

6th International Conference on Clinical Ethics Consultation – Art of Ethics 2010

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Other Presenter: Jim Huth, Ph.D.

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Not planning to submit a poster at this time.

Paper is being completed on this topic for submission to journals

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The Artful Intersection of Psychology and Bioethics Within the Context of an Ethics Consultation

Attention to values, beliefs, and meaning-making that patients and families draw upon as they grapple with ethical issues during an ethics consultation calls for ethicists to enter into a type of therapeutic relationship within the context of an ethics consultation. What allows us to make such a bold statement is that to argue for such a relationship and the use of skills to foster this relationship, points to a more comprehensive and perhaps a more accurate understanding of the roles and functions of the ethicist within an ethics consultation. To be clear, we are defining loosely a “therapeutic relationship” in the context of an ethics consultation as one that involves the development of a safe space for dialogue between patients, families, SDMs, who have been placed in positions where a decision has to be made, or an ethical issue explored, and not referencing a counselor-client relationship where the goal is to affect some type of therapeutic change. Yet, an ethics consultation has a strong relationship component in it: people are in contact with each other and each is making some perceived difference in the experiential field of each other.

The presenters will discuss the above within the context of exploring issues of spirituality with patients/families, and will discuss the need for the bioethics field to address broad based skill training in communication techniques for ethicists. These techniques would foster aspects of a therapeutic relationship with patients and families that allows for the clarification of values and beliefs, and meaning-making exploration.

Text: 254 words