

Mental Health Professionals and Media Challenges

Elisa Hernandez

Southwestern Adventist University

Abstract

Today's world is being taken over by the media. They have a lot of influence over how people communicate and get things done. There is not much need for face-to-face communication anymore because the Internet, with its tools of e-mail, video calling, blogs, and social networks, has changed the way that people interact. Technology is something that keeps progressing and changing over time; it is our job to make sure to use it properly and effectively. One needs to proceed with caution and good professional judgment when dealing with aspects of the media. It is important to always keep in mind the principles of confidentiality, ethical conduct, competence, blurred boundaries, and conflict of interests. Social networks, blogs, interviews, and talk shows can be tools that mental health professionals can run into during their career. They can work to one's advantage, but if one does not practice good social media etiquette then there can be grave consequences for one's professional credibility. Maintenance of a client's confidentiality online, and during interviews, or a talk show is crucial and will help one stay out of trouble. Institutional preparation in classes can also be of help in preparing and forming good ethical professionals.

Mental Health Professionals and Media Challenges

Mental health professionals walk on egg shells around the media due to the challenges they are faced with when it comes to working alongside them, or using the media in their practice. It is important for psychologists, school guidance counselors, or anyone that is in the practice of mental health to be aware of the difficulties that one will face when they make the decision to incorporate the Internet, television broadcast, etc into their work. One needs to proceed with caution and good professional judgment. Today's world is being taken over by the media. They have a lot of influence over how people communicate and get things done. There is not much need for face-to-face communication anymore because the Internet, with its tools of e-mail, video calling, blogs, and social networks, has changed the way that people interact. There may come a time when one receives a friend request from a current or previous patient. There may also be a psychologist that is asked to go on a talk show or radio station to give advice to public audiences. It is important to always consider the principles of confidentiality, ethical conduct, competence, blurred boundaries, and conflict of interests. One needs to be informed and prepared on the issue of media relationships and its use, because it is something that is becoming a large part of a professional's life. It is important to learn how to use the media in an effective way that can help one in their profession, so it does not harm them. If precautions are not taken, the ethical principle of confidentiality can be broken. Ethical conduct and one's competence can be questioned; resulting in conflicting interests. The Internet can lead to changing and undefined relationships as well.

Sample Case

One case that speaks on this issue that is found in the *Ethics in Psychology and the Mental Health Profession* book written by Koocher and Keith-Spiegel (2008) consists of a social psychologist that was invited to appear on a national television talk show as an expert to address problems and give advice. The certain situation was of a father that had physically and sexually abused his wife and children. The children, whom were now adults and harbored animosity, confronted their father on their past. The host of the show revealed certain details about the experiences they went through during their childhood. The social psychologist was later introduced into the situation to begin the healing process in the family. The case states that the psychologist was very welcoming to the father at first, to have the father open up. The father was suspicious about the situation and was closed off instead. The frustrated psychologist referred to the father as a monster and also stated he seemed to have a borderline personality. She also proceeded to attack the mother's character, an already abused and distraught woman, for not protecting her children and choosing to stay with the father. Koocher and Keith-Spiegel analyzed that the psychologist did more harm than good, and seemed to act as more of a mob leader. The psychologist lacked a professional approach which did not allow the family members and audience to have acquired enlightenment on the father's situation. Her public diagnosis was also considered to be wrong. It was not ethically appropriate to diagnose the father in such a public manner. Doing so could have had consequences for the father. The psychologist also was not clinically trained to make such a claim of a diagnosis. Also her attack on the mother does not reflect the competence, responsibility, and moral behavior of a mental health professional. The book does not specify if the case was taken up to the Ethics Committee. This case shows how one needs to be careful

when making public appearances in shows like these. The main goal of this media outlet is to entertain the public, its audience. They may not necessarily have the person or people's best interest in mind. As a mental health professional one needs to keep in mind that it is their duty to keep all people from harm. The way she diagnosed the father in public may have soiled his image. She was also not certified to make such a diagnosis. It goes against the code of ethics to make claims based on something that one has no knowledge of. Her outburst did not show professionalism at all.

