Ethics in Assessment

Kevin R. Murphy

Lamorinda Consulting LLC and

Colorado State University

Ethics in Assessment

- High Ethical Standards for Assessment
  - Are good business
  - Are what separates the professionals from the hacks
  - Are a win-win

Ethics in Assessment

- **Good Business/Professionalism**
  - Anyone can sell tests and assessments
  - Buyers are not equipped to sort the good from the bad
  - A well-founded reputation for professionalism is the only thing that gives IPAC professionals a leg up
- **Win-Win**
  - Ethical practice of assessment makes assessment better for users and participants

IPAC Professional Principles

- What did I sign up for ?
  - IPAC has a short statement of Professional Principles that lays out the bases for ethical assessment

  - http://www.ipacweb.org/principles.html
- What does it mean ?
  - It may be short, but it packs a punch
    - There are some key terms in each of the principles that are operationally very important

IPAC Professional Principles

- Pursuing the use of appropriate selection procedures and fostering and applying constructive action within organizations for the use of valid and fair selection procedures which are in accord with technical, legal and ethical standards.

Appropriate, Valid

- Appropriate
  - Content/construct validity – can you make a clear and defensible argument that the attributes being assessed are really relevant to the decision being made?
    - Decisions – hiring, promotion, certification, dismissal may all involve different considerations
- Valid
  - Valid for what?
  - What evidence counts?
    - Research literature
    - Local validation
    - Experience

Fair

- Fairness
  - Hard to operationally define, but there are a few threads running through most attempts to define it
    - Relevance/freedom from contamination
    - Equity
      - In treatment
      - In outcomes

IPAC Professional Principles

- Striving to assure that the personnel assessment and selection functions meet the goal of providing organizations with the qualified and productive employees who can effectively carry out their programs.

Qualified and Productive

- Qualified
  - Do assessees posses personal characteristics, KSAs, needed to meet the demands of jobs, assignments, etc.
    - Get the characteristics right
    - Get the assessments right
- Productive
  - What to assessees do with those qualifications
  - PRODUCTIVE = f(QUALIFIED * MOTIVATED)?

IPAC Professional Principles

- Respecting and protecting, without regard to race, sex, age, handicap, religion or national origin, the dignity of individuals, and honoring their right to fair consideration in all aspects of the assessment and employment process and to the pursuit of a promising career.

Fair Consideration

- Fair Consideration
  - Relevance/freedom from contamination
    - Unbiased assessment of individuals
  - Opportunities to exhibit relevant characteristics
  - Cultural relevance often cited as a component of fairness, but the research evidence that this makes a broad difference is thin

IPAC Professional Principles

- Protecting, from invasion of privacy, information obtained in the assessment process, preserving confidentiality of individual assessment results, and striving to attain a balance between the individuals right to be informed of assessment results and the need to protect the security of assessment procedures against unwarranted disclosure.

Individual Rights

- What are they?
  - Valid assessments
  - Reasonable access to knowledge of outcomes
  - Right to appeal
- Are some rights surrendered in particular situations?
  - Job applicants may have fewer rights than incumbents

IPAC Professional Principles

- Striving to maintain the integrity, reputation, and proprietary rights of employers or clients.

Rights of Employers

- What are they?
  - Valid and appropriate
  - Ownership of assessments needs to be defined
  - Protection of the valid interests of employers
    - Test security

IPAC Professional Principles

- Maintaining the highest standard of professional competence in personnel assessment and related areas of practice through education, training, and self-directed study.

Professional Competence

- Be aware of
  - The types of assessments that are available for different purposes
  - Their general relevance, validity for particular types of decisions
  - How to find current and credible information about assessments
  - How to judge the claims of developers of assessments

Professional Competence

- The research literature shows that some general classes of assessments tend to provide valid predictions in most jobs, and that others provide predictions that are either minimally useful across the board or useful in some jobs and much less useful in others

- This literature provides a good starting point for evaluating validity and appropriateness

Professional Competence

	Broadly Useful	Useful in Some Jobs	Rarely Useful
Cognitive ability and skill measures	X		
Structured Interviews	X		
Unstructured Interviews			X
Situational Judgment Tests	X		

Professional Competence

	Broadly Useful	**Useful in Some Jobs**	**Rarely Useful**
Personality Measures		X	
Latent Class measures (MBTI)			X
Criminal and Credit Background Checks			X
Self Concept assessments		X	