

# **SHHH, DON'T TELL! ETHICS AND CONFIDENTIALITY IN SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK**



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# WHAT ARE VALUES?

- A value is an idea or way of being that you believe in strongly---something you hold dear and that is visible in your actions (sweitzer & king, 2009)





# SO, WHAT ARE YOUR VALUES?



# **IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PERSONAL VALUES AND PROFESSIONAL VALUES?**

# THE DIFFICULTY OF DEALING WITH VALUES

- Values are such a central part of our thought processes that we often are not consciously aware of them and therefore we are unable to identify their influence on our decisions.

# THE DIFFICULTY OF DEALING WITH VALUES

- A person may be forced to choose among values that are in conflict with one another. This is known as a **value conflict**.

# THE DIFFICULTY OF DEALING WITH VALUES

- Addressing values in the abstract may be quite different from applying them in a real-life situation.



# THE DIFFICULTY OF DEALING WITH VALUES

- Values are problematic because they change over time.

# THE PLACE OF VALUES IN SOCIAL WORK

- Values clarification is an important aspect of social work practice
- Social workers must be concerned with his or her own values, and control for inappropriate intrusion into practice situations. This is known as **value suspension**.

# VALUES HELD BY SOCIAL WORKERS

- Commitment to the primary importance of the individual in society.
- Commitment to social justice and the economic, physical, and mental well-being of all in society.
- Commitment to social change to meet socially recognized needs.

# VALUES HELD BY SOCIAL WORKERS

- Respect and appreciation for individual and group differences.
- Commitment to developing clients' ability to help themselves.
- Willingness to transmit knowledge and skills to others.
- Reflect for confidentiality of relationship with clients.

# VALUES HELD BY SOCIAL WORKERS

- Willingness to keep personal feelings and needs separate from professional relationships.
- Willingness to persist in efforts on behalf of clients despite frustration.
- Commitment to a high standard of personal and professional conduct.

**WHAT ARE SOME VALUES ACCORDING TO  
NASW?**

**WHO HAS A PURPLE SLIP OF PAPER?**

# VALUES ACCORDING TO NASW

- Service
- Social justice
- Dignity and worth of a person
- Importance of human relationships
- Integrity
- Competence



# VALUES AND ETHICS...ARE THEY DIFFERENT?

- **Values** are concerned with what is good and *desirable*, while **ethics** deal with what is *right* and *correct*.



# ETHICS

- **Ethics**- moral principles (rules, guides); beliefs held about what constitutes moral judgment and right conduct.

# HISTORY OF ETHICS AND SOCIAL WORK

- Ethics have been central to social work since its formal inception.
- Grounded in concepts of justice and fairness
- Evolution of social work values and ethics had several key stages.

# ETHICAL VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

- Value: Service
  - Ethical principle: social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems.



# ETHICAL VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

- Value: social justice
  - Ethical principle: social workers challenge social injustice



# ETHICAL VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

- Value: dignity and worth of the person
  - Ethical principle: social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.