Literature review

Regarding the media and its now ever present and constant use by mental health professionals, it appears that there are professionals termed, "young professionals" that are the ones taking advantage of this technology. Mize (2011) defines young professional membership as "any professional thirty-five and younger who is working at least part-time" (p. 45). These young professionals can be found anywhere in any field and their numbers seem to be growing. They are also referred to or considered to be the professionals of the millennial generation (Mize, 2011). Professionals that have been in their field longer do not seem to have much liking for these newcomers; they possess both positive and negative characteristics. These professionals hold an average of twelve to fifteen different jobs during their first years after graduating. This is partially due to the fact that they have a large sum of student loans and they will not settle for a job that will pay them less than they believe they should or want to earn. This is something that is viewed as negative to many. Mize (2011) argues that, "some will see the opportunity to job surf as a great way to become a more well-rounded professional" (p.46). A positive aspect that Mize (2011) highlights is the fact that, "young professionals are very aware of social media- their

mobile devices keep them well connected” (p.46). They are able to manage large amounts of information that helps them make better qualified decisions in a more productive manner due to the technology that they are able to use effectively. According to Mize (2011), “current young professionals will use the skills sets developed on mobile and computer devices to lead us in the upcoming years” (p.46). Due to their online participation they are able to be more connected with colleagues compared to previous generations. Their use of peer-to-peer sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn has helped them become more community-oriented. This article defines and identifies who the users of the media are and how they are using this tool to their advantage in their work. It is something that helps them improve the way that things are done and pull away from old ways.

Social Media and its Advantages

Brown (2010) agrees with Mize (2011) in the perspective that the media is a tool that is useful in a professional’s career. Brown recognizes that there is much debate and scrutiny on the topic of professionalism and privacy when dealing with the media. Brown (2010) states that, “there exist no clear boundaries defining what is considered appropriate behavior” (p.744). Meaning the rules or guidelines that are written based on online professionalism is not very specific and is written in a broad manner. This can be partially due to the fact that media is an ongoing changing tool. The article recognizes that trust is something that is crucial in the field, but adding restrictions on the use of media is not something practical. He agrees with Mize (2011) on the basis that it is a method of being connected. He believes that this allows the development reflective practice. Brown (2010) argues that, “reflection is central to the practice of medicine as doctors often find themselves faced with difficulty and complex decisions that

require them to understand how their emotions may produce biases and affect their ability to act professionally” (p.744). “As the world becomes more connected, the profession will continually be confronted with new challenges involving privacy and professionalism online” (Brown, 2010, p.744).

Barclay (2008) also claims that media is an effective tool that can be used for the purpose of informing individuals of personal narratives illustrating complex ethical issues that clinical professionals are faced with (p.26). The author believes that in making individual’s stories public allows for the community to realize and “understand the human consequences of complex medical dilemmas from the perspective of both the patients and the doctors that treat them” (Barclay, 2008, p.26). She wants the public to understand the ethical dilemmas that both the patient and doctors are faced with. She believes that television broadcast is a good media source to get the issue out in the open (Barclay, 2008, p.26). That is why she makes two documentaries of two individual’s lives and discusses them in this article. These stories face ethical concepts such as autonomy, competence, and dignity.

Personal narrative. One story that is discussed is based on Diane Pretty. She was a woman that was in the terminal stage of motor neuron disease. According to Barclay (2008) she is paralyzed from the neck down, dependent on twenty-four hour care, and she is only able to communicate with an electronically- operated voice synthesizer that she could operate with one finger (p.26). Barclay met with her outside of the European Court of Human Rights where she hoped to receive consent for her husband to assist her in committing suicide. Diane decided to be a part of the film because she wanted people to understand why she made the decision of performing assisted suicide. The issues that were being faced with her are that she needed to

receive consent from her before starting to film each time. Another is if filming her in degrading and humiliating situations such as her nurse bathing her was going too far. The other ethical issue in Diane's story has to do with her autonomy, dignity, capacity, and her right to consent to or refuse medical treatment. Is her right to autonomy violated due to the court's refusal (Barclay, 2008, p.27)? The chief of a hospital, states that Diane has the right to choose assisted suicide, but that he cannot break the law. She is fully competent to make her own decision but there is a legal issue that is involved. Context of the portrayal is what is crucial in this case. Barclay (2008) states, that in order for the media use to be effective, "it must be based on trust and willingness to present medical dilemmas in a balanced way and in an appropriate context" (p.30).

Social Media and the Ethical Issues Behind it

Media can be a tool found to be very constructive when used in the proper manner. It helps one connect with colleagues and keep them informed. There are times when it can backfire on a professional; especially when it comes down to social networks.

