# Now What?
# Aligning Expectations & Communication with Outcomes

Susan Fogelson Memorial Ethics Panel 2026

# Introducing the Panelists

Caroline Towery, BCET

Dr. Bibi Pirayesh

Frances Shefter, Esq.

Marion Marshall, BCET, FAET, Moderator

## Roles of the AET Ethics/Scope of Practice Committee

- Protection of AET as an organization
- Keeping up with laws & periodic additions/revisions to AET's Code of Ethics
- Protection of individual members
- Communication with Professional Affairs, Executive Committee, and Certification Board

- Note that the AET Ethics/Scope of Practice Committee is writing an **Everyday Ethics** column for each AET Journal issue.

# Learning Outcomes

**Participants will demonstrate the ability to:**

- evaluate various points of view in the case and describe how they differ
- recognize several ethical approaches to the same case
- explain when the case may have legal elements and/or involve aspects of social equity
- analyze what is in the “best interest” of the client and provide support for that decision
- determine the Scope of Practice issue needed to serve the client within the case

# Specific Goals for this Ethics Panel

- increasing one's capacity to recognize and resolve ethical issues
- recognizing ethics in everyday occurrences
- defining ethics using AET's Code of Ethics
- cultivating & personalizing your own ethical perspectives
- understanding that problem-solving can take different approaches & perspectives
- modeling curiosity in seeking information
- modeling the "wrestling" process
- providing additional tools for participants

## From AET’s Code of Ethics

Developing an "ethical mindset" is an ongoing process that integrates professional values, ethical principles, and ethical standards which must be consciously cultivated, valued, and applied.

# Purpose of Ethics Exam

- Demonstrate knowledge of AET's Code of Ethics
- The ability to recognize and fairly represent the points of view of all constituent groups or persons involved with the educational therapy client
- The ability to balance and weigh competing points of view
- The ability to recognize that there may not be clear-cut answers to ethical problems
- The ability to be guided by "what is in the best interests" of the client
- The ability to provide alternative and well-reasoned possible solutions
- The ability to clearly and fairly communicate ideas and possible

# Participate by:

❖ Responding to the polls

- PollEv.com /scanlon
- Send **scanlon** to **22333**

❖ Keep a running log of your questions, comments  & insights

❖ Put your questions & comments in the Q & A



# Poll Question #1

## How do you define ethics?

1. Facts of the situation
2. AET's Code of Ethics
3. Relevant laws
4. Own personal ethical perspectives

# Caroline Towery, BCET

*Board Certified Educational Therapist | Founder & Director, Adapted Learning Center, Marin County*

## My Perspective

**~17 years**

**as an educational therapist**

As a recent BCET, I just went through the certification process and the ethics exam

## Preparing for the Ethics Exam

**My emphasis for exam takers:**

1. **Explain your reasoning**
2. **Connect it to the AET Code of Ethics and the child's best interest**

## Meet Parents Where They Are

- Parents come to us at very different points in understanding their child's needs.
- We need to take this into account as we navigate a case.

**More in my session, *Empowering the Whole Family***

> *"Ethical reasoning requires us to explain **why** a particular next step makes sense for this child, with the information we currently have – and to reconsider it when new information emerges."*

# Frances Shefter, Esq.

- Every decision starts with one question:
- What does your child need to learn, grow, and feel safe?
- We look beyond labels, test scores, and behavior charts. We focus on the whole child and build upon their strengths to help boost their weaknesses. We push for services and supports that are needed, not what the school wants to provide.

**At Shefter Law, PA these are not just words—
they are commitments we live by.**

We are dedicated to making a difference in the lives of children with special needs and their families, one case at a time.



