

CAVEWAS Corner

Ethics in Assessment

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CAVEWAS Corner

Dear fellow colleagues and readers, here is our most recent contribution to CAVEWAS Corner.

As many of you know, CAVEWAS (Canadian Assessment, Vocational Evaluation and Work Adjustment Society) is a member society of VRA Canada, serving in large part to represent and support the professional and developmental needs of vocational evaluators as well as professional rehab personnel specializing in work adjustment of injured workers and the like. In this section, you will find current and candid articles authored by CAVEWAS members, non-members (and future members alike) that will share, discuss, and communicate with you developments and changes affecting our membership. This includes issues of best practice, professional development and designation, as well as industry trends.

We hope you continue to find the content in this section stimulating, motivating, and informative and we encourage your ongoing participation and contributions.

Enjoy!

CAVEWAS

National Board Of Directors

If you are a CAVEWAS member and have any ideas, opinions, or thoughts relevant to this section and you would like to share, discuss, and communicate them in the next issue, please contact: Melissa Bissonnette at mbissonnette@insightadvantage.ca. We also encourage you to join our group on LinkedIn.

Oprah Winfrey says “real integrity is doing the right thing [and] knowing that nobody’s going to know whether you did it or not.” Real integrity is a basic principle for vocational assessors who work in confidential and isolated spaces, and often with clients who have very little knowledge or understanding of assessment processes and protocols. Fortunately, most vocational assessors do practice professionally and ethically.

In vocational rehabilitation, the areas of professional practice that receive the most ethical complaints include privacy/confidentiality, informed consent/choices, client rights, record keeping, conflict of interest, and formal testing. This is one reason why Codes of Ethics have entire sections dedicated to vocational assessment (see Fig. 1).

Fig 1.

Code of Ethics	Standard/Value Statement	Values
VRA Canada	5. Evaluation, Assessment, & Interpretation “Vocational Rehabilitation Professionals shall provide quality vocational evaluation and assessment services through the use of valid and reliable assessment tools and techniques. Vocational evaluation and assessment services should be provided in a manner consistent with the best practice principles of the profession. They recognize the historical, social prejudices in the misdiagnosis and pathologizing of certain individuals and groups.”	5.1 Validity and Reliability 5.2 Informed Consent 5.3 Release of Information to Competent Professionals 5.4 Research and Training 5.5 Competence to Use and Interpret Assessment Instruments 5.6 Assessment Techniques and/or Instrument Selection 5.7 Conditions of Assessment Administration 5.8 Multicultural Issues/Diversity in Assessment 5.9 Scoring and Interpretation of Assessments 5.10 Security 5.11 Obsolete Tests and Outdated Results 5.12 Assessment Construction 5.13 Forensic Evaluation

Fig 1. continued...

Code of Ethics	Standard/Value Statement	Values
College of Vocational Rehabilitation Professionals (CVRP)	5. Evaluation, Assessment, & Interpretation "Certified Vocational Professionals [CVP] will provide quality vocational evaluations through the appropriate selection and use of valid and reliable assessment techniques and tools. They recognize the historical, social prejudices in the misdiagnosis and pathologizing of certain individuals and groups."	5.1 Informed Consent 5.2 Validity and Reliability 5.3 Competence to Use and Interpret Assessment Instruments 5.4 Assessment Techniques and/or Instrument Selection 5.5 Conditions of Assessment Administration 5.6 Multicultural Issues/Diversity in Assessment 5.7 Scoring and Interpretation of Assessments 5.8 Release of Information to Competent Professionals 5.9 Research and Training 5.10 Security 5.11 Obsolete Tests and Outdated Results 5.12 Assessment Construction 5.13 Forensic Evaluation 5.14 Informed Consent in Vocational Evaluation
Commission on Rehabilitation Counsellor Certification	Section G: Evaluation, Assessment, & Interpretation	G.1 Informed Consent G.2 Release of Information to Competent Professionals G.3 Proper Diagnosis of Mental Disorders G.4 Competence to Use and Interpret Tests G.5 Test Selection G.6 Conditions of Test Administration G.7 Test Scoring and Interpretation G.8 Assessment Considerations

The fact that all of these standards exist is evidence these organizations are serious about and committed to promoting high technical and ethical standards for professional level skills and behaviours in the assessment area. In recent years, there has been an increase in discussions about how to make sure proper ethical conduct is not only advocated but also applied as best practice. Even after a code of ethics is adopted, each organization struggles with issues of both enforcement and education.

Educational activities are particularly important. Case studies are highly effective at demonstrating how ethical issues may be analyzed and how judgments may be used to evaluate behaviour. Open forums for discussions of ethical issues, disseminating realistic problems that involve judgments about appropriateness of behaviour, and group learning activities that pose ethical dilemmas are also beneficial to the learner's development.

Conducting Internet research in ethics and assessment is also an interesting experience. In doing so, I came across a website by James Bach's, the owner of Rapid Software Testing (1). So how does this relate?

James has summarized how he stays safe in his business through his code of business conduct. The similarities between technical testing in software and formal testing in vocational rehabilitation are impressive. James' code of conduct includes the following:

- Know what a test is
- Maintain reasonable impartiality
- Report everything that I believe, in good faith, to be a threat to the product (client) or to the user thereof (direct stakeholders), according to my understanding of the best

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interests of my client and the public good

- Apply test methods that are appropriate to the level of risk in the product (client) and the context of the project (assessment)
- Alert my clients to anything that may impair my ability to test
- Make my clients aware, with alacrity, of any mistake I have made which may require expensive or disruptive correction
- Do not accede to requests by my client (or others) to work in a wasteful, dangerous, or deceptive way
- If I do not understand or accept my mission, it shall be my urgent priority to discover it or renegotiate it
- Do not deceive my clients about my work, nor help others to perpetrate deception
- Do not accept tasks for which I am not reasonably prepared or possess sufficient competence to perform, unless I am under the direction and supervision of someone who can guide me
- Study my craft. Be alert to better solutions and better ways of working.

Thank you, James, for this insight and reinforcement of best practice. While our association and governing bodies might provide us with the rules and regulations within which we must work and respect, it is up to us to embrace and adopt these guidelines. Like James Bach, we may also choose to establish our own governing principles to better ourselves and our practices. ☺



To view references for this article, visit our website www.vracanada.com/media.php



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