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Moral philosophy, ethical theories, and applied ethics

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Moral Philosophy, Ethical Theories, and Applied Ethics

David J. Cox, PhD, MSB, BCBA-D

Principal Analyst of Behavioral Science & Analytics

Department of Data Science

GuideWell

How can I live
my best life?

What does it mean
to live a good life?

Overview

- Moral philosophy
- Ethical theories
- Applied ethics

Moral philosophy

- What is morality? (Gert, 2016)
 - Statements about 'right' and 'wrong'
 - Latin:
 - *Moralis*: proper behavior of a person; one's disposition
 - *Mores* (*plural of moralis*): customs, manners
- The function of morality
- Morality and ethics

Moral philosophy

- What is morality?
 - 'Right' and 'wrong'
 - Typically justified at individual level
- The function of morality
 - Acquired, maintained, and reduced via social contingencies (Baum, 2005; Skinner, 1953, 1971)
 - Possibility for non-social contingencies to take over
- Morality and ethics

Moral philosophy

- What is morality?
 - 'Right' and 'wrong'
 - Typically justified at individual level
- The function of morality
 - Social & non-social contingencies
- Morality and ethics

Morality

Latin:

- *Moralis*: proper behavior of a person; one's disposition
- *Mores (pl.)*: customs, manners
- Possibility for independent, non-socially mediated contingencies to take over
- Arguments about my behavior

“Right”, “wrong”,
“good”, “bad”

Acquired,
maintained, &
reduced via social
contingencies

Ethics

Greek:

- *ēthos*: the characteristic of a culture, era, or community
- Requires interlocking contingencies of people in group
- Arguments about regulating behavior of people in group

Morality

My behavior



Ethics

Behavior of individuals
within a group

Conscientious Objection

E.g., abortion, contraception, withdrawal of life sustaining treatment

Refusal to participate in violence, vaccinations

Morality

My behavior



Ethics

Behavior of individuals
within a group

Practice Standards

*E.g., scope of practice,
reinforcement before punishment procedures
develop intervention without a functional assessment*

Moral philosophy

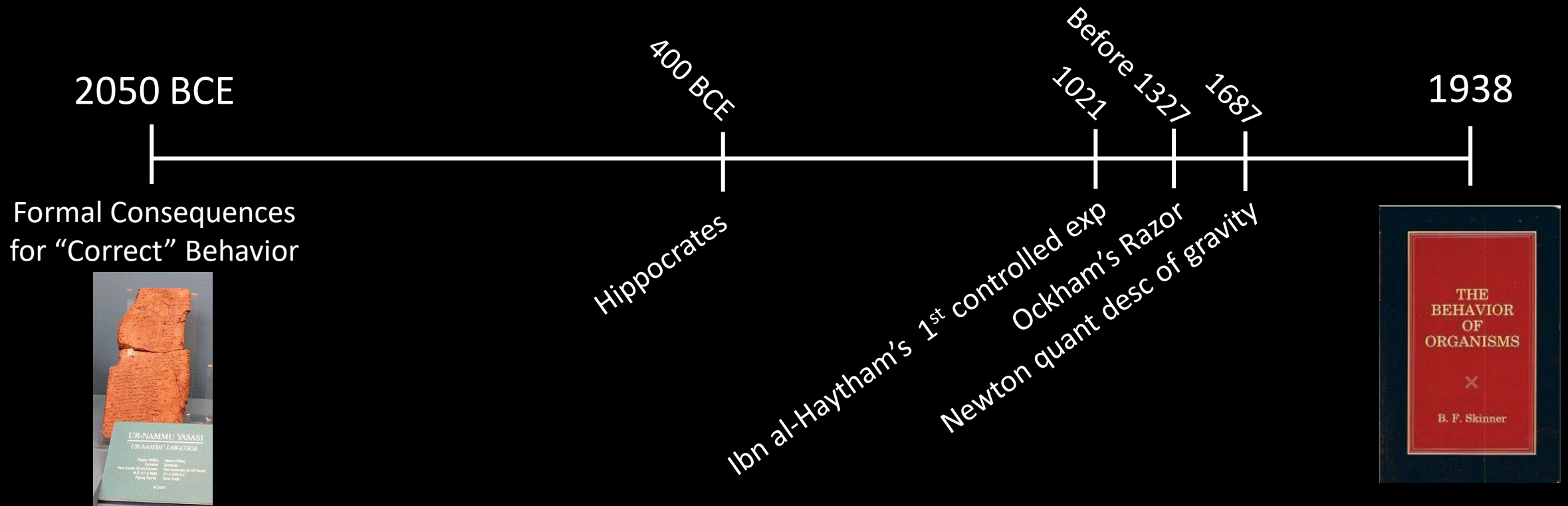
- What is morality?
 - 'Right' and 'wrong'
 - Typically justified at individual level
- The function of morality
 - Social & non-social contingencies
- Morality and ethics
 - Overlap, but distinct

