

**Team-based Simulations as a Tool for
Developing an Ethical Code of Conduct
among Counselors and Employers in
Supported Employment Frameworks:
Learner Centered Education**

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ABSTRACT

Employment of individuals with mental developmental disabilities (IDD) raises complex ethical dilemmas resulting from various obstacles they encounter in the employment market. This study is of considerable importance as it reveals the perceptions, attitudes and ethical challenges with which supported employment counselors and employers cope, while accompanying these workers in the open employment market.

The central objective of this study is to examine various counseling strategies of the simulation and scenario type among supported employment counselors and employers who accompany workers with intellectual and developmental disabilities in their work, and cope with ethical dilemmas connected with their employment. An additional goal of this research is to expose the ethical dilemmas and ethical behavior rules that occur in supported employment, in order to help develop an ethical code agreed upon by counselors and employers in supported employment. The examination of counseling strategies will focus on ethical dilemmas and ethical rules of conduct derived from this type of employment, that arise from learner-centered counseling (LCE), by means of group simulation workshops with the participation of actors, analysis of dilemma scenarios and investigation of simulation videos, while relating to perceptions of psychological empowerment, self-efficacy, and attitudes towards employment of IDD workers among the study's participants.

The study participants were divided into two groups: the first group included 83 supported employment counselors who were divided into three subgroups: the experimental group that underwent simulation-based group counseling with the participation of actors, control group A that was requested to study the scenarios of ethical dilemmas, and control group B that did not undergo a counseling process. The second group included 60 employers divided into three subgroups as well: the experimental group that underwent group counseling, aided by watching simulations carried out among supported

employment counselors, control group A that was asked to study dilemma scenarios, and control group B that did not undergo a counseling process. All participants completed questionnaires three times in a year that examined their psychological empowerment, self-efficacy, and attitudes regarding the employment of workers with IDD individuals.

The data analysis method was based on Mixed Methods data analysis, a combination of qualitative methodology (observation of simulations and reports, analysis of investigation of events) and quantitative methodology (attitude questionnaires).

Findings in the qualitative section of the study revealed that the majority of the derivative ethical dilemmas and ethical conduct rules (using open coding) were shared by both the supported employment counselors and the employers, and that the ethical conduct rules could be described along a continuum ranging from mental flexibility to rigidity and setting limits. dilemmas and etiquette rules were found around five common interactions that constitute key axes in the social ecological model, for example, the micro system deals with the relationship between the instructor / employer and the employee, the mesos system refers to the instructor / employer and the relationship between them and the parents of the employee, The exos system relates to the instructor / employer and the relationship between them the mecro system discusses the relationship between the instructor / employer and his / her supervisor In the organization, and the chrono system layer deals with the relationship between the instructor / employer and the public policy.

Findings in the quantitative portion revealed that the level of psychological empowerment among the employers was significantly higher than that of the counselors; the level of self-efficacy among the counselors was significantly higher than the level of self-efficacy among employers, and the level of employers' positive attitude toward employing a person with IDD was significantly higher than the counselors' positive attitude toward employing a person with IDD. These findings indicated that role playing through simulations among counselors or observation of the simulations by employers leads to an improvement of attitudes of the psychological empowerment type, self-efficacy and positive attitude toward employing workers with IDD, more than the other types of interventions: analysis of investigations or completing questionnaires.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the influence of simulations is substantially notable in the counselors' group that underwent role playing, and, moreover, the dominant influence on attitudes in the experimental period remains consistent 6 months after the study's conclusion.

In theoretical terms, this study presents an integrative approach to coping with the multi-dimensional complex of ethical dilemmas that arise in subsequence to the employment of a person with IDD, among supported employment counselors and employers, through the use of a social ecological model, while examining varied counseling processes. Practically speaking, the study's findings will help to develop a systemic perspective toward the development of an ethical behavior code for employers and counselors of persons with IDD, a code that is likely to aid them in coping with ethical dilemmas and challenges, while developing a shared policy that will influence the job market for people with IDD.