# ETHICAL VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

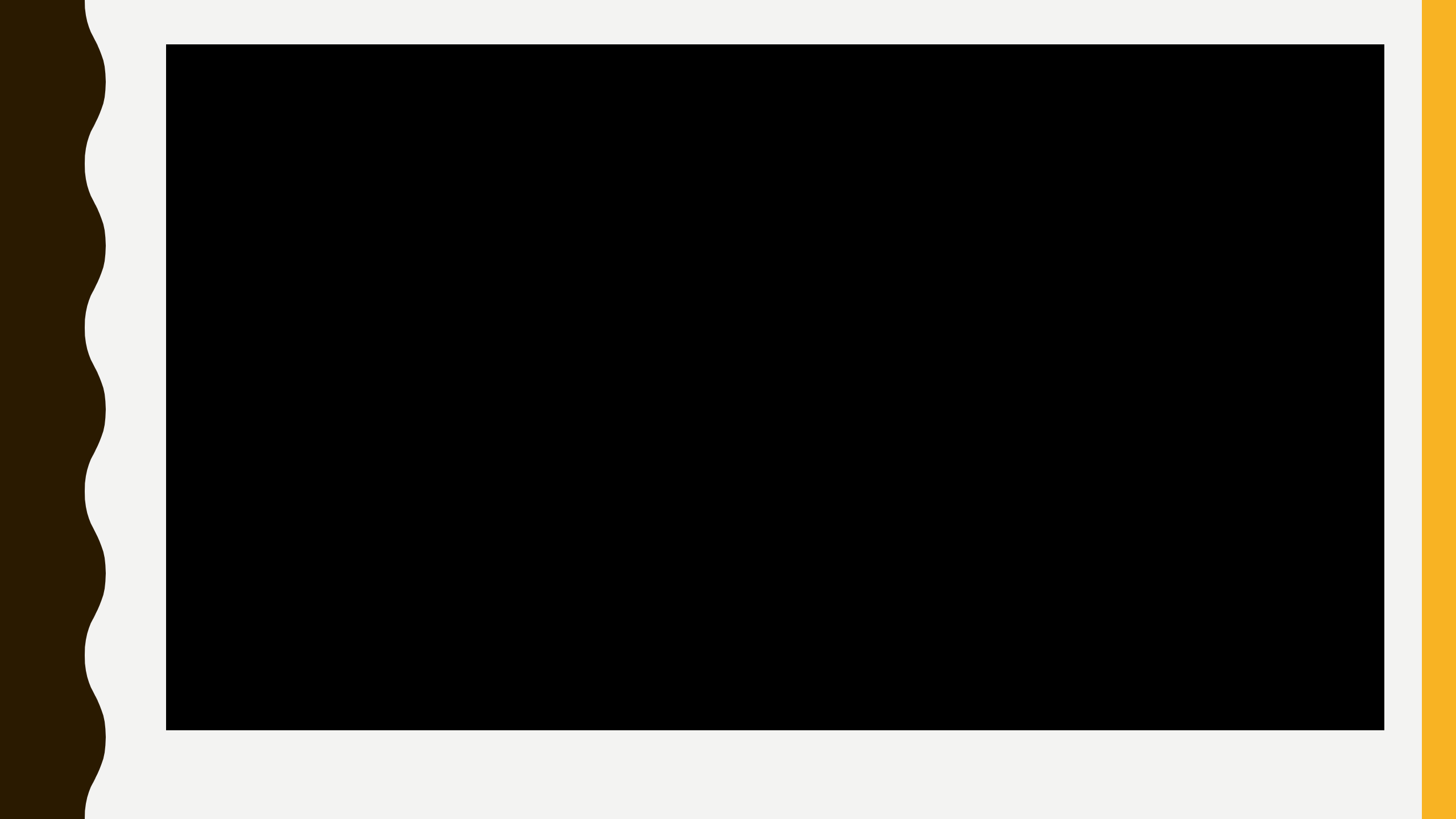
- Value: importance of human relationships
  - Ethical principle: social workers recognize the central importance of human relationship



We chat online for, like, two hours everyday so, I guess you could say things are getting pretty serious.