Overview

- Moral philosophy
- Ethical theories
- Applied ethics

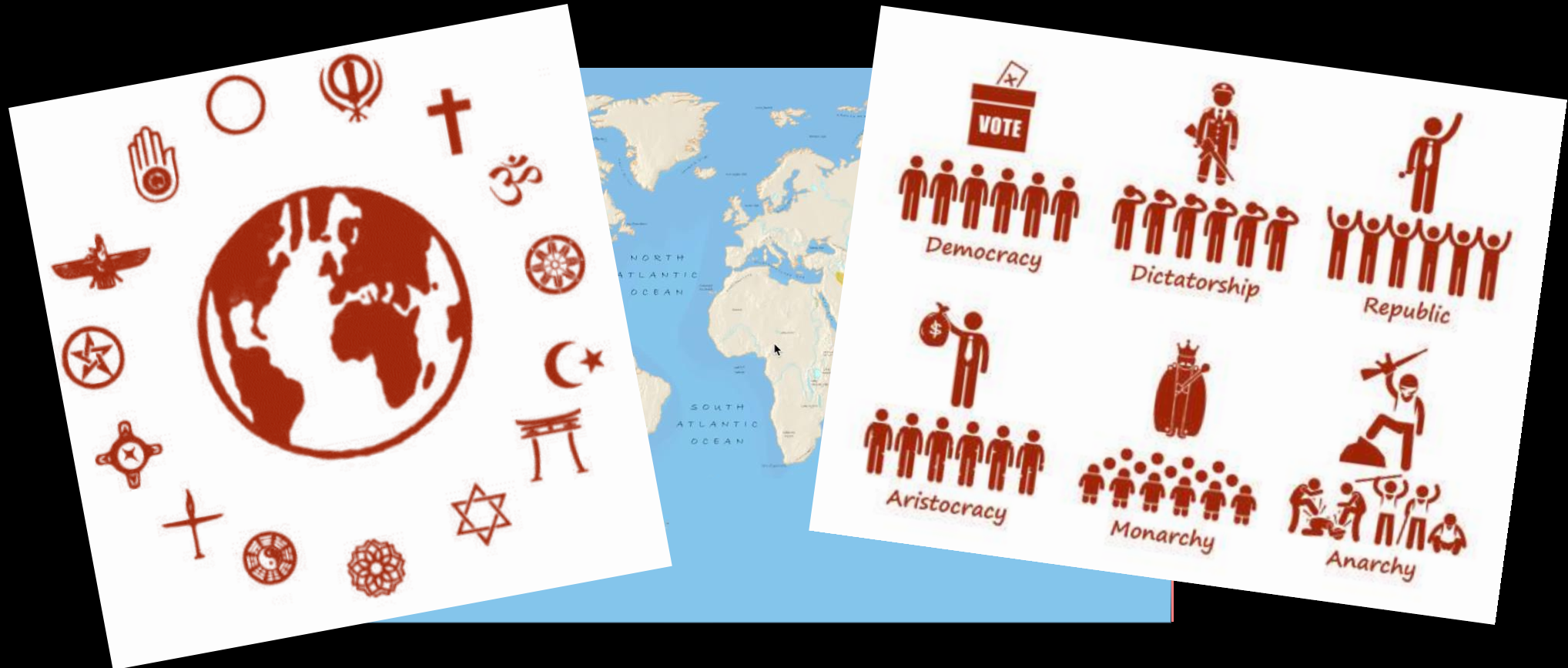
Ethical theories

- Consequences



Ethical theories

- Consequences



Ethical theories

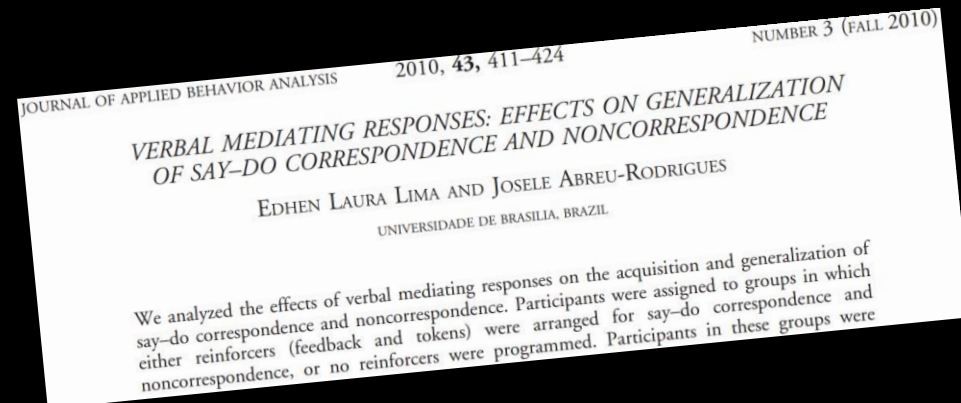
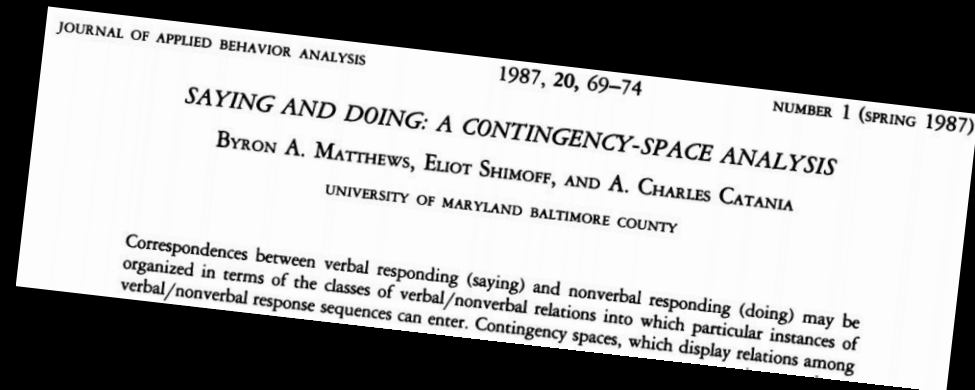
- Consequences
 - Virtue
 - Consequentialism
 - Deontology
- Contract Theory
- Feminist ethics / ethics of caring

Virtue Theory

- Some behaviors are always 'right' or 'good' regardless of contexts or outcomes

Virtue Theory

- Some behaviors are always 'right' or 'good' regardless of contexts or outcomes



Virtue Theory

- Some behaviors are always 'right' or 'good' regardless of contexts or outcomes
 - Moral excellence, or virtue, is proper focus of ethics and rules for behavior



Virtue

- Some b
outcom
- Mor
- Resp



ardless of contexts or
s and rules for behavior
orcement



Ethical theories

- Consequences
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 - Consequentialism
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 - Feminist ethics / ethics of caring

Consequentialism

- Only outcomes of behavior matter



The ends justifies the means.

