

An In - Depth Exploration of the Ethical Dilemmas Confronting College Counselors: A Comprehensive Analysis of Underlying Causes

Jiabin Zhang

School of Southwest Petroleum University, Chengdu 610500, China.

Abstract: *College counselors play a pivotal role in the mental health and overall well - being of students on campus. However, they frequently find themselves entangled in a web of ethical dilemmas that pose significant challenges to their professional practice. This paper aims to conduct a thorough investigation into the various ethical dilemmas faced by college counselors and analyze the root causes behind these predicaments. One of the most prevalent ethical dilemmas is the conflict between maintaining student confidentiality and the duty to warn. College counselors are bound by ethical codes to keep student information confidential, which is crucial for building trust in the counseling relationship. Nevertheless, in situations where a student poses a serious threat to themselves or others, counselors are faced with the difficult decision of whether to breach confidentiality to protect potential victims. This dilemma is further complicated by legal requirements that may vary across different jurisdictions, adding to the confusion and stress for counselors. Another significant ethical issue arises from the multiple relationships that college counselors may have with students. In a college setting, counselors and students often interact in various contexts outside of the counseling session, such as in academic or social settings. These overlapping relationships can blur professional boundaries and lead to conflicts of interest, making it challenging for counselors to maintain objectivity and impartiality. The paper also examines the influence of cultural and diversity factors on ethical decision - making. College campuses are increasingly diverse, with students from different cultural backgrounds, belief systems, and values. Counselors must navigate these cultural differences while upholding ethical standards, which can sometimes lead to conflicting interpretations of what is considered ethical behavior. To analyze the causes of these ethical dilemmas, this study considers several factors. These include the lack of clear and consistent ethical guidelines, insufficient training in ethical decision - making, and the high - pressure and complex nature of the college counseling environment. Additionally, the evolving social and cultural landscape, as well as advances in technology, have introduced new ethical challenges that counselors may not be adequately prepared to handle. By shedding light on these ethical dilemmas and their causes, this paper hopes to contribute to the development of more effective strategies for preventing and resolving ethical issues in college counseling, ultimately improving the quality of mental health services provided to students.*

Keywords: College Counselor, Ethical Dilemma.

1. ORIGIN OF THE PROBLEM

At the beginning of the 21st century, the No. 16 document "Opinions on Further Strengthening and Improving the Ideological and Political Education of College Students" by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council put forward the requirements for "professionalization and professionalization" of counselors: Based on the principle of "positive", build a team of high-level counselors that combine professional and concurrent skills. In 2022, the National University Ideological and Political Conference was held, and the "Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Ideological and Political Work in Universities under the New Situation" was issued, which puts forward higher requirements for the quality of counselors. In this field, at the theoretical level, scholars have begun to focus on how to establish and improve the standards and norms of "professionalization and professionalization" of college counselors; at the practical level, colleges and universities have begun to focus on improving the "specialization and professionalization" of counselors. For the skills needed, develop professional quality training and training for individual counselors. Theoretical research and practice advancement have greatly promoted the professionalism and professionalism of the counselor team.

However, as a special professional role, counselors work as both teachers and managers, but they cannot simply apply teacher ethics and management ethics to the requirements, and there is no unified "counselor ethics code" for the time being. When talking about the ethical thinking of counselors themselves, in many cases college counselors will fall into the "ethical dilemma" situation, it is easy to enter into professional burnout, or even leave. This phenomenon should obviously arouse the attention of practice and managers for the construction of college counselors. However, there are few more targeted thinking and research in the academic field. Based on the

summary of the experience in the practice process, this article proposes reflections, hoping to help colleges counselors get some suggestions and Enlightenment for future work.

2. COMMON ETHICAL DILEMMAS

2.1 The Ethical Conflict Between Student Independence and University Management

Undergraduates in colleges and universities are basically adults physiologically and enjoy various rights stipulated by the law, Such as the right to equality, privacy, freedom of speech, freedom of movement. The primary task of schools and counselors is to protect students' rights from being violated. However, most students' mental and personality development lags behind their physical growth, so In order to enable students to better develop their morality, intelligence, and physical skills, on university campuses , Chinese universities emphasize extremely high discipline and strict systems. In the actual work process, some students protested against the school's strict management system, such as the dormitory sanitation system, the school attendance registration system, and the school leave system often aroused widespread concern and heated discussions on social media.

Whether to protect the free will of students or to follow the rules and regulations unselfishly often makes counselors get into a difficult choice.

2.2 Ethical Conflicts Brought about by Multiple Values

Here are great differences within the group of college students, and various differences in family background, geographic environment, and cultural customs have formed different living habits and values. For example, classmates in some ethnic minority areas like to drink and often engage in ethnic gatherings, drinking, singing and dancing, which is very different from the living habits of Han classmates. In the author's work practice, there have been incidents of ethnic minority students "sexual harassment" of Han girls. After the investigation, it was discovered that this was actually a misunderstanding caused by differences in cultural backgrounds. Minority students' understanding of normal communication between men and women is different from that of Han students. This may lead to a widening of the gap between ethnic minorities and Han, which is not conducive to the national policy of school management and ethnic integration.

Secondly, as a life mentor for students to grow and become talented and a close friend of a healthy life, counselors need to have more emotional and thought exchanges with students outside of professional knowledge. This requires counselors and teachers to have more identical value concepts with students. However, due to the heterogeneity of the life background, experience, and academic qualifications of the counselors, and the large age gap between them and the students, this has caused a collision of different values. Many times, when facing the same thing, the two sides have completely different views, and even conflicts.