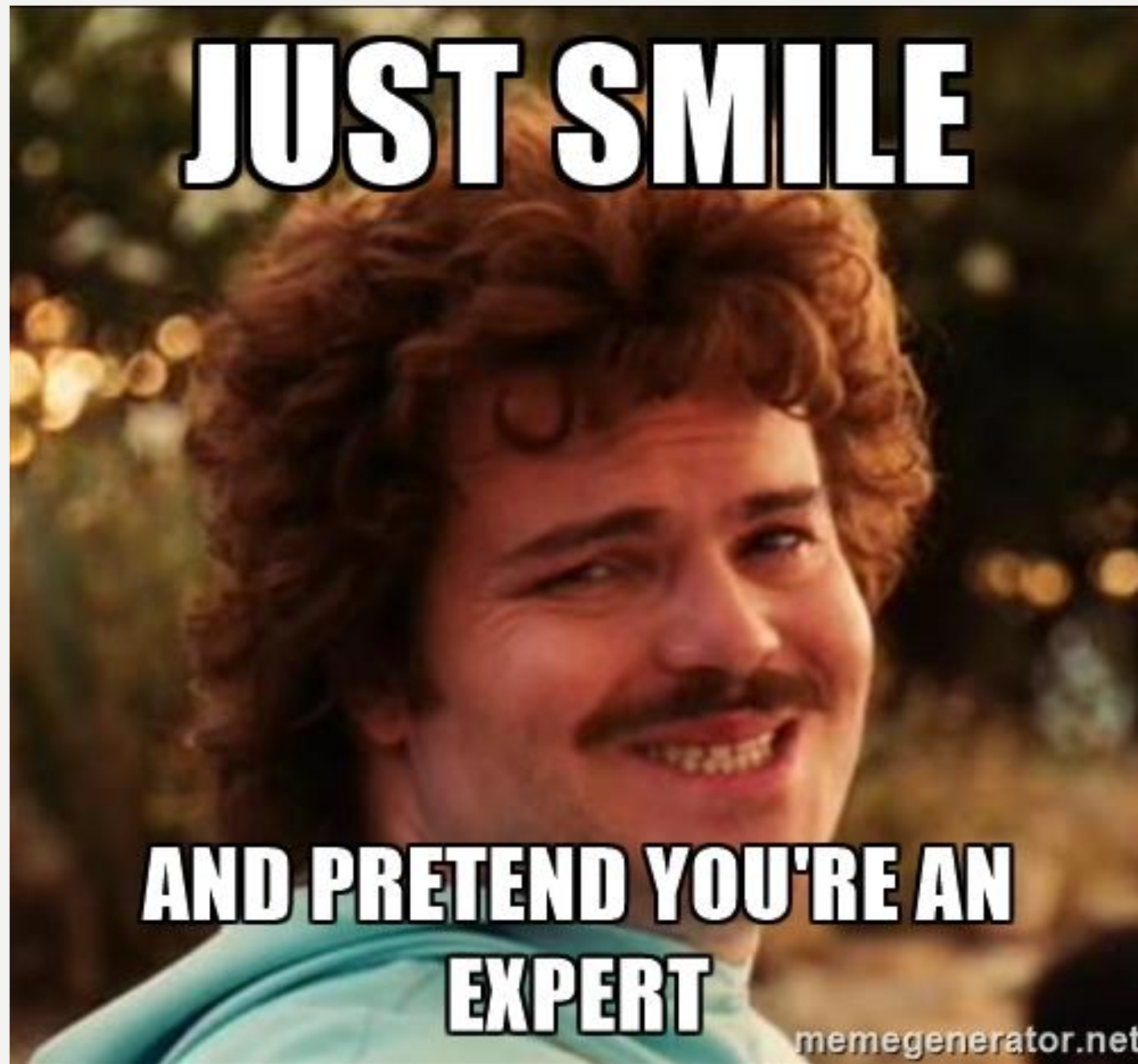
# ETHICAL VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

- Value: integrity
  - Ethical principle: social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.



# ETHICAL VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

- Value: competence
  - Ethical principle: social workers practice within their area of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise



# CODE OF ETHICS

- **Code of ethics**: explicit statement of the values, principles and rules of a profession, which acts as a guide for its members and their practice.

# CODE OF ETHICS PREAMBLE

- The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance well being and help the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual wellbeing of society...the mission of...profession is rooted in a set of core values...(which include) service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of the human relationships, integrity, and competence. (Nasw, 2008, code of ethics preamble p.1)



# ETHICAL STANDARDS

- Relevant to the professional activities of all social workers.
- 6 standards outlined in the code of ethics:
  1. Responsibilities to clients
  2. Responsibilities to colleagues
  3. Responsibilities in practice settings
  4. Responsibilities as a professionals
  5. Responsibilities to the social work profession
  6. Responsibilities to the broader society