~ Niccolo Machiavelli

Consequentialism

- Only outcomes of behavior matter
 - Act consequentialism:
 - “Right” or “wrong” *iff* act maximizes good, or minimizes harm
 - Hedonism:
 - Pleasure is only “right”
 - Pain / aversiveness is only “wrong”

Consequentialism

- Only outcomes of behavior matter
 - “Greatest happiness for the greatest number.”

Consequentialism

- Only outcomes of behavior matter



Ethical theories

- Consequences
 - Virtue
 - Consequentialism
 - Deontology
 - Contract Theory
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Deontology

- Behavior in context

Deontology

- Behavior in context
 - Weakness of Virtue Theory
 - Behavior isn't always right or wrong
 - No agreed on upon virtues
 - Not behavior based
 - Weakness of Consequentialism
 - Consequences not in our control
 - Calculations impractical
 - Uncomfortable conclusions

Deontology

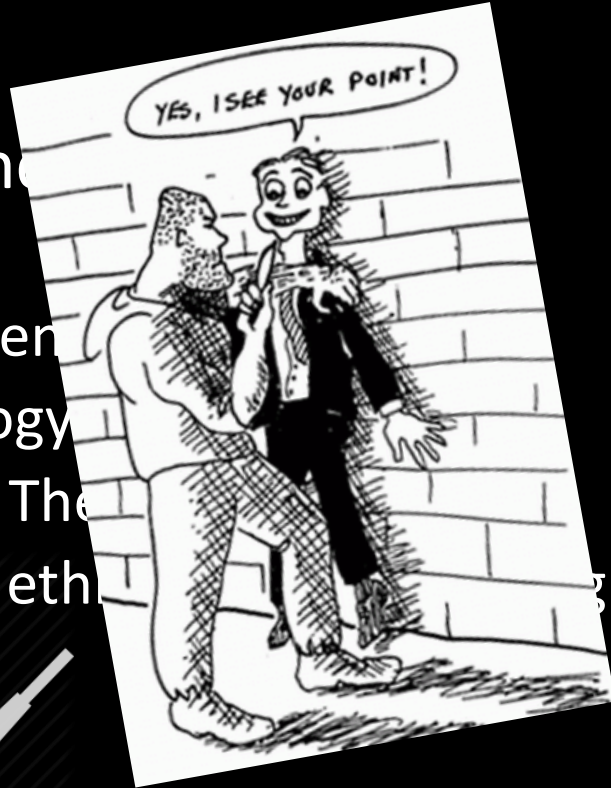
- Behavior in context
- Follow the rules defined by context

Ethical theories

- Consequences
 - Virtue
 - Consequentialism
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Ethical theories

- Consequentialism
 - Virtue
 - Consequentialism
 - Deontology
 - Contract Theory
- Feminist ethics



Ethical theories

- Consequences
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 - Feminist ethics / ethics of caring

Contract Theory

- Agreement to social arrangements shows they're normative
 - We all agree to play the game
- Contractual Approaches:
 1. Role of social contract
 2. Parties involved
 3. Type of Agreement
 4. Object of agreement
 5. What is agreement supposed to show



Contract Theory

- Agreement to social arrangements shows they're normative
 - We all agree to play the game
- Many contractual approaches
- Veils of ignorance are hypothetical
- Contingencies favor providers



Ethical theories

- Consequences
 - Virtue
 - Consequentialism
 - Deontology
 - Contract Theory
 - Feminist ethics / ethics of caring

Feminist ethics / ethics of caring

- Regulating behavior misses the point
 - Independent, rational, impartial, and impersonal decision-making about universal rules
- Care for others provides framework
 - Core of care
 - Moral equality of all people
 - Historical female experience
 - Feminist deliberation



Feminist ethics / ethics of caring

- Regulating behavior misses the point
 - Independent, rational, impartial, and impersonal decision-making about universal rules
- Care for others provides framework
- Ambiguous, local, and familiar
 - Difficulty generalizing
 - Moral relativism

Ethical theories

- Consequences
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 - Feminist ethics / ethics of caring

Overview

- Moral philosophy
- Ethical theories
- Applied ethics



...and i should care,
why?

