

## Book Review / Compte rendu

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Chadwick, R. (Ed.) (2012). *Encyclopedia of Applied Ethics* (2nd ed.). [*L'Encyclopédie de déontologie appliquée* (2ième éd.)] Salt Lake City, UT: Academic Press. ISBN 978-0-12-3736-1.

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*Reviewed by:* Jean L. Pettifor

### ABSTRACT

The *Encyclopedia of Applied Ethics* presents short articles on a wide range of topics related to ethics. The second edition (2012) includes issues that have become more significant since the first edition was published in 1998. The articles generally include historical roots, theories, current status, unresolved issues, and considerations for the future. Professional ethics as a subheading of Applied Ethics is not covered sufficiently to guide busy practitioners to resolve ethical dilemmas that they encounter in practice.

### RÉSUMÉ

*L'Encyclopedia of Applied Ethics* [Encyclopédie de déontologie appliquée] présente de courts articles sur une vaste gamme de sujets relatifs à la déontologie. La seconde édition (2012) a inclus des questions qui ont gagné en pertinence depuis la parution de la première édition (1998). Les articles comportent habituellement les sources historiques, les théories, le statut actuel, les questions non résolues, et des considérations pour l'avenir. La déontologie professionnelle en tant que sous-rubrique de la déontologie appliquée n'est pas suffisamment couverte pour guider les praticiens occupés lorsqu'il s'agit de résoudre des dilemmes éthiques auxquels ils doivent faire face dans le cours de leur pratique.

My first comment is to advise counsellors who work primarily in providing direct services to clients that the *Encyclopedia of Applied Ethics* is not a handbook of advice on resolving ethical dilemmas that you encounter in practice. Applied Ethics is

a general field of study that includes all systematic efforts to understand and to resolve moral problems that arise in some domain of practical life, as with medicine, journalism, or business, or in connection with some general issue of social concern, such as employment equity or capital punishment. (Winkler, 2012, p. 174)

Professional Ethics is one of many subheadings under Applied Ethics.

The *Encyclopedia of Applied Ethics, Second Edition* contains four volumes or some 3300 pages with 408 short articles by 408 authors addressing a comprehensive range of applied ethics topics. These topics are presented alphabetically; thus the volumes resemble a reference dictionary rather than a scholarly journal. The subject classification includes Applied Ethics; Bioethics; Computer and Information Management; Economics/Business; Environmental Ethics; Ethics and Politics;

Ethics in Education; Legal; Medical Ethics; Philosophy/Theories; Social; and Social/Media. There is a strong focus on philosophy and history.

The second edition is intended to include aspects of society that have changed significantly since the first edition appeared in 1998, including the response to terrorism, biometric identification, stem cell research, reproductive technologies, environmental issues, and social media. Each volume covers a wide diversity of topics, for example, Volume 1, A to D, lists topics from Abortion to Dual Use of Biotechnology; Volume 2, E to L, lists topics from Ecological Balance to Loyalty; Volume 3, M to R, lists topics from Machiavellianism to Risk Governance in a Complex World, and Volume 4, S to Z, lists topics from Safety Laws to Zoological Parks.

The encyclopedia is a treasure house of information for counsellors who are interested in the application of ethical concepts to a wide range of issues, many of which may not impact their daily practice. The focus of the articles is generally on historical roots, theories, current status, unresolved issues, considerations for the future, and references. It is not a handbook or practical guide for ethical decision-making and it does not address specific ethical dilemmas that are frequently encountered in practice.

There are articles on ethics and various religious faiths (e.g., Buddhism, Christian ethics, Islam, Confucianism, Sikhism, and Taoism). Nonreligious theoretical approaches include feminist therapy. Many social issues of concern today are included (e.g., the military, space, climate change, capital punishment, election strategies, gun control, corporate governance, poverty, and consumer rights).

The professions of medicine, nursing, dentistry, physiotherapy, and social work are included, but counselling and psychology are not. The author of the article on professional ethics sees the professions as using ethics codes and regulation to serve themselves at the expense of the public good, and appears to be unaware of the degree of public accountability that is required under professional legislation. He sees the future of the professions changing as professions lose their power and authority due to a public that is more informed because of the Internet. He believes that ethics will become more important, although all ethical standards will still be open to self-serving abuse by professionals. The question is also raised on whether the professions are sufficiently different that they require separate codes of ethics or whether one common code is more appropriate. The implications of ethics in collaborative care (interdisciplinary) are not addressed. Separate articles are provided on some of the commonly found ethical principles in codes of ethics (e.g., respect, dignity, privacy, trust, truth telling, and conflict of interest).

Another area of increasing importance in ethics today includes globalization, international professional ethics, and the expansion of the concepts of multiculturalism and global ethics. Two articles on global ethics debate its place in the discipline of applied ethics; the conclusion is that global ethics involves a theoretical reworking of key ethical needs and political theories in light of requirements of the world and the application of these theories in practice. The historical roots and theories from ancient Greece to political declarations of independence in the 18th

century to the United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) to the recent *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists* (2008) are not included. Some authors are pessimistic that universal humanitarian values can ever be universal in light of the cultural differences that exist in the world today. They do not discuss the contention that there are universal humanitarian principles that may be translated into culture-specific standards of behaviour.

This encyclopedia has some noteworthy features for members of the Canadian Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy. It provides easy access to narrative on specific topics including an historical and philosophical context for today's concerns on the rightness and wrongness of human behaviour. It seems an ideal source of information for students and instructors in understanding our human struggle over the centuries in determining what are "right" and "wrong" ways of living. As such, the encyclopedia has the potential to enrich one's understanding of ethics and to aid one's appreciation of the influence of context and politics of the times in which one lives.

On the down side for the practicing professional, professional ethics were not adequately addressed. The authors appear to be more academic- than practice-oriented, and hence the publication is short on coverage of professional ethics and the role of legislated regulation. More attention to the differences between aspirational ethics and standards of behaviour would have been helpful as would the use of examples. In addition, some of the authors use language that is too abstract to follow. Other topics of current concern that are not sufficiently discussed are multiculturalism and globalization, including attempts to create ethical principles that are universal to all cultures.

So will members of the Canadian Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy find the *Encyclopedia of Applied Ethics* a "must have" for practical guidance, or value for their money to purchase at approximately \$1295? I think not! Better to find a library with a copy.

### References

- Winkler, E. R. (2012). Applied ethics overview. In R. Chadwick (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of applied ethics* (2nd ed.; Vol. 1, p. 174). Salt Lake City, UT: Academic Press.

### About the Author

Jean L. Pettifor has a Ph.D. in clinical psychology and is an adjunct professor at the University of Calgary. She has served as president of the Psychologists Association of Alberta, the College of Alberta Psychologists, and the Canadian Psychological Association. Trained as a clinical psychologist, she was employed for many years in Alberta Mental Health Services. In the last 25 years, she has focused her work on teaching and promoting professional ethics provincially, nationally, and internationally. She is co-author of the *Companion Manual to the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists*. She has received many awards for her lifetime contributions to psychology.

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