# RESPONSIBILITIES TO CLIENTS

- Clients' interests/well-being are primary
- Client has right to self-determination
- Informed consent
- Competence
- Cultural competence and social diversity
- Conflicts of interest
- Privacy and confidentiality
- Access to records
- Sexual relationships

# RESPONSIBILITIES TO CLIENTS

- Physical contact
- Sexual harassment
- Derogatory language
- Payment for services
- Clients who lack decision-making capacity
- Interruption of services
- Termination of services

# RESPONSIBILITIES TO COLLEAGUES

- Respect
- Confidentiality
- Interdisciplinary collaboration
- Disputes involving colleagues
- Consultation
- Referral for services
- Sexual relationships
- Sexual harassment
- Impairment of colleagues
- Incompetence of colleagues
- Unethical conduct of colleagues

# RESPONSIBILITIES IN PRACTICE SETTINGS

- Supervision and consultation
- Education and training
- Performance evaluation
- Client records
- Billing
- Client transfer
- Administration
- Continuing education and staff development
- Commitments to employers
- Labor-management disputes

# RESPONSIBILITIES AS PROFESSIONALS

- Competence
- Discrimination
- Private conduct
- Dishonesty, fraud, and deception
- Impairment
- Misrepresentation
- Solicitations
- Acknowledging credit

# RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

- Integrity of the profession
- Evaluation and research
  - Contribute to the development of knowledge
  - Keep current with emerging knowledge
  - Protect research participants
  - Obtain written, informed consent
  - Inform of right to withdraw from research at any time
  - Access to appropriate supportive services
  - Ensure anonymity/confidentiality
  - Avoid conflicts of interest/dual relationships with research participants
  - Be educated about responsible research practices

# FAQ'S ABOUT THE CODE OF ETHICS

- Are there limits to how far a social worker is committed to a client?
- Are there directions that we may use to decide if a client's self-determination should be restricted?
- What if I am not sure a client is capable of understanding "informed consent?"



# FAQ'S ABOUT THE CODE OF ETHICS

- Is therapy over the telephone or by a computer allowable?
- What infraction of the code has resulted in the most negative actions against social workers?
- How much should I know about diversity and culture to be competent?

# FAQ'S ABOUT THE CODE OF ETHICS

- What if my religious or other basic values conflict with the code of ethics in a particular instance?
- I live and work in an area where I see my clients frequently at social settings such as restaurants, church, while shopping, and so forth, sometimes we serve on voluntary committees together. Am I in an dual relationship?

# FAQ'S ABOUT THE CODE OF ETHICS

- How do I know if I am violating a client's privacy when asking about things related to his or her treatment?
- What if I am called to court to testify for a client? Should I release all information?
- I am concerned that my members in my group therapy sessions, couples, and family therapy may break confidentiality. Will I be at fault for this?

# FAQ'S ABOUT THE CODE OF ETHICS

- Am I required to allow a client to see his or her file?
- What should I do if a client appears to want more intimate contact with me?
- Are there casual factors that we may foresee to help us avoid becoming intimately involved with clients?

# FAQ'S ABOUT THE CODE OF ETHICS

- When should I begin to prepare clients for termination?
- I know social workers who gossip frequently about each other. others do not believe in the work of particular professions recognized by the state and refuse to cooperate with them. Are these actions allowable behavior?

# FAQ'S ABOUT THE CODE OF ETHICS

- A social worker at my job purposely is acting unethically. What should I do?
- I would like to volunteer to be a supervisor toward licensing for msw's. does nasw have requirements I should meet?
- Are social workers allowed the freedom to bill for services as they wish?

# FAQ'S ABOUT THE CODE OF ETHICS

- Once I become an administrator, am I still responsible to the nasw code?
- What if I have a chance for employment in an agency that acts against nasw code guidelines?
- Part of the code involves acting well as a professional. What does this mean?

# FAQ'S ABOUT THE CODE OF ETHICS

- How can I make social work a better profession?
- What if I am presenting on behalf of an organization and its policy is congruent with the code but I have doubts. Should I state my opinion or the agency's?
- Do we have any more responsibilities?



# QUESTIONS & COMMENTS



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