Applied Ethics

Morality

My behavior

“Right”, “wrong”,
“good”, “bad”

Ethics

Behavior of individuals
within a group

Applied Ethics

Examines *what* is right to do and *why* it is right
for specific issues

Applied Ethics

- Incompatible behaviors
- New behaviors
- Organizational systems and policies

Applied Ethics

- Incompatible behaviors
- New behaviors
- Organizational systems and policies



BEHAVIOR ANALYST CERTIFICATION BOARD®

Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts

RBT® Ethics Code



Applied ethics

- Incompatible behaviors
- New behaviors

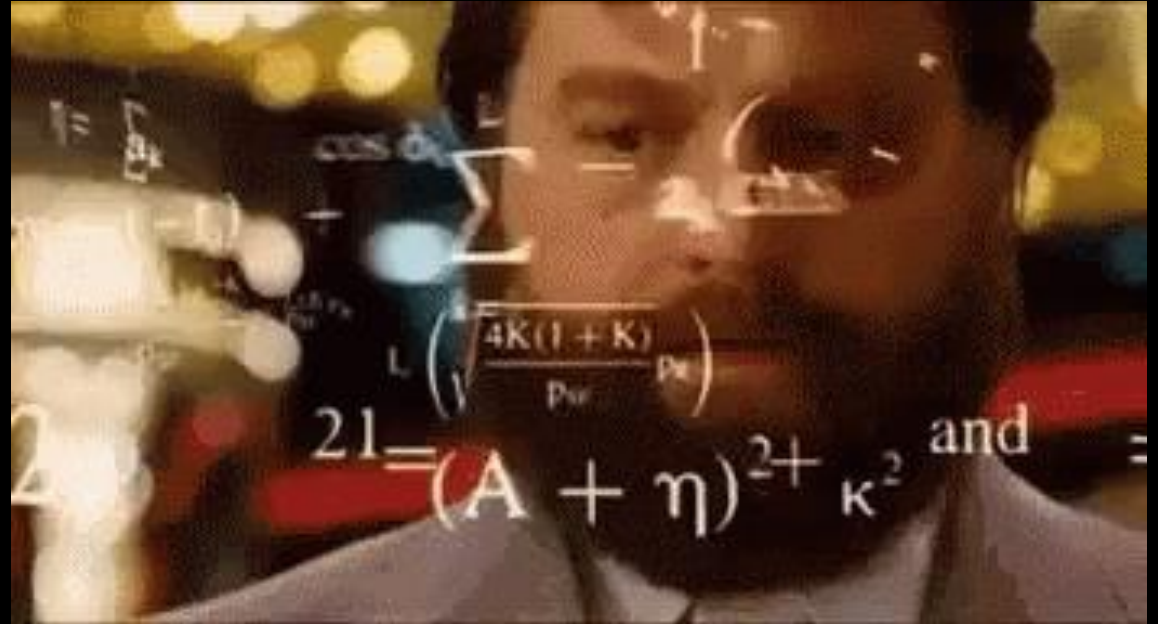
1.04 Integrity.^{RBT}

- (a) Behavior analysts are truthful and honest and arrange the environment to promote truthful and honest behavior in others.

Applied ethics

- Incompatible behaviors

- New behaviors



- Organizational Ethics
- ## 2.09 Treatment/Intervention Efficacy.

(a) Clients have a right to effective treatment (i.e., based on the research literature and adapted to the individual client). Behavior analysts always have the obligation to advocate for and educate the client about scientifically supported, most-effective treatment procedures. Effective treatment procedures have been validated as having both long-term and short-term benefits to clients and society.

