the medication because to do so potentially saves many others.

Your mother has Alzheimer's disease and every day she asks you if she has Alzheimer's disease. Telling her "yes" makes her miserable for that day, then she forgets what you told her and asks you again the next day.

The Non-Consequentialist tells her the truth because lying is always wrong;

the Consequentialist lies to her because they will both enjoy that day.

<https://www.learnreligions.com/deontology-and-ethics-249865>

UNCLASSIFIED



*Medically Ready Force... Ready Medical Force*





# Let's go back to the boat...



UNCLASSIFIED

(Courtesy of Lt Col Miller)



*Medically Ready Force... Ready Medical Force*



# Useful Ethics

---

“Ethics codes cannot do our questioning, thinking, feeling, and responding for us. Such codes can never be a substitute for the active process by which the individual therapist or counselor struggles with the sometimes bewildering, always unique constellation of questions, responsibilities, contexts, and competing demands of helping another person... Clinicians confront an almost unimaginable diversity of situations, each with its own shifting questions, demands, and responsibilities... Ethics that are out of touch with the practical realities of clinical work, with the diversity and constantly changing nature of the therapeutic venture, are useless.”

(Pope & Vasquez, 1998, xiii – xiv)

UNCLASSIFIED

*Medically Ready Force... Ready Medical Force*



# Aspirational Principals

---

## Psychology Ethics Code (APA, 2017; 20 pages)

- General Principals... aspirational in nature:
  - Beneficence and Nonmaleficence: help people you work with and avoid harm
  - Fidelity and Responsibility: establish trust, understand professional and scientific responsibilities to society and communities in which they work.
  - Integrity: promote accuracy, honesty, and truthfulness in science, teaching and practice.
  - Justice: Psychologists recognize all persons should have access to and benefit from contributions of psychology. aware of biases, competence, and do not condone unjust practices.
  - Respect for People's rights: respect dignity and worth of all people

UNCLASSIFIED



*Medically Ready Force... Ready Medical Force*



# Common Ethical Issues Faced by Embedded Providers

---

1. Informed Consent
2. Competence
3. Confidentiality
4. Dual/Multiple Relationships
5. Conflicts Between Ethics, Law, Regulations, Governing Legal Authority and/or Organizational Demands

UNCLASSIFIED



*Medically Ready Force... Ready Medical Force*



# American Psychological Association (APA) guidance 3.05

## Multiple Relationships

---

(a) A multiple relationship occurs when a psychologist is in a professional role with a person and (1) at the same time is in another role with the same person, (2) at the same time is in a relationship with a person closely associated with or related to the person with whom the psychologist has the professional relationship, or (3) promises to enter into another relationship in the future with the person or a person closely associated with or related to the person.

UNCLASSIFIED



*Medically Ready Force... Ready Medical Force*



# APA guidance continued

---

A psychologist refrains from entering into a multiple relationship if the multiple relationship **could reasonably be expected to impair the psychologist's objectivity, competence, or effectiveness** in performing his or her functions as a psychologist, or otherwise risks exploitation or harm to the person with whom the professional relationship exists.

UNCLASSIFIED



*Medically Ready Force... Ready Medical Force*



# APA guidance continued

---

- Multiple relationships that would not reasonably be expected to cause impairment or risk exploitation or harm are not unethical.
- (b) If a psychologist finds that, due to unforeseen factors, a potentially harmful multiple relationship has arisen, the psychologist takes reasonable steps to resolve it with due regard for the best interests of the affected person and maximal compliance with the Ethics Code.

UNCLASSIFIED



*Medically Ready Force... Ready Medical Force*



# Scenario #1



You have a close working relationship with your Sgd CC. He consults you almost daily and you have regular “running meetings” where you talk about a lot of things to include the stress of his position. After working together for 1 year, his wife files for divorce and takes their children. You begin to observe increasing depressive symptoms and your “running meetings” start to feel more like therapy.

What is the ethical issue?

What do you do?

UNCLASSIFIED



(Photos Courtesy of Lt Col Miller)



*Medically Ready Force... Ready Medical Force*





# Is this an accurate statement?

---

- If it is not documented, it did not happen.