Nowadays, it is common for students to take part-time jobs or simply give up their studies to start a business on or near colleges and universities. On the one hand, colleges and universities encourage students to engage in part-time and entrepreneurial activities. With a good foundation, on the other hand, more and more college students are misled by the so-called "study is useless" in the society, coupled with certain material rewards in the process of part- time business start-ups, they give up their studies, and some even drop out of school to start a side job. This value is usually contrary to the values of counselors. Counselors use their own set of value systems to educate and guide students, but they are often rejected. Coupled with the rebellious psychology of teenagers transitioning to youth, they often backfire. Appropriate value intervention is essential, but how to ask what is appropriate and which values are truly correct often make counselors fall into thinking.

2.3 The Ethical Dilemma under Multiple Roles

Colleges and universities have endowed counselors with multiple roles, as well as various rights and obligations. As a teacher of students, counselors have the right to manage and evaluate students, as well as the right to control various rewards and punishments. These rights It is of great significance to students, which requires the counselor to treat each student objectively and fairly, and keeping a sense of distance from each student is also an important measure for the counselor and teacher to maintain their authority.

But at the same time, the counselor also has the role of student friend. In daily work, he will provide appropriate emotional counseling, value guidance, and ideological leadership to the students in need. This will invisibly increase the emotional link between teachers and students, and students will also In this process, increase the

dependence and expectation on the counselor, not only eager to get the help and support of the counselor teacher in life and study, but also hope to get preferential treatment in various awards and evaluation activities. If the counselor adheres to the principle of work, it will make these students feel disappointed and even hostile to the counselor. This will have a certain impact on the future work. If the personal feelings favor one another, it will not only violate the basic working principles, but also It will arouse dissatisfaction among other students, and it is also not conducive to work.

Therefore, how to find a balance among multiple roles and play the roles of "teacher" and "friend" at the same time has become a dilemma for counselors.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSE

3.1 Special National Conditions

After the founding of New China, the Communist Party of China led the people to establish, develop and improve China's higher education governance system, and the governance of higher education has also gone through different stages of development. The leadership system of higher education institutions has different forms in different periods. It has successively experienced the "School Affairs Committee System", "School (Dean) Dean Responsibility System", "School Affairs Committee Responsibility System under the Leadership of the Party Committee", and "School Affairs Headed by the Principal under the Leadership of the Party Committee". Leadership systems such as the committee responsibility system, the principal responsibility system under the leadership of the party committee, and the school (dean) responsibility system are finally determined as the principal responsibility system under the leadership of the party committee. In the new era, to strengthen and improve the party's overall leadership of colleges and universities is to adhere to the principal responsibility system under the leadership of the party committee, and to give full play to the party's leadership role in college governance and the main role of teachers and students in college governance.

The ideological and political counsellors are the front-line grassroots personnel in the ideological and political education of the party and government, and are assistants to the work of the party committee. This nature determines the importance and seriousness of the work of counselors. They must be consistent with the interests of the party and the country.

Therefore, counselors often fall into confusion when facing diverse and complex student problems.

3.2 Insufficiency of Institutional Mechanisms

Modern society is changing with each passing day, and the rapid development of China's science and technology has brought about various novel social phenomena and problems. College students are the most sensitive group to social changes, and they are the "trendr" of the times. The system of colleges and universities is often relatively fixed and cannot fully adapt to the current management problems of college students, causing the phenomenon of "two skins" between the college system and student management. Counselors When facing such problems, teachers can only make suggestions to the school due to their own position constraints. As for whether they know whether to adopt or how long they will be implemented, it is impossible to predict. The problems that students need to solve are often time-sensitive, which results in counselors' dilemma.

3.3 The Professionalism of the Counselor

At present, the recruitment of college counselors generally only restricts the CCP members, not the Education-related majors. Therefore, some counselors lack the professional knowledge foundation of ideological and political education work, and rely on experience in their work. This puts forward extremely high requirements on the personal professional quality of counselors; coupled with the hard work of counselors, they will be Counselors often choose to relocate or resign, which makes it difficult to accumulate outstanding and experienced talents in counselor positions. As a result, there has been a large gap in the daily work performance of counselors, which has also affected the quality of student management.

4. CONCLUSION

College counselors mainly serve all college students, but the practical problems are complicated, and relying on and applying ethical principles and standards cannot properly handle ethical problems. The solution of ethical dilemmas needs to be tailored to local conditions, based on specific scenarios, fully considering the situation of relevant stakeholders to make comprehensive trade-offs and considerations, and continue to reflect and correct in practice.

REFERENCES

- [1] State Council [Document 16]. Opinions of the CPC Central Committee and State Council on Further Strengthening and Improving the Ideological and Political Education of College Students [Z]. Beijing: CPC Central Committee and State Council, 2024.
- [2] Ministry of Education [Order No. 24]. Provisions on the Construction of Counselor Teams in General Higher Education [Z]. Beijing: Ministry of Education, 2022.
- [3] Zhirong Zhou. The ethical dilemma of college counselors and its coping principles [J]. Hebei Agricultural University Journal: Agriculture and Forestry Education Edition, 2023(10): 17-5.
- [4] Wenjing Wei, Min Zhong. The ethical dilemma and countermeasures of college counselors from the perspective of campus governance—based on the practical experience of school social work[J].Regional Governance, 2023(39):179-181.