Applied ethics


- Incompatible behaviors

1.05 Professional and Scientific Relationships. ^{RBT}

- (a) Behavior analysts provide behavior-analytic services only in the context of a defined, professional, or scientific relationship or role.
- (b) When behavior analysts provide behavior-analytic services, they use language that is fully understandable to the recipient of those services while remaining conceptually systematic with the profession of behavior analysis. They provide appropriate information prior to service delivery about the nature of such services and appropriate information later about results and conclusions.


8.05 Testimonials and Advertising. ^{RBT}

Behavior analysts do not solicit or use testimonials about behavior-analytic services from current clients for publication on their webpages or in any other electronic or print material. Testimonials from former clients must identify whether they were solicited or unsolicited, include an accurate statement of the relationship between the behavior analyst and the author of the testimonial, and comply with all applicable laws about claims made in the testimonial.




2.0 Behavior Analysts' Responsibility to Clients.

Behavior analysts have a responsibility to operate in the best interest of clients.



2.09 Treatment/Intervention Efficacy.

(a) Clients have a right to effective treatment (i.e., based on the research literature and adapted to the individual client). Behavior analysts always have the obligation to advocate for and educate the client about scientifically supported, most-effective treatment procedures. Effective treatment procedures have been validated as having both long-term and short-term benefits to clients and society.

1.04 Integrity.

(a) Behavior analysts are truthful and honest and arrange the environment to promote truthful and honest behavior in others.

Consequentialism

vs.

Virtue

JOURNAL OF APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

1991, 24, 251-264

NUMBER 2 (SUMMER 1991)

FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION TRAINING TO REDUCE CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR: MAINTENANCE AND APPLICATION IN NEW SETTINGS

V. MARK DURAND AND EDWARD G. CARR

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT ALBANY, STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT STONY BROOK, AND SUFFOLK CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Mental Retardation
Vol. 31, No. 1, 49-60
© 1995 American Association on Mental Retardation