Greysen & Chretien (2010) bring forth the issue of how popular social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other popular sites similar to these are becoming a hazard for individuals that hold fields where their professionalism is very important in the media's, client's, and other individual's eyes. It discusses three points where professionals need to be weary when it comes to the Internet. These points are: a patient's confidentiality, the impact online content posted by them can have on their patients and the public, and how a single moment of poor judgment when posting something that is unprofessional can have a negative result on the entire profession. "The Internet has changed the way professionals and clients interact with one

another” (Greysen & Chretien, 2010, p.1227). It has also introduced a new way for the public to be able to keep an eye on them. It identifies the fact that the public holds professionals to certain social standards. If they violate these social expectations they are sanctioned by the public as well as by their professional institution or committee. An example that they provide is of professionals that posted pictures of naked and unconscious patients, of them posing next to coffins, and drinking. When these pictures were made viral the public made statements such as, “Anybody who isn’t smart enough to figure out what is acceptable to post on the Internet has no business being in charge of others health” (Greysen & Chretien, 2010, p.1228). This shows how the public’s perception of a professional’s competence and trustworthiness is evaluated by their online activity. Greysen & Chretien (2010) conclude that the public does not feel someone that shows unethical behavior is not responsible enough or suited to handle patient care. Greysen & Chretien (2010) suggest that institutions should educate professionals and future professionals so that when they post or browse through the World Wide Web they leave a trail behind that can be traced and is difficult to get rid of; this trail is identified as a “footprint” that can have negative consequences (p. 1228). They also suggest that institutions should set some kind of standard on online professionalism

In further support to this Mostaghimi & Crotty (2011) state “the omnipresence of the Internet at work, at home, and via mobile devices has led to the birth of the modern information age” (p. 560). “Physicians, like other professionals, are expanding their use of Internet-based resources at work while simultaneously developing individual digital lives marked by sharing thoughts, journals, and media online” (Mostaghimi & Crotty, 2011, p. 560). These advancements in technology are very beneficial to a professional but they can be harmful as well.

It is becoming more of a challenge to separate one's professional life from their private digital persona. Mostaghimi & Crotty (2011) state that these changes create challenges and opportunities in terms of online behavior that require physicians to consider the evolution of professionalism in a digital era. With the continuous use of the Internet professionals need to be that of what they post online and how it is being presented. The use of online rating sites and search engines by clients require professionals to manage their online identities and personal brands. All these challenges demand that they proactively review and maintain their digital lives at a professional and appropriate level. Issues dealing with the dilemma of boundaries also need to be considered. This modern world makes it awkward and difficult when they are faced with a friend request from a client on a social network. Now, one does not just deal with patient disclosure in the office, but with online disclosure as well (Mostaghimi & Crotty, 2011). Nowadays it is easier to connect with colleagues, share studies, and reach clients or potential clients due to the Internet. There are clear limits that exist when it comes to sharing information online that should be kept in mind and not crossed. There have been many cases where staff have had to be reprimanded for inappropriate online posts; "seventeen percent of the posts contained information that could have potentially identified the patient" (Mostaghimi & Crotty, 2011, p. 560). There was a comparison made to elevator talk. There are instances when one can be in an elevator and be discussing something and the other people in the elevator can over hear. An elevator is considered a public place and one needs to be careful with disclosing confidential patient information. One never knows who may be present in the elevator. "In this fashion, social networks may be considered the new millennium's elevator: a public forum where you have little to no control over who hears what you say, even if the material is not intended for the

public” (Mostaghimi & Crotty, 2011, p. 561). Routine electronic self-audits should be performed on a regular basis to see what may pop up on a search engine.

