

Publication

Ethics of the Psychotherapeutic Alliance, Shared Decision Making and Consensus on Therapy Goals

Book Item (Buchkapitel, Lexikonartikel, jur. Kommentierung, Beiträge in Sammelbänden)

ID 4526907

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Year 2019

Title Ethics of the Psychotherapeutic Alliance, Shared Decision Making and Consensus on Therapy Goals

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Book title The Oxford Handbook of Psychotherapy Ethics

Publisher Oxford University Press

Place of publication Oxford

ISSN/ISBN 978-0-19-185885-7

Series title Oxford handbooks online

The ethics of the psychotherapeutic alliance (a), shared decision making (b), and consensus on therapy goals (c) is discussed in the context of a legal overview in three German-speaking countries. Particular ethical challenges are identified in different settings. Clinical Ethics Support (CES) has gained importance beyond acute medical patient care, but is still new in psychotherapy. Three examples present ethical issues underlying the basic concepts of psychotherapy (a, b, and c) that often go unnoticed or remain implicit. Addressing ethical questions in a practical psychotherapy context may lead to acknowledging more complexity than expected. At the same time, meta-level ethical reflection can help to coordinate previously diverging interests and efforts and remove obstacles towards problem-solving. Complexity as well as problem solving will be illustrated by referring to problems with confidentiality concerning sexual abuse, coercion in treating dependency disorders, and responding to wishes of assisted suicide.

edoc-URL <https://edoc.unibas.ch/74807/>

Full Text on edoc No;

Digital Object Identifier DOI 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198817338.013.25