

HOW TO OBTAIN AN ETHICS CONSULTATION

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Every practitioner eventually faces a situation in which his or her own best judgment is not enough to resolve an ethical dilemma. According to Stone (2005), an ethical dilemma exists when these four elements are present: (1) Reasonable choices exist between two or more courses of action. (2) Each choice can be supported by ethical principles. (3) Each choice presents significant potential consequences. (4) The selection of either course of action will compromise at least one of the ethical principles.

In the American Psychological Association's (APA; (2017) *Ethical principles and code of conduct*, the term *reasonable* is defined as follows:

“As used in this Ethics Code, the term *reasonable* means the prevailing professional judgment of psychologists engaged in similar activities in similar circumstances, given the knowledge the psychologist had or should have had at the time” (APA, 2002, p. 1062; 2010, p. 2, APA, 2017, p. 3).

What does *reasonable* mean? The word *reasonable* does not define itself. Reasonable is often defined in a circular manner (e.g., what a reasonable person would do). What is reasonable to one person may not be reasonable to another. Therefore, consulting with colleagues helps define what is reasonable. When consulting with colleagues, consult with those whom do not share your own viewpoint.

Organizations That Provide Ethics Consultations

APA Ethics Office	202-336-5930
APA Insurance Trust (The Trust)	800-477-1200
American Professional Agency	800-897-0033
GPA Ethics Committee	404-634-6272
ACA Ethics Department	800-347-6647
LPCA of Georgia	770-449-4547
HPSO	800-982-9491
CPH & Associates	800-875-1911

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Twenty-five common consultation topics are discussed in Doverspike's (2015, pp. 153-284) chapter titled “Consulting With Colleagues.”

References

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