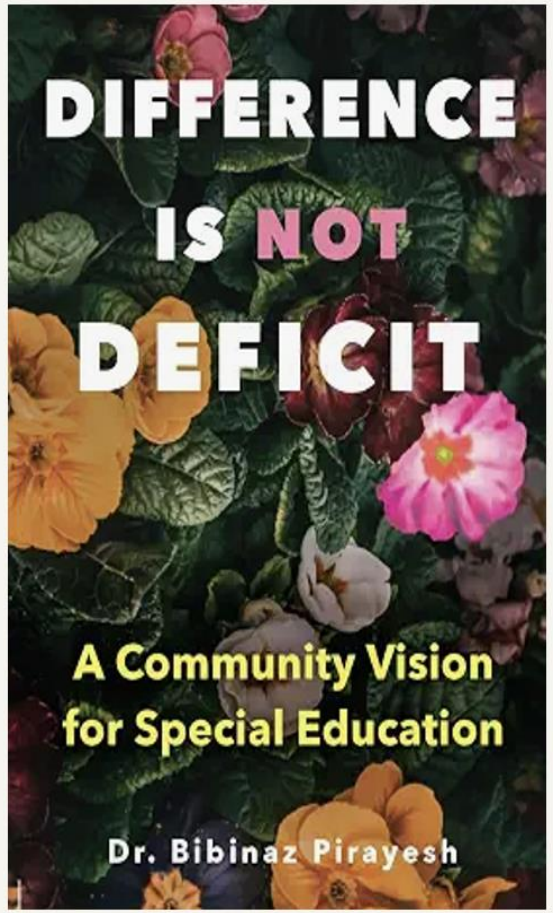
# BEYOND COMPLIANCE

A liberatory ethics of love

**Dr. Bibinaz (Bibi) Pirayesh, Ed.D.**

Educational therapist · 20 years in practice
USC counseling educator · Author & speaker

Disability, education, and liberatory practice




2025 · HEINEMANN

# Disability Justice changes the question.

Not simply: “How do we help this child?”

## But: “Who gets to define what help means?”

**WHOLENESS**

A child is more than a diagnosis, test score, or deficit.

**LEADERSHIP OF THOSE IMPACTED**

Lived experience is essential knowledge—not an afterthought.

**INTERDEPENDENCE**

Access, care, and flourishing are collective responsibilities.

Sins Invalid, 10 Principles of Disability Justice (2015); Patty Berne et al.

# Expertise without domination.

We bring knowledge. But who has the authority to name reality?

**THE "BANKING" RELATIONSHIP**

The professional defines the problem and delivers the solution.

**DIALOGUE & PRAXIS**

Understanding is built with the person, through reflection and action.

**The ethical task: hold professional responsibility without erasing agency.**

Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970); Ignacio Martín-Baró, Writings for a Liberation Psychology (1994)

# Ethics begins before the decision.

*Before we ask, “What should we do?”*

01 **Who has defined the problem?**

02 Whose knowledge counts?

03 What remains outside our frame?

DISABILITY JUSTICE · FREIRE · LIBERATION PSYCHOLOGY

# A framework for staying with complexity.

01 **COLLECTIVE IDEOLOGY**

Question the assumptions

*What are we taking for granted?*

02 **CONNECTED EXPERIENCE**

Honor lived knowledge

*Whose experience is missing?*

03 **CONTEXTUALIZED DIAGNOSIS**

Understand without reducing

*What does the label reveal—and obscure?*

04 **COMMUNIZED CARE**

Share responsibility

*Who must help create the conditions for flourishing?*

# Love is not sentiment.
# It is an ethical practice.

A commitment to dignity, agency, justice,
and our shared responsibility for one another.

| GO BEYOND | HOLD THE TENSION | RESPOND WITH CARE |
| --- | --- | --- |
| the first interpretation | without erasing complexity | without claiming certainty |

*“What do we owe this child—and one another?”*

DR. BIBINAZ PIRAYESH

# Case Part 1 What Was Told:
## Referral Information, Expectations, & Assumptions

- The ET is contacted by a parent who found their name on the AET website.
- The mother states that they are “desperate to assist their child.”
- There is no other ET for miles around.
- The mother voices that she has heard that ETs are like “miracle workers” & can “speed up learning.”
- The mother states the student, Lena, is a 3rd-grader and is “very bright, hard-working, very happy and creative.”
- The mother reported that Lena was diagnosed 1 year ago with dyslexia by the school district.
- Lena has been receiving specialized reading instruction at school three periods a week for the past year.
- Lena’s math skills are behind, but the parent states that they are “not concerned” about that right now.
- Lena was recently tutored over the summer for reading remediation by a former first grade teacher.
- Lena’s reading skills are now a grade level, according to that tutor said the mother.
- The mother described Lena as “anxious,” especially around new people.
- The ET is concerned about the student’s ability to focus on sessions after being in an extended-day school program.
- The parents have agreed to an initial “get-to-know you meeting" between the student and the ET.




Looking at the first quadrant in the 4-Way Decision Making Method

What questions are raised at this point?

Put them in the Q & A.

