

# Ethics

written by Richard Leslie | May 24, 2016

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... The various professional organizations that represent a variety of mental health practitioners have adopted ethical standards or Codes of Ethics. These organizations have also developed procedures by which ethics investigations are conducted and resolved. Many therapists or counselors who are the subject of a state or national association ethics investigation cooperate with the association, while a few may believe, for a variety of reasons, that they should not cooperate with the committee and may simply resign or allow their membership to lapse. Before taking such action, therapists and counselors should think carefully about the possible ramifications. Each organization and each state's law may treat such a situation differently.

One of the more common ramifications might be that a report will have to be made (or may be made voluntarily) by the association's ethics committee to the state licensing board or regulatory body, to the effect that the person resigned his/her membership during a pending ethics investigation. It is then possible that the licensing board will investigate the matter and possibly move (file an accusation or complaint) against the licensee. Additionally, the association's membership records will likely permanently reflect that the person resigned his/her membership, or allowed his or her membership to lapse, during a pending ethics investigation. In some cases, an association may proceed with the investigation and with action even if the target of the investigation does not cooperate.