

Biol/Chem 4900/4912

Forensic Internship

Lecture 3

Ethics in Forensic Science

Culture - a large group of people with shared beliefs, laws, morals, standards, and characteristics.

Values - a belief that a specific method of conduct is personally or socially preferred.

Morals - specific and generally agreed on standards conduct in society.

Ethics - are standards of conduct that prescribe behavior but do not describe actual behavior. General study of ideals regarding human behavior and guiding principles.

Ethics in Forensic Science

**Ethical Standard in
Forensic Science**

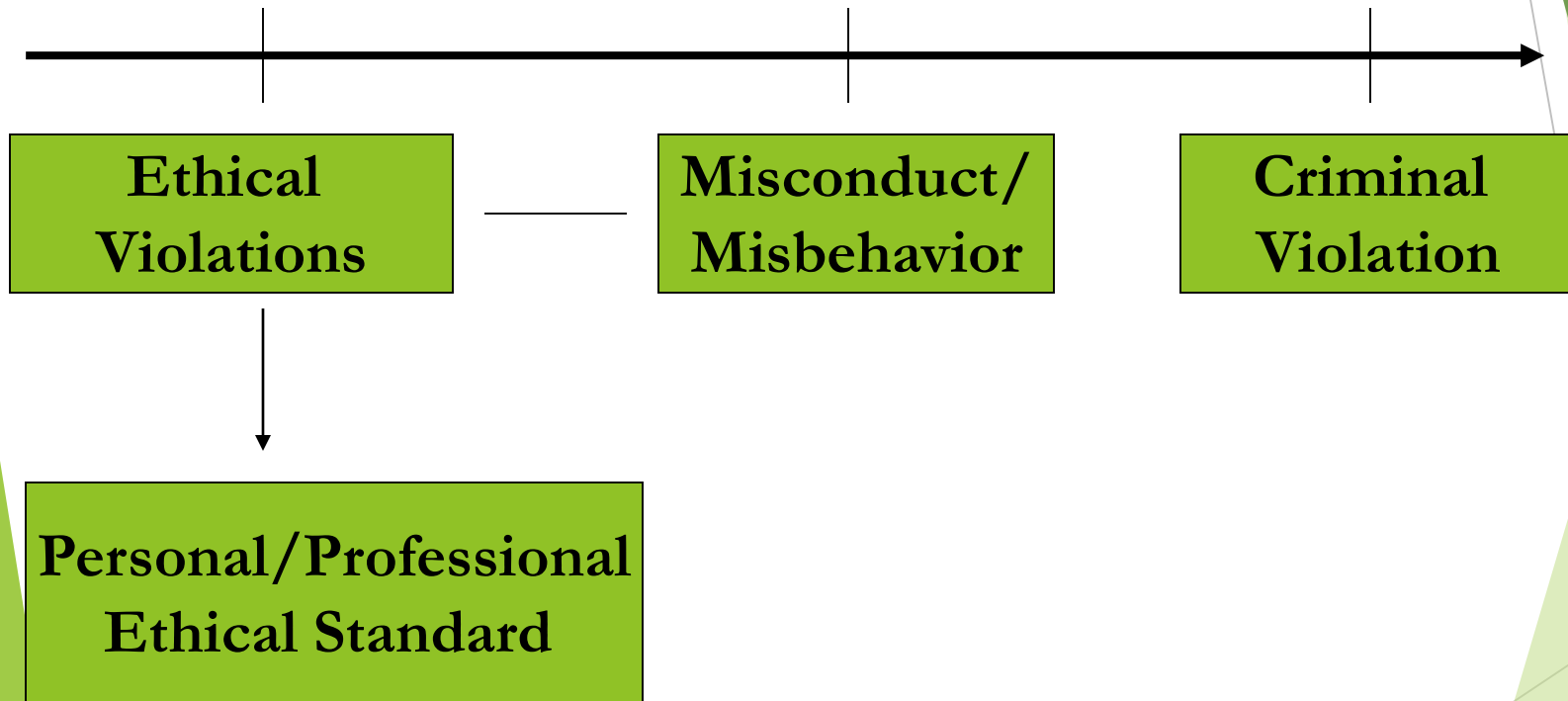
**Ethical Standard in
Criminal Justice**

**Ethical Standard in
Business**

**Ethical Standard in
Science**

Ethics in Forensic Science

Violation Spectrum



Ethics in Forensic Science

1) Definition of Ethics

The rules of conduct recognized in respect to a particular class, group, culture or human action etc.: medical ethics, Christian ethics

2) Definition of Forensic Sciences

The application of scientific principles and practices to the adversarial process where guilt or innocence is determined in court.

3) Components of Ethics

- a. Provide written rules of professional conduct;
- b. Specify an ethical violation;
- c. Decide consequences of that violation.

Common Ethical Issues

- 1) **Misrepresenting qualifications or credentials**
- 2) **Pressured testimony (adrenaline factor)**
- 3) **Omitting unfavorable information**
- 4) **Lying about the knowledge of the evidence planted**
- 5) **Falsifying the data or notes**
- 6) **Biased examination**
- 7) **Discrepancies in ethical guidelines**
- 8) **Determination of ethical violations**
- 9) **Lack of specific training on unethical situations**
- 10) **Need for a disciplinary Forensic Ethics**

Ethics in Forensic Science

Is incompetence an ethical issue?

Can I make a mistake?

Ethics in Forensic Science

Three main types of unethical behavior in criminal justice field:

- 1. Lying and deception**
- 2. Prejudice and discrimination**
 - Prejudice - adverse judgment or opinion formed without examination of all facts or having enough knowledge.
 - Discrimination - making a distinction based on a behavior pattern.
- 3. Egoism and abuse of power**

Why do these occur? Opportunity and incentive

Highlights of Ethical Standards

- 1) Accurate representation of qualifications**
- 2) Maintain the integrity of the evidence**
- 3) True and accurate representation of data**
- 4) Clear and complete documentation**
- 5) Impartiality of the examination**
- 6) Impartiality of testimony**
- 7) Confidentiality and disclosure**
- 8) Reporting of colleagues who violate the profession's ethical code.**

Ethics in Forensic Science

Forensic scientists are subject to pressures from four distinct sources:

- 1. The police who are usually their clients**
- 2. The adversary system, which evaluates their data**
- 3. The science on which the data is based**
- 4. Own personal sense of ethics and morals**

Questions

1. What are some of the ethical decisions you make on a daily basis?
2. Describe what you believe to be the biggest ethical concern in criminal justice today.
3. How is discretion an ethical issue within the criminal justice system?
4. What steps can be taken when determining what course of action someone should take when faced with an ethical dilemma?
5. Describe ethical dilemmas encountered by members of the following criminal justice profession: law enforcement, lawyers, judges, correctional officers, forensic scientist.

Ethics in Forensic Science

Forensic Scientists as Expert Witnesses

Conflicts of interest

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Assignment

- ▶ Paper Abstract (Topic)
- ▶ Work log (due the end of the semester)
- ▶ Assignment: Homework 2 - Compare the various codes for ASCLD and AAFS and write a one page description of each.
- ▶ Assignment: Homework 3 - Write a 2 page paper on a case or trial in which there was ethical misconduct by the lawyers or law enforcement.

- ▶ Read:
 - 1) Ethics, Ch. 1-5, Bowen