

Case Scenario 1: A Case Illustrating Virtue Ethics

Read the case about Kevin:

Your client, Kevin, is making good progress in his counseling with you. Then he informs you that he has lost his job and will not be able to continue seeing you because of his inability to pay your fees. Here is how four different therapists handled a similar situation:

Therapist A: I'm sorry but I can't continue seeing you without payment. I'm giving you the name of a local community clinic that provides low-cost treatment.

Therapist B: I don't usually see people without payment, but I appreciate the difficulty you find yourself in. I'll continue to see you, and you can pay whatever portion of my fee you can afford. In addition, I would like you to seek out a community agency and do volunteer work in lieu of the full payment.

Therapist C: I suggest that you put therapy on hold until you can financially afford it.

Therapist D: I can't afford to see you without payment, but I am willing to suggest an alternative plan. Continue writing in your journal, and once a month I will see you for half an hour to discuss your journal. You pay what you can afford for these sessions. When your financial situation has been corrected, we can continue therapy as usual.

Due 9/28

Giselle Shea's Answer these questions:

Q: How do you react to the various therapists' responses?

A: **Therapist A-C's** responses were too forward and direct to the point that the client could no longer be seen with them. Though they made suggestions about what the client could do, they did not provide Kevin with an action plan on how to maintain the progress they have made or even what they could work on in the meantime. **Therapist D's** response provided a more reasonable solution to Kevin's financial hardship and as to what the client can do in the time frame that they will be away from therapy.

Q: Which response appeals to you and why?

A: **Therapist D's response** seemed to be more appropriate considering that the counselor took into consideration all of the progress that Kevin had made and suggested that he could Journal during this time. Journaling can be an effective way to keep track of any issues that come about for a client and can serve as a good reference for the counselor to draw upon with their client; especially during a shorter session. Having a shorter session once a month would be a reasonable suggestion and most likely more feasible financially for a client like Kevin who just lost his job.

Q: Can you think of another response?

A: Another response could be: "I can imagine how difficult your job loss must be for you. You have made so much progress during considering and I understand your desire is to continue as so long your finances permit. Let's come up with a plan together to help you stay focused while you search for new job opportunities. There are plenty of resources you could consider. Perhaps your insurance could offer some suggestions as well. We could also meet for a half an hour bi-weekly and you can be billed on a monthly cycle. For now, let's use this time wisely and create an action plan."

Q: Would you be willing to see a client without payment? Why or why not?

A: I would not see a client without payment because it would cross boundaries that need to remain in a client-counselor relationship. If a client receives a free session in this way, it could lead the to think that they are friends with the counselor and could alter the progress that has been made. It could also become known by others who then might want a free pass. A counselor should always set the standard for themselves in that they are providing a professional service for those who are in need. Free counseling could devalue not only the credibility of the counselor but of the profession as well.

Q: Do you have concerns about the responses of any of these therapists?

A: **Therapist A's response** could be interpreted as insensitive to Kevin's financial circumstances. Though the counselor suggested a local low-income treatment resource, their response emphasized Kevin's inability to afford their services in what could be seen as somewhat a demeaning way.

Therapist B's response showed an appreciation to Kevin's misfortune; almost in amusement of how they could explore their hard time for their practice. This would not be ethical. Additionally, the counselor offered the client, an exchange for their work by volunteering in order for them to pay for mental health services. This is also not ethical or legal for the profession.

Therapist C's response was not delivered with best practices in mind considering that Kevin had been making progress in the therapy sessions and suggesting that he completely put this success on hold, could revert Kevin to old patterns or behaviors that he had before he began counseling. The counselor also did not consider options or resources that could have benefited Kevin during his job search.