An Experimental Assessment of Facilitated Communication

Douglas L. Wheeler, John W. Jacobson, Raymond A. Paglieri, and Allen A. Schwartz

Deontology vs. Consequentialism

1.06 Multiple Relationships and Conflicts of Interest



2.05 Rights and Prerogatives of Clients



Applied ethics

- Incompatible behaviors
- New behaviors
- Organizational systems and processes

Consequentialism

Deontology

Contract
Theory

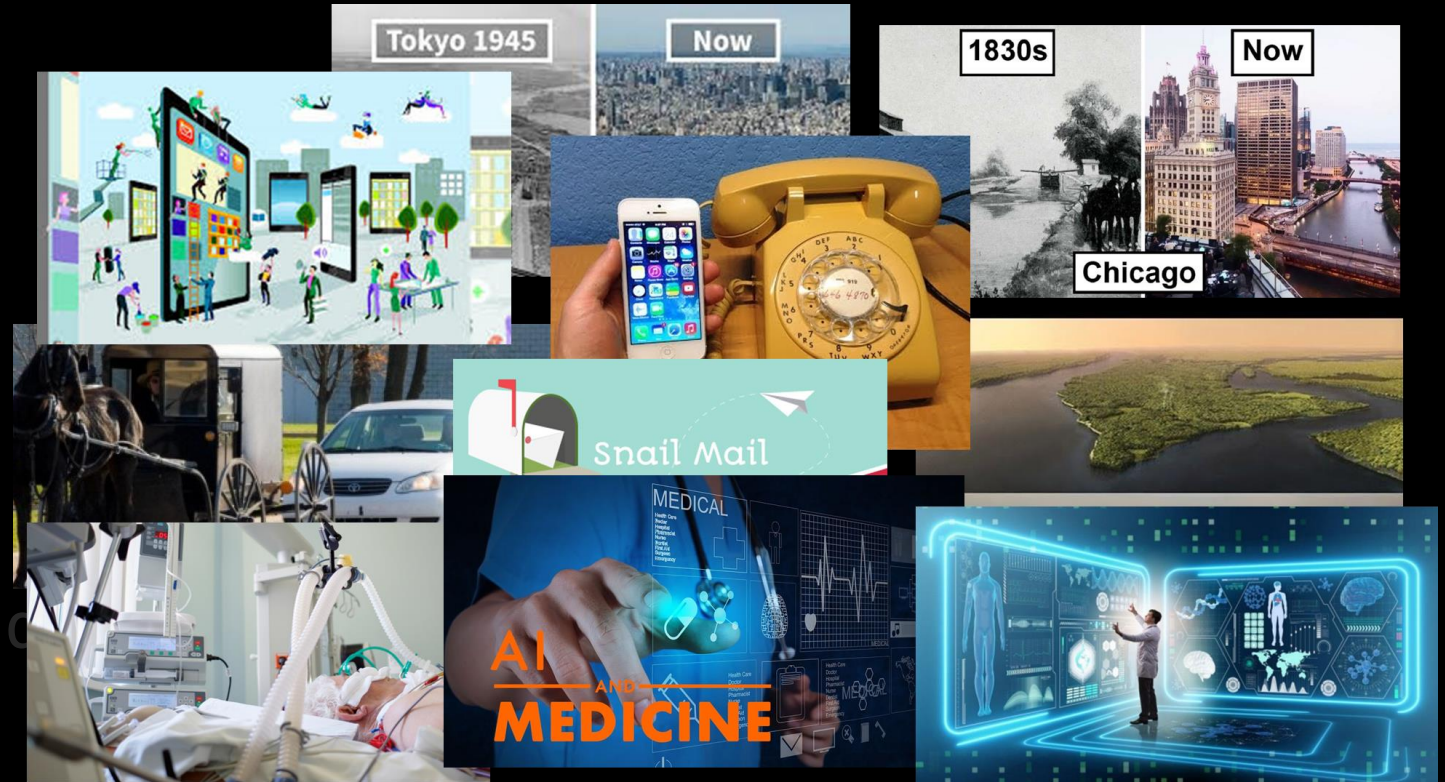
Virtue
Ethics

Ethics of
Caring



Applied ethics

- Incompatible behaviors
- New behaviors
- Organizational systems and



Applied ethics

- Incompatible behaviors
- New behaviors
- Organizational systems and policies



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Applied ethics

- Incompatible behaviors
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Consequentialism

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Virtue
Ethics

Contract
Theory

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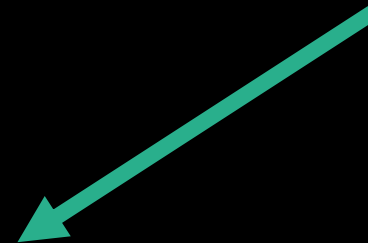
Applied ethics

- Incompatible behaviors
- New behaviors
- Organizational systems and policies

Applied ethics

- Incompatible behaviors
- New behaviors
- Organizational systems and policies
 - What is right = descriptive ethical behavior
 - Why it is right = normative ethical behavior

All the stuff we've been talking about today.



Applied ethics

- Incompatible behaviors
- New behaviors
- Organizational systems and policies
 - What is right = descriptive ethical behavior
 - Why it is right = normative ethical behavior