# Part 2 What Was Observed

- The ET prepares “getting to know you” activities that are non-threatening yet informative.
- Lena paused at the door before entering the office but was able to separate from the mother.
- Lena was not able to give all of the letter names and sounds.
- Lena made many letter reversals and miscalled many similar orthographic letters (p/q) (/b/d) (/n/u); sounds confused
- Very limited number of high frequency words read in isolation.
- Lena’s reading was very inaccurate when reading a brief 1st grade-level story.
- Some of the high frequency words read correctly in isolation are not recognized within the story.
- The ET observes that Lena had an awkward pencil grip; many of her letters were formed with improper letter strokes.
- The ET observes that Lena’s spoken sentences and utterances were very brief or single-word responses.
- Lena was unable to name common objects in a wordless picture book designed to elicit language.
- The ET learns, in conversation with the Lena that Spanish and English are both spoken between the parents at home.
- Lena says that she is “sad all the time” at school because she “can’t read” like the other kids and has “no friends.”
- Lena appeared very fatigued in this brief 30-minute session.

# What sources of information might you tap?

Put your sources or people’s roles in the Q & A.

# Part 3 Assessment Received: New Information, Questions, & Next Steps

- The ET asked to see the current IEP and school ed-psych assessment report. The ed-psych report reveals that the student's cognitive scores are all at the 1st through 3rd percentile ranks.

See the presentation file for assessment scores.*

- The testing shows very low memory skills.
- All of the Lena's academic skills are at the 1st through 3rd percentile ranks.
- The school eval. states that the student does not meet the requirements for a specific learning disability based on the fact that there is no discrepancy between cognitive and achievement scores.

- The school SLP assessed Lena's language skills. A Receptive and Expressive language disorder was determined.
- Lena's Adaptive Skills were also evaluated by the school psychologist.
- SPED services are granted based on low phonemic skills; the report uses the term "dyslexic."
- Lena has been receiving reading support 3 periods a week by SPED teacher.
- She receives one 30-minute session with the SLP per week.

* WISC-5, WIAT-4, NEPSY-II, SLP Report, BASC-3, ASRS

# Poll #2

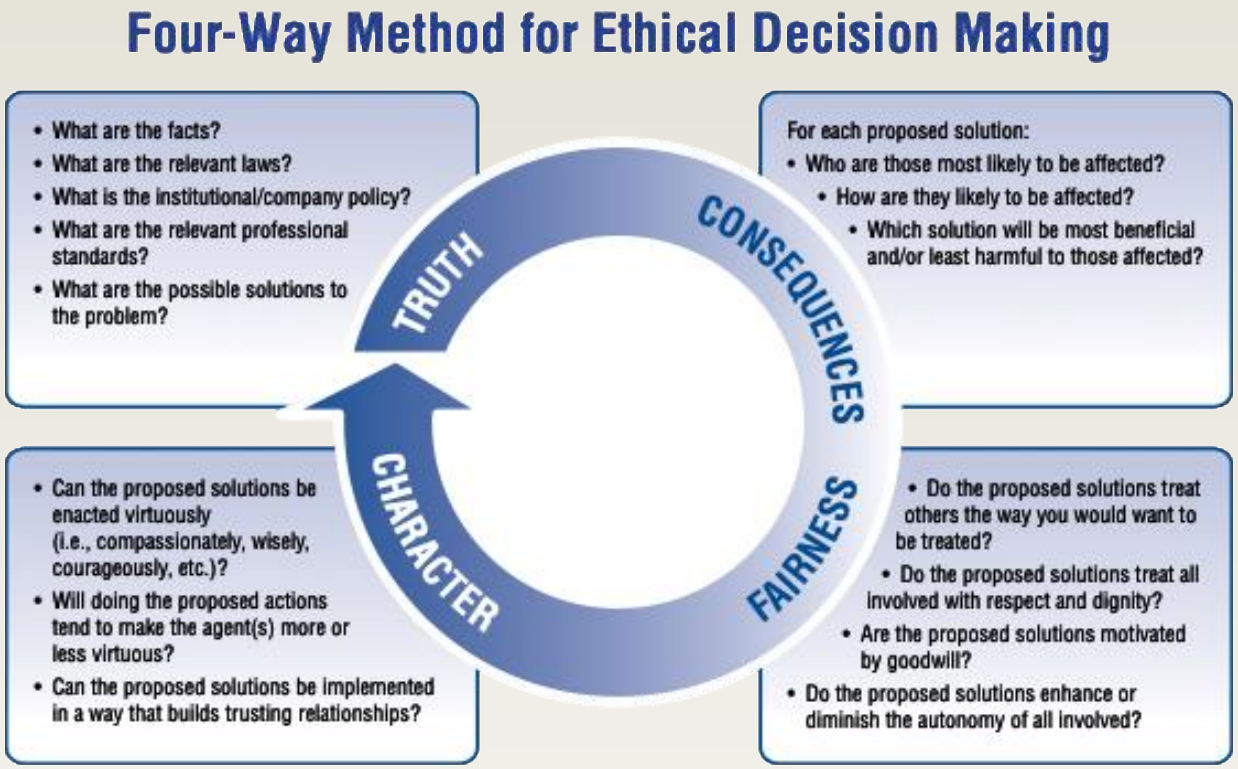
Have you ever experienced a situation where the information received seems in conflict?