Internet-based Online Groups

In addition to social networks the internet has other purposes for mental health professionals. One such use is Internet-based online group. These online groups are the virtual version of a support group. Although the public aspect of this virtual support group brings ethical issues into the matter. Humphreys, Winzelberg, & Klaw (2000) attempt to bring awareness to the ethical issues surrounding online groups as well as provide strategies for minimizing the occurrence of ethical problems (p. 493). Such tools that fall under online groups are chat rooms, bulletin boards, and discussion rooms. Most of these web pages follow an ask the expert format. Humphreys, Winzelberg, & Klaw (2000) believe that these groups cannot be conducted in an ethical manner. One of the reasons being, that information that is displayed on the internet does insure privacy or confidentiality. Posting something online is “the equivalent of shouting their personal concerns to a large audience” (Humphreys, Winzelberg, & Klaw, 2000, p.494). There is also the possibility of relationship misunderstandings. There may be a user that does not understand that the discussion is public and is not a one-on-one interaction. They may get the sense that the psychologist supervising the forum is their own private therapist; “psychologists must therefore take the pains to ensure that their role is continually clarified” (Humphreys, Winzelberg, & Klaw, 2000, p.494). Not clarifying their role can lead to public harm. This misunderstanding has the potential of developing at any time that is why precautions are to be taken. Humphreys, Winzelberg, & Klaw (2000) suggest that a statement identifying that the group or discussion is public and not a private therapeutic relationship is to be sent to all

subscribers automatically upon integration into the group. “We recommend that psychologist exert caution in such situations because a personal relationship may be created in a context in which the psychologist cannot exercise ethical responsibilities” (Humphreys, Winzelberg, & Klaw, 2000, p.495). Further guidance can be found in Section 3 of the APA.

Code of Ethics View on Media

The code of ethics does not discourage the idea of appearing on a talk show, being interviewed, or the use of the internet; it does however provide advice and guidance.

Koocher & Keith-Spiegel (2008) state:

Risks present whenever we accept opportunities to present ourselves and our ideas and research to the public. The challenge is not whether but how we involve ourselves with the media that raises ethical questions about social responsibility, competence, conflict of interest, and the public image of the helping professions and social/behavioral research (p.404).

Public statements in interviews. “Journalist has total control over what actually gets through to the public. Inevitable alterations occur in the form of small selected segments that fit media needs (Koocher & Keith-Spiegel, 2008, p. 409). One needs to be very cautious in what is said in an interview; the media publishes based on what they believe will sell. Unfortunately this is at the expense of others. They do not have the person’s well being in mind. They have the ability of being charmers and showing interest in one’s work. The opportunity of obtaining publicity can tempt anyone; therefore, many professionals accept interviews. Although they may go in and be blindsided and not being in a situation they did not know they were getting into. One may enter into an interview being attacked, or one might make comments that are not

suitable or appear as professionally or ethically correct. Koocher & Keith-Spiegel (2008) state that it is important to be aware of the situation one is entering into.

Minimizing the risks. It is important to know the purpose of the interview; that way one can be aware of what they walking into. One can be informed on the purpose and details of the story behind it. Also keep in mind that a mental health professional's purpose and a reporter's purpose are entirely opposite. "Keeping these differences in mind may assist in a decision to participate; as well as an understanding why the final outcome is the way it is" (Koocher & Keith-Spiegel, 2008, p. 411). The results can be positive if one is prepared based on what is going to be said beforehand and provides a summary for the reporter. It is also important to be informed and be knowledgeable about the subject they are to be speaking about. Koocher & Keith-Spiegel (2008) advise that if one does not have sufficient experience on the topic or area they will be sharing their expertise on; then they should refuse the interview and refer them to a better source. When making statement one needs to be wary of not speaking for the entire profession. In order to do so, authorization is to be given or sufficient data is available to justify the generalization claim. Confidentiality must also be maintained throughout the interview. "Even if a notable individual consents or invites you to make public statements professional judgment may dictate against sharing such information" (Koocher & Keith-Spiegel, 2008, p. 412).

Guest appearances. Another format of being interviewed is by television or radio broadcast. This can bring troublesome factors such as not being able to get one's point across, or being asked inappropriate or irrelevant questions. Therapists can be called onto a show to provide feedback on guest's questions or situations, and educate the public. The problem is that

the therapist is often giving the last few minutes to make the appearance and provide the advice. “This late in the show maneuver, often made as few as ten minutes before the program ends, serves as a quick-and –easy attempt to lend an air of legitimacy and redeeming social value to otherwise morally dubious entertainment” (Koocher & Keith-Spiegel, 2008, p. 413).

