

Real Cases Project: **Social Work Ethics**

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INTRODUCTION

A. Overview of this Course within the Social Work Curriculum

Social work values and ethics have long been an integral part of social work practice and education. Over fifty years ago Muriel Pumphrey wrote about the importance of educating students about values and ethics (Pumphrey, 1959.) The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) in the most recent Educational Policy Accreditation Standards (2003) emphasizes that curriculum should help students understand their own values, teach them about professional values and standards as described in the NASW Code of Ethics, recognize ethical dilemmas, and apply models of ethical decision making.

How have social work schools sought to teach about social work values and ethics? A CSWE publication *Teaching social work values and ethics: A curriculum resource* (Black, Congress, and Gottfried, 2009) provides both separate course outlines on ethics, as well as modules that can be used in Human Behavior, Policy, Research, and Practice classes. Some schools have offered a discrete course, while others have chosen only to integrate content on ethics throughout the curriculum. The number of schools that offer a separate course on ethics has increased over the years. A study conducted 15 years ago indicated that 10% of schools include a separate course (Black, Hartley, Whelley, and Kirk-Sharp 1989), while a more recent study found that up to 50% of MSW schools had either a required or elective course on ethics (Congress, 2001).

Almost all social work schools (98%) report that content on social work values and ethics are integrated throughout the curriculum (Congress, 2001.) Those who advocate for a discrete course have argued that a required course insures that all students receive content on ethics, while an elective course may lead only to those particularly interested (and knowledgeable) about ethics taking the course. Those who propose only an integrative model stress that this approach is in keeping with the CSWE standards and ensures that ethics content is included in every part of social work education. An ongoing concern, however, is that social work educators may vary in the degree to which ethics content is integrated into different courses.

There is value in offering a separate course as presented in this outline and it is recommended that a separate course on ethics be offered at the mid point or toward the end of MSW program (Reamer, 2001).

B. Relevance of these Case Studies to this Course

Social work students may be initially reluctant to take a social work ethics course, as they fear that the course might be similar to very abstract Philosophy 101 required courses from their undergraduate days. An important principle for adult learners is that content must be linked to actual practice experience; thus the use of case vignettes is very useful in teaching about social work ethics. The three case studies are particularly helpful in a course on social work values and ethics. The examples raise many ethical issues, value conflicts, and dilemmas that can be discussed in an ethics course. Some of the major themes revolve around confidentiality with issues of cultural differences in child rearing in the Anne case and confidentiality and rights to receive treatment in mental health in the Andrea case. For example, Peter and Anne are from a different culture. Do they have different beliefs about child rearing than what is considered appropriate in American culture and by the Children Services? Anne was abused by her spouse. Should she be blamed for the fact that Peter abused the children, especially as she has complied with the service plan developed by Children Services.? In terms of the Andrea case what are the rights of a mother with mental illness? With her mental illness she has periods of health - Should she be deprived forever of the right to raise her child? What if child welfare laws and agency policy of returning children to birth parents unless there is clear evidence of the possibility of abuse conflicts with the caseworker's belief that the parent is not ready to assume responsibility for the child? Additional themes are what role should the caseworker have in facilitating interdisciplinary collaboration? How should the caseworker relate to school personnel, to mental health professionals?

C. Specific Learning Objectives Related to Using these Cases in this Course

Social work students taking this course with the integration of the three case studies will:

- Learn to identify personal, cultural, societal, agency, client and professional values
- Understand the NASW Code of Ethics and its use in ethical decision-making
- Identify ethical issues and dilemmas in professional child practice
- Gain awareness of relevant laws and agency policy that affect ethical decision-making in child welfare
- Develop skills in understanding and resolving ethical dilemmas

D. Overview of What is Included in this Guide

- I. Introduction
 - A. Overview of role of social work ethics in social work curriculum
 - B. Themes for integration of **each of the three case studies** into ethics course
 - C. Learning objectives for this ethics course using the **three case studies**
- II. Strategy One – Course long integration of three case studies
 - A. Areas of the case studies to be highlighted each week
 - B. Structure – Weekly classes
 - C. Teaching activities – Lecture, Discussion, Role Play – Andrea R. family, Anne M. family, and Mary S. family.
 - D. Readings from books, articles, and handouts related to values, ethical issues, and decision making in child welfare
 - F. Evaluation Plan – course evaluation, paper, exam and pre and post test
- III. Strategy Two –Class I on Values - Areas of Case Studies to be highlighted
 - A. Exploration of personal, cultural, societal, agency, client, and professional values in relation to the three case studies
 - B. Structure – beginning at the beginning with students own values
 - C. Teaching Methods
 - Lecture – Value definition and examples of different sets of values
 - Discussion – Identification of different values
 - Case studies - Identification of value conflicts within case
 - D. Readings on values, moral continuum example, child welfare case vignettes, role play values conflict
 - E. Evaluation Plan for Class I – Class discussion
- IV. Conclusion
 - A. Summary of key themes
 - B. Plans for future courses
 - Law and Ethics in Child Welfare
 - Development of Modules for different courses

TEACHING STRATEGIES

A. Strategy One: Integrating the Case Studies throughout the Course

1. Areas/Issues of the case study to be highlighted:

The three case studies can be integrated throughout this course. The first three classes, Class I on values, Class II on the Codes of Ethics and Laws, and Class III on ethical dilemmas and decision making constitute the foundation in the study of social work values and ethics within the child welfare field. Lesson I focuses primarily on values, which is described in greater detail under Strategy Two. Lesson two looks at law and the Codes of Ethics. Using the case examples,

students will be asked to identify relevant laws and policies that impact on the caseworker's work with all three families. Some relevant laws include the Adoption and Safe Families Act (1997), the Violence Against Women Act (1998), the Immigration Act of 1990, and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. (HIPPA.) Students also should identify what parts of the Code of Ethics are relevant to each of the three cases. Standards on confidentiality especially in regard to social work with different family members, interdisciplinary collaboration, and responsibility to oppressed populations are particularly relevant. Students should be asked to look at potential areas of conflict between law and social work ethics.