1. Yes
2. No



# Now What?

## Ethical Responsibilities, Scope of Practice, & Communication





# Poll #3

If you were the ET & considering your training, might there be a Scope of Practice issue?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

# CONSIDER THIS -

**From AET's Code of Ethics:**

- Educational Therapists shall be committed to the development of professional skills appropriate to the special needs of clients, and devoid of false claims or guarantees.

- Educational Therapists provide only those professional services for which they have been adequately trained.

## Panelists Discuss Case Possible Solutions



# In Conclusion

I keep thinking about how there are always things that we simply do not know. And that the things we don't know, are often the things that matter most.

In thinking about ethical dilemmas and educational therapy practice, in general, I think that we tend to focus on the information we have, weighing evidence, applying experience, and making reasoned judgments.

Yet our decisions are inevitably shaped by what remains outside our awareness: the diagnosis we have not yet considered, the client's values we have not yet uncovered, the social/cultural circumstances we have not recognized (or are biased toward), or the unintended consequences we have not yet anticipated.

~ Juli Bowman, Member of the Ethics Committee & Doctorial Candidate, John Hopkins University



# Poll #4

Did your view of the case change as new information emerged ?

1. Yes, quite a bit.
2. Somewhat.
3. Not really.

Remembering the Goals for the Presentation-

**How did we do?**

Put your comments in the Q & A.

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# Ethics Resources

## located in the session file

**AET's Code of Ethics**
https://www.aetonline.org/images/ABOUT_Section/Governance_Docs/FINAL_FORMATTED_AET_CoE_September_2025.pdf

**AET FACT SHEET**
https://www.aetonline.org/resources/trending-news/116-new-aet-fact-sheet

**Boundary Setting For ETs**
https://www.aetonline.org/images/MEMBER_CENTER_Section/Journal_Docs/2023/44-1/AET_2023_Journal_Spring_FA_low.pdf

**An Ethical Mindset**
https://www.aetonline.org/images/MEMBER_CENTER_Section/Journal_Docs/2018/39-2/AET_2018_Journal_Fall_FA_web.pdf

**Foundational Principles in Solving Ethical Dilemmas**
https://www.aetonline.org/images/MEMBERSHIP_Section/Applications/Foundational_Ethical_Principles_Graphic.pdf

**Solving Ethical Dilemmas Graphic**
https://www.aetonline.org/images/MEMBERSHIP_Section/Applications/Ethical_Decision_Making_Processes_Graphic.pdf

**Keep reviewing the Everyday Ethics articles in the AET Journal**
https://www.aetonline.org/images/MEMBER_CENTER_Section/Journal_Docs/2025/46-1/Spring2025_05_Is_Lonny_Lost-AETethics.pdf Post Graduation Considerations

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PkoncPAbpsFUAOhu9V2OjZxV-rZUQwZ3/view
Do I Need a Professional Will?

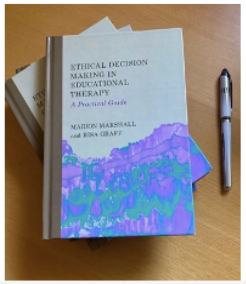
https://www.aetonline.org/images/MEMBER_CENTER_Section/Journal_Docs/2025/46-2/AET_2025_Journal_Fall_FA.pdf Help! What Records Should I Keep?

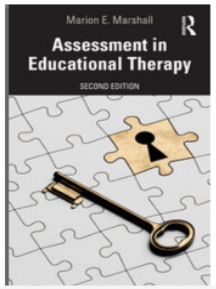
**Have a Question or Dilemma?** Ethics@aetonline.org confidential Consultation Request

**Under Members Center Tab**




**Recommended Books** **(See Chapter 2 Ethics in Assessment)**



# Thank you

Also:

Assessment Scores (in session folder)

Dr. Pirayesh's resources (in session folder)

Questions?