Public statements over the internet. “Public statements should never be made for entertainment or self-gratification purposes at the expense of others or of the mental health professions (Koocher & Keith-Spiegel, 2008, p. 428). One needs to be careful not to break the Federal CAN-SPAM Act of 2003 by sending e-mails to any e-mail that crosses your path. Wording is another factor that needs to be kept in mind. Koocher & Keith-Spiegel (2008) state that defamation lawsuits are more successful due to sloppy users on the internet. At times one may phrase a comment in a way that can be understood differently than what was intended. While others make the grave mistake of intentionally posting information that can harm another’s credibility. They believe that there is no way of being identified, but the Internet always leaves trails that can be traced back to the user. Koocher & Keith-Spiegel (2008) strongly recommend that patient information that has the potential of identifying them be removed when sending confidential material. At times confidentiality may not be respected by the recipient of the information; therefore it is always safer to refrain from writing anything that can breach confidentiality. Once it is sent out into the internet it is not retrievable.

Interviews

The chair of the Psychology Department in Southwestern Adventist University states that the mass media is not something to be considered as harmful (personal communication, March

25, 2013). He believes that the way one chooses to use the media is what can have negative results. When asked on his opinion of the media and professionalism he stated, “One needs to act on professional judgment. If one finds them self pondering if the situation or behavior is appropriate then it mostly likely isn’t and one should refrain from doing or continuing on the idea or action” (personal communication, March 25, 2013). His opinion on social networks and relationships with clients was very clear. “One should stray from befriending clients because it can cause multiple-role relationships. Boundaries will be crossed and it may appear that the professional is taking advantage of the client; this can have law suit written all over it” (personal communication, March 25, 2013). He also stressed the principle of confidentiality. He stated that e-mail is not the best tool to use for communicating with clients. It is possible the e-mail can be seen by other eyes besides just those of the client’s.

It is an easy task for someone to have access or hack into a client’s e-mail. Even sending it to the wrong person can easily occur. That is why if one has to use e-mail they should not include any information that can give away the situation of the patient. Refrain from including any crucial or confidential information; keep in mind that patient confidentiality is one principle that a mental health professional should always maintain (personal communication, March 25, 2013).

On the topic of interviews and talk show hosts he believes there is nothing wrong with being a part of them. He does state that one needs to be wary of what they say especially statements concerning client’s (personal communication, March 25, 2013). Even deceased client information is still bound to confidentiality. When asked for recommendations he restated that one should not breach confidentiality and stray from creating possible multiple-role relationships (personal communication, March 25, 2013).

A current student from Southwestern Adventist University in the Masters Program of Psychology concurred with the chair of Psychology on the topic of social networks. She stated that as professionals, one needs to maintain their position of a client's psychologist at all time, not just when in the office (personal communication, March 28, 2013). As a psychologist one's role does not end when they walk out their office door. When asked about her plans on how to incorporate or deal with media issues she answered

As a recent graduate it is easy to make mistakes, especially when it comes to the media. Young out of the university professionals want to enter the field and be successful right away. That why they are more willing to agree to interviews and appearances. The idea of a career boosts, more or better clientele, and even the possibility of fame can lead them to make bad choices" (personal communication, March 28, 2013).

There is nothing wrong with wanting to advance in the field, but the methods to do so can be considered unethical at times. As new professionals stepping into an interview or talk show can be trouble. One has not obtained enough experience to be knowledgeable about everything in the field. They may not be prepared to walk into a situation where they will find themselves as a target; there have even been instances where professional with years of experience are cornered in interviews. The idea of fast money and fame is something that can altar a young professionals values easily. They want to pay off school debts therefore, to make fast cash they may give up too much information.

I recommend that professors in universities teach more media etiquette so that graduates can be better well prepared when they are thrown out in the field. We need to be informed of the possible situations we will face with them so that we will not fail. Not fail just ourselves but the profession as well (personal communication, March 28, 2013).

Discussion

The ethical issue of the media is something that one needs to take into great consideration in. The media is something that is used globally and has a great deal of influential power. It can be a tool that has the potential of advancing the profession, but it also has the potential of causing harm. The media has its own job to get done, the same way we mental health professionals have ours. Their main duty is to inform the public and to entertain them. Although, at times their way of informing and entertaining is done in a way that can harm an individual. For this reason psychologists need to be wary on how they go about dealing with the media. Image is very important when it comes to the social media. They can turn an innocent thing into a scandal that can lead to someone losing their license. That is why it is very important to think before one decides to act, because just one simple click can hold big consequences.

