

Navigating Ethically Within Different Systems

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PART 1:

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Shhh, Don't tell!

Ethics and confidentiality in school social work



PART 1: Reviewing the Ethical Standards

Values and Ethics

Updates to NASW Code of Ethics

NASW Standards for School Social Work Services

What are values?

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**.

What are some 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

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 in a social context and the 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

2017 Revisions to the Code of Ethics

Some changes in language

Recognizing role of technology

19 new technology-related standards

Technology-related additions in these sections: informed consent, competent practice, conflicts of interest, privacy and confidentiality, sexual relationships, sexual harassment, interruption of services, unethical conduct of colleagues, supervision and consultation, education and training, client records, & evaluation and research

FAQs 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?"

FAQs 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?

FAQs 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?

FAQs 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?

FAQs 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?

FAQs 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?

FAQs 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 MSWs. Does NASW have requirements I should meet?

Are social workers allowed the freedom to bill for services as they wish?

FAQs 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?

FAQs 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?

NASW Standards for School Social Work Services

1. **Ethics and Values:** school social workers must adhere to the NASW code of ethics as a guide to making ethical decisions.
2. **Qualifications:** school social workers must meet the provisions for professional practice set by NASW *and* their respective state department of education.
3. **Assessment:** school social workers must conduct assessments with the goal of improving student social, emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes.
4. **Intervention:** school social workers shall understand and use evidence-informed practices in their interventions.

NASW Standards for School Social Work Services

5. **Decision Making and Practice Evaluation:** school social workers should use data to guide service delivery and to evaluate their practice regularly to improve and expand services.
6. **Record Keeping:** school social workers must maintain accurate data and records that are relevant to planning, implementation, and evaluation of school social work services.
7. **Workload Management:** school social workers must organize their workloads to fulfill their responsibilities and clarify their critical roles within the educational mission of the school/district in which they work.
8. **Professional Development:** school social workers must pursue continuous enhancement of knowledge and skills to provide the most current, beneficial, and culturally appropriate services to students and their families.

NASW Standards for School Social Work Services

9. **Cultural Competence:** school social workers should ensure that students and their families are provided services within the context of multicultural understanding and competence.

10. **Interdisciplinary Leadership and Collaboration:** school social workers must provide leadership in developing a positive school climate and work collaboratively with school administration, personnel, family members, and community professionals as appropriate to increase accessibility and effectiveness of services.

11. **Advocacy:** school social workers must engage in advocacy that seeks to ensure that all students have equal access to education and services to enhance their academic progress.

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