Applied ethics

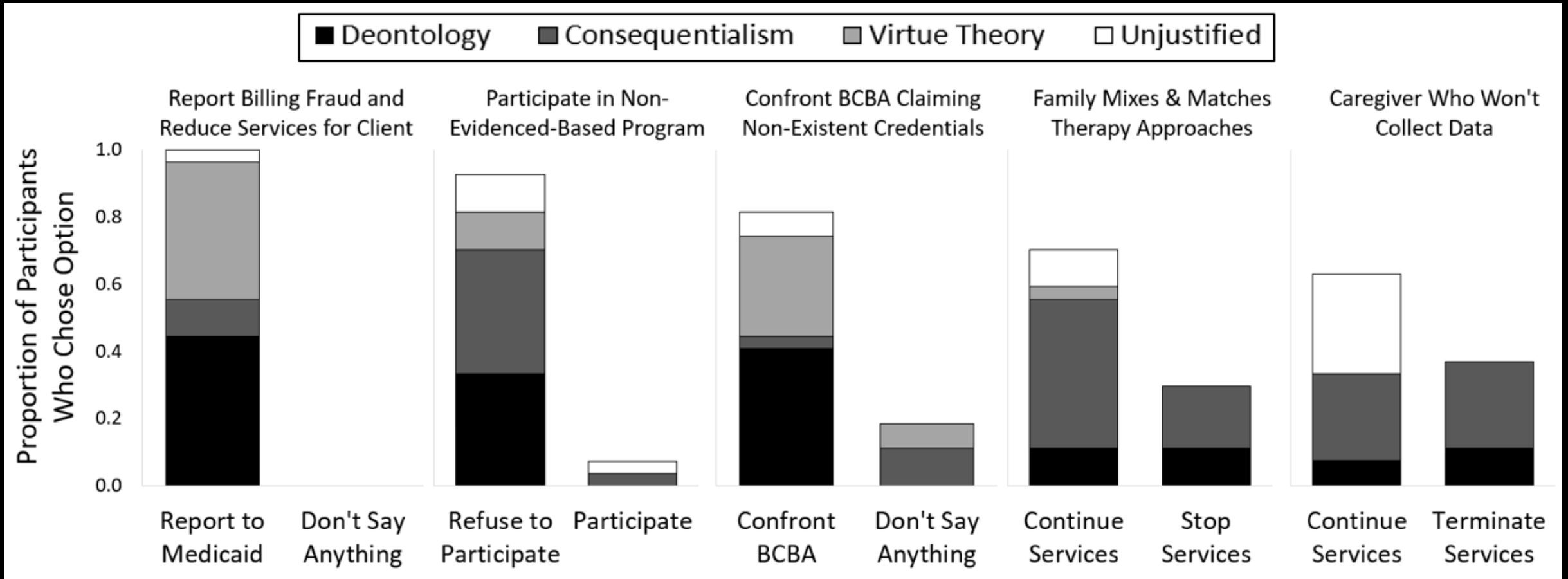
- Incompatible behaviors
- New behaviors
- Organizational systems and policies



Why it is right → What is right

Gert, B., & Gert, J. (2016). The definition of morality. In E.N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy*.
Skinner, B. F. (1953). *Science and human behavior*. The Free Press.

Applied ethics



Cox, D.J. (*accepted*). Descriptive and normative ethical behavior appear to be functionally distinct. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*.

Applied ethics

- Incompatible behaviors
 - New behaviors
 - Organizational systems and policies
 - What is right = descriptive ethical behavior
 - Why it is right = normative ethical behavior
 - Groups of people are variable
- } Functionally independent

Applied ethics



How are Your Values Ranked?

1. Client's best interests

Consequentialism

2. Follow the Code

Deontology

3. Adhere to Contracts

Contract Theory

4. Behave virtuously

Virtue Theory

1. Adhere to Contracts

Contract Theory

2. Client's best interests

Consequentialism

3. Behave virtuously

Virtue Theory

4. Follow the Code

Deontology

- Organizational systems and policies

- What is right = descriptive ethical behavior
- Why it is right = normative ethical behavior
- Groups of people are variable

} Functionally independent

Applied ethics

- Incompatible behaviors
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to live a good life?



How can I live
my best life?

What does it mean
to live a good life?



David J. Cox, Ph.D., M.S.B., BCBA-D

@davidjcox_

cox.david.j@gmail.com

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/coxdavidj/>

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/David_Cox26