Social Networks

Nowadays, social networks have replaced the way that people communicate and interact with one another. Social network sites such as Facebook and Twitter have been connecting people in an easier manner. This is a great tool for connecting with new people, but professionals need to be cautious of how they portray themselves in these sites. As research has shown the public bases a professionals' competence by what is posted online. They expect us to behave ourselves in an appropriate manner, because that is how they will make the decision of whether one is trust worthy not. For example it can be pretty ironic to be counseling an alcoholic about his obsessive drinking when he has found a picture online where you are partying and passed out drunk. How can the patient take a professional seriously? This type of behavior would not be condoned by the public. The counselor will be viewed as incompetent in counseling about alcohol addiction. How one portrays him/herself determines their professional

career. It is at this time when one needs to prepare themselves, upon entering the field. It is important to keep in mind that what is posted online can be traced back, even if it was material that was posted years ago. The internet leaves digital footprints that can be followed. Years from now when one is working in the field and are professionals it would be troubling to have a client go online to check one's credibility and background and have them find material that is compromising. That is why it is important to start taking care of one's credibility as of now. As research has shown one needs to be careful with their brand. We are selling ourselves in order to get clientele that is needed. Our credibility is what is going to make us our income. The internet is something that one needs to be careful with, but it is also something that can help us land a good job. Creating a professional portfolio online is a good way of putting oneself out there. It is a tool that can boost one's chance in being successful.

These social network sites also bring dilemmas when it comes to client-patient relationships. There may come a day when one logs into their account and finds a friend request from a current or recently past patient. One is faced with a very uncomfortable situation. If one chooses to accept then they run the risk of creating a blurred relationship where boundaries can be crossed. With the technology we have nowadays it is very tempting to want to consult with a client via e-mail or social networks. It is an easier way of dealing with a client, but it is not a method that does not exemplify professionalism. One needs to be careful when using these means of communication. Things can go very wrong very easily. One needs to always keep in mind that a professional relationship needs to be maintained and made clear to a client if using any of these means to communicate with them.

Online groups

Online groups are something that need to be used with caution if one chooses to create and lead one. As the research mentioned these groups are the virtual versions of support groups. The main difference, besides the fact that they are conducted over the internet, is that they act as a type of ask the expert web page. Any user can join the discussion at any time they wish. They are able to go and post questions or comments on a certain issue they wish to learn more about, or that they be facing. Many join these types of discussions as a type of therapeutic session. It is imperative that psychologists that lead, supervise, or create the site that they state and clarify that the group is not in any way a therapy session. Users may be under the impression that the discussions are lead by a therapist or that a one on one relationship can come out of it. It may not be something that happens intentionally, but it is important to keep the public's information private. They are posting material voluntary but they may not realize the full public aspect of it. Even if they are not one's patient there is still an ethical duty to keep the person from harming themselves from posting personal information.

Interviews and Guest Appearances

The idea of gaining publicity, fame, and more clientele is something that is very tempting to many mental health professionals. Who doesn't want to their work to be known? For this reason many are subjected to agreeing on being interviewed or make appearances on talk shows. They go in thinking of the potential boost that it might bring without considering the consequences. As researchers have mentioned the media's purpose is to get viewers or readers. Reality is that the public is entertained by scandal; it is what they tune into. Journalists or hosts

will use a psychologist to add to their entertainment. Mental health professionals need to realize that a few moments of fame may not be worth it. They run the risk of being misquoted. Journalist will write out stories to their benefit; at times that may be at a psychologist's expense. As experts have stated many times psychologists are invited to add credibility. Many times the psychologist is brought in at the very end after the host has antagonized the public. They may not be given enough time to fully discuss and help the individual. Other times one may be walking into a situation where they find they have to defend themselves. One can be coerced because of the media's appeal. Keep in mind that the media does not the public's interest in mind. One can be walking into a trap of entertainment without even knowing.

Recommendations

Recommendations that can be given are to refrain from posting anything compromising on the internet; whether it is on social networks or any other sites. Keep in mind that the public will determine one's credibility and competence based conduct. That is why it is imperative to have good online ethical conduct. Be wary of not uploading media images that can taint one's reputation. You do not want a client or potential employer to search your name and find old college photos of you. These posts can haunt for the rest of a lifetime therefore start building professional credibility even as a student. The same can be said about public statements online. Refrain from posting information that can lead to false pretenses about one's expertise, relationship with clients, or anything that has the potential to harm anyone. Meaning slandering anyone on the internet, doing so can lead to lawsuits.