UNCLASSIFIED



*Medically Ready Force... Ready Medical Force*



# Let's get this out of the way...

---

- If it is not documented, it did not happen...
  - Providers can lie.
  - Providers can document but that does not mean it happened...or happened competently (questions at end of primary care manager [PCM] session, copy forward).
  - Consulting, psycho-education, coaching happen all the time **with impact** but no documentation.

UNCLASSIFIED



*Medically Ready Force... Ready Medical Force*



## Scenario #2



You are an embedded behavioral health (BH) provider in a logistics squadron. You are working with a client who is reporting that he is unable to work in the warehouse because it is too “busy, chaotic, and activates his severe posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)” secondary to a deployment to BAF where he experienced IDF. One day while scrolling your Facebook (FB) feed you get notified of a person you may know, it is your client with pictures of his most recent trip to a professional football game and the week he spent at Disney World.



(Photos Courtesy of Lt Col Miller)

UNCLASSIFIED

*Medically Ready Force... Ready Medical Force*



# We know this, but still feels weird...

Survey of 332 clients –

- 70% reported finding personal information about therapist on the internet
- 87% of these individuals indicated they found the information intentionally
- 13% indicated they found it accidentally
  - 78% found information on Google
  - 42% found information of Facebook
  - 17% found information on LinkedIn
  - 10% found information on a Blog
- 3% paid for increased access and 0.5% Hacked an account
- 67% returned to the page a few times, 45% returned frequently

UNCLASSIFIED

(Kolmes & Taube, 2013)



*Medically Ready Force... Ready Medical Force*



# Key Takeaways

---

- Every provider will have to deal with dual relationships in their practice
  - Military shrinks our world and makes this more likely
  - Embedded work shrinks our world even more and makes it inevitable
- Dual relationships are not as easy to avoid as we may hope and...
  - You may not want to avoid every dual relationship.
- It is paramount that you understand your personal ethical boundaries
- It is also paramount that you understand your professional ethical obligations
- In an embedded role you must be willing to exist in the gray.

UNCLASSIFIED



*Medically Ready Force... Ready Medical Force*



# References

---

Cline, A. (2019). Deontology and Ethics: Ethics as Obedience to Duty and God. <https://www.learnreligions.com/deontology-and-ethics-249865>

American Psychological Association (APA). (2017). Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct: Including 2010 & 2016 Amendments. <http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/>

Kolmes, K. & Taube, D. (2013). Seeking and finding our clients on the internet: Boundary considerations in cyberspace. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 45, 3-10.

Pope, K.S., & Vasquez, M. (1998). *Ethics in psychotherapy and counseling: A practical guide*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

UNCLASSIFIED



*Medically Ready Force... Ready Medical Force*



---

# Questions?

UNCLASSIFIED

*Medically Ready Force... Ready Medical Force*



# How to Obtain CE/CME Credits

To receive CE/CME credit, you must register by 0745 ET on 24 June 2022 to qualify for the receipt of CE/CME credit or certificate of attendance. You must complete the program posttest and evaluation before collecting your certificate. The posttest and evaluation will be available through 7 July 2022 at 2359 ET. Please complete the following steps to obtain CE/CME credit:

1. Go to URL: <https://www.dhaj7-cepo.com/content/jun-2022-ccss>
2. Search for your course using the Catalog, Calendar, or Find a course search tool.
3. Click on the REGISTER/TAKE COURSE tab.
  - a. If you have previously used the CEPO CMS, click login.
  - b. If you have not previously used the CEPO CMS click register to create a new account.
4. Follow the onscreen prompts to complete the post-activity assessments:
  - a. Read the Accreditation Statement
  - b. Complete the Evaluation
  - c. Take the Posttest
5. After completing the posttest at 80% or above, your certificate will be available for print or download.
6. You can return to the site at any time in the future to print your certificate and transcripts at: <https://www.dhaj7-cepo.com/>
7. If you require further support, please contact us at: [dha.ncr.j7.mbx.cepo-cms-support@mail.mil](mailto:dha.ncr.j7.mbx.cepo-cms-support@mail.mil)