For the same purpose one should conduct annual web searches of oneself to know what is out in the internet. Many believe by simply clicking delete it will make everything go away. It only takes a few seconds for information posted in the internet to be seen by someone. As researchers have mentioned the internet leaves behind a foot print that can lead to anything that has been previously posted.

If one is going to be part of an interview or appear on a talk show, they should be prepared for any type of situation. There is an agreement among researchers that one should research the purpose of the show and interview. It is a safety precaution from being blindsided. Also keep in mind that the media's purpose is to entertain. Also if you are not fully capable of proving sufficient information about a topic then refer to someone that can. Do not portray to be credited for something that one is not. For example a school counselor is not knowledgeable of clinical therapy. Do not let fame cloud your judgment because it can have severe consequences.

Always define and clarify relationships. Do not lead people to believe that there is a client-patient relationship over the internet. When it comes to social networks do not make the mistake of socializing with clients. Do not accept that friend request. You do not want boundaries to be crossed. Many times it can lead to a relationship that is more than just friendship.

Academic institutions should provide more education on media conduct. The internet is already a big part of student's lives. If they are taught correctly then they will learn to use the internet properly. They will use it to their advantage. There should be more classes that advise students on the use of social networks, online groups, interviews, and appearances. Media

ethical conduct should be one of the main focuses of the classes. If they are prepared in time then there will be a higher percentage of successful use of the media.

Additions to the Code of Ethics

Netiquette is addressed in the Code of Ethics under the section that addresses relationships between colleagues, students, supervisees, and employees. It specifically addressed the issue with only fellow colleagues; but netiquette needs to be also addressed in the section of media relationships. Netiquette should not just be limited to colleagues. Internet interaction can also happen with clients; whether it be e-mail or through social networks. Social networks are a big part of interaction nowadays therefore there should be regulations and guidelines in the code of ethics that will help mental health professionals refrain from behaving unethically. There is a need for these additions because due to the absence of these regulations one can come to the conclusion that it is acceptable to befriend a client on a social network. Of course with professional judgment one should be able to conclude that it is not recommendable, but someone that is not looking for the well being of the patient will have the ability to say that the code does not forbid it. There should be guidelines that will help one prepare and know how to proceed if the situation should arise. There should be consequences for those that make the poor judgment to socialize with clients over social networks. These consequences can also derail anyone from contemplating. Many will choose to ignore such situations out of fear. At times that is what is needed in order to keep professionalism. Fear is a good incentive.

Conclusion

Technology is something that keeps progressing and changing over time; it is our job to make sure to use it properly and effectively. One needs to proceed with caution and good professional judgment when dealing with aspects of the media. Social networks, blogs, interviews, and talk shows can be tools that mental health professionals can run into during their career. They can work to one's advantage but if one does not practice good social media etiquette then there can be grave consequences for one's professional credibility. Maintenance of a client's confidentiality online and during interviews or a talk show is crucial and will help one stay out of trouble. Institutional preparation in classes can also be of help in preparing and forming good ethical professionals.

References

- Barclay, S. (2009). The Shock of the Human: how the media can change the way we think about ethical dilemmas in medicine. *Clinical Ethics*. doi:10.1258/ce.2008.008046
- Brown, A. D. (2010). Social media: a new frontier in reflective practice: commentaries. *Medical Education*. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2923.2010.03729.x
- Greysen, S. R., Kind, T., & Chretien, K. C. (2010). Online Professionalism and the Mirror of Social Media. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*. doi:10.1007/s11606-010-1447-1
- Humphreys, K., Winzelberg, A., & Klaw, E. (2000). Psychologists' ethical responsibilities in the Internet-based groups: Issues, strategies, and a call for dialogue. *Professional Psychology-research and Practice*. doi:10.1037//0735-7028.31.5.493
- Koocher, G. P., & Keith-Spiegel, P. (2008). *Ethics in psychology and the mental health professions: Standards and cases*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mize, S. (2011). Who are these Young Professoinals?. *Parks & Recreation*, 45-46.
- Mostaghimi, A., & Crotty, B. H. (2011). Professionalism in the Digital Age. *Annals Of Internal Medicine*, 154(8), 560-W.197.

Appendix

What is the role that media plays in the mental health profession?

Are there ethical considerations when it comes to media etiquette?

Are there different standards or principles when dealing with a client over the internet?

Can media involvement hinder a psychologists' competence?

What recommendations do you have for current students in the profession?