In Class III students should gain some understanding of the philosophical basis for social work ethics. They should learn to identify what might be a deontological (absolutist) approach in working with these families and what would be teleological (consequential). Students should be asked to look for ethical dilemmas in the case studies. After an exploration of dilemmas, students should be introduced to models of ethical decision-making that might be helpful in resolving these dilemmas. A short, five step ETHIC model of decision making (Congress, 1999) may be helpful in resolving ethical dilemmas especially for caseworkers who are very pressed for time, but still want to consider thoroughly relevant ethical issues. Students could be asked to select an ethical dilemma from one of the three cases, as for example confidentiality issues in working with the client and the family and follow through these five steps:

Examine relevant values

Think about relevant laws, policies, regulations, and code provisions

Hypothesize about different consequences

Identify who will be helped and harmed in terms of the most vulnerable

Consult with supervisors and other colleagues.

The first step students have covered in the first class and the second step is covered in the second class. The third step involves hypothesizing about different consequences. Sometimes it is helpful to ask students to develop different scenarios based on following different courses of action. The fourth step involves looking at vulnerability. Students can become more aware of social justice issues impacting on these families. What discrimination and oppression have the families encountered in their community, in the school systems, in the social service agencies where they have gone for help? Who are the most vulnerable in these cases? The fifth step requests that students look to supervisors and others to discuss ethical issues, dilemmas, and decision-making presented by these cases.

Classes 4-15 continue to demonstrate the integration of these case studies into teaching and learning about social work ethics. Each case provides the opportunity to highlight a specific ethical issue. The fourth class looks at social justice issues in child welfare in general and with the Andrea, Anne, and Mary's

families specifically. The fifth class focuses on confidentiality issues regarding technology in child welfare as well as within Mary case and each of the families. Class VI looks at issues of self-determination with Jason and Mary.

Class VII examines child welfare issues such as divided professional loyalties and interdisciplinary work. Class VIII examines ethical issues in mental health, such as the rights of parents with mental health issues such as Andrea to raise her son.. Class XI looks at issues within the child welfare bureaucracy and its impact on work with Andrea, Anne, and Mary families, while Class XII examines whistle blowing, media, and recording for risk management, all relevant issues for a discussion about these families. Class XIII focuses on the appropriate role for the caseworker and how to identify and take action when faced by incompetent work by colleagues. Class XIV examines the role of the supervisor with Andrea, Anne and Mary families and also the issue of burn out in working with multi-problem families. The last class deals with research and a discussion of ethical issues in research with families in the child welfare system. Also the use of an ethics committee is presented as a method to improve ethical practice with the families. In summary, each of the three family case studies can be integrated throughout this course on social work values and ethics.

The following course outline illustrates how the three case studies can be integrated throughout a course on values and ethics.

- I. Overview of the course
 - A. Use of case studies
 - B. Value base of social work
 - C. Values
 1. Personal
 2. Societal
 3. Agency
 4. Client
 5. Professional values
- II. Social work ethics
 - A. Relationship to Law
 - B. Professional Codes of Ethics
 1. NASW Code of Ethics
 - a. Relevant part of Code in **each of the three case studies**
 - C. Laws affecting caseworker in **the three case studies**
 - D. Agency policy affecting **each of the families**
- III. Ethical Decision Making
 - A. Deontological and Teleological Approaches
 - B. Identification of Dilemmas – **In each of the three case studies**
 1. Self determination of parent and need for child protection
 2. Confidentiality of parent and adolescent child

- 3. Definition of social work role and interdisciplinary work
- C. Social Work Models of Ethical Decision-Making
 - 1. ETHIC model
 - a. Application to **each case study**
- IV. Social Justice/Conflict of Interest
 - A. Distributive Justice/ Scarce Resources
 - 1. Social economic differences in child welfare
 - 2. Social justice issues as applied to **each of the three families**
 - B. Policy and Direct Practice Issues – Application to **the three cases**
 - 1. Self-Determination -
 - 2. Informed consent
 - 3. Competency
 - 4. Paternalism and vulnerable populations
- V. Confidentiality
 - A. Limits on Confidentiality
 - B. Privileged communication - Legal system
 - C. Technology - CONNECTIONS network in child welfare
 - D. Family and group work – conflicts in **the Mary S. family**
 - E. Laws (HIPPA Regulations)
- VI. Ethical Issues in Child Welfare
 - A. Divided Professional Loyalties – **Andrea R. Case**
 - 1. Responsibility to agency and client
 - 2. Responsibility to child and family – Anne M. Case
 - B. Interdisciplinary work
 - 1. Relationship with lawyers
 - 2. Relationship with other agencies
- VII. Ethical Issues in the Mental Health/Substance Abuse
 - A. Duty to warn - Tarasoff decision
 - B. Interdisciplinary work
 - 1. Role of caseworker with mental health issues – Andrea R. Case
 - 2. Suicide or homicide risk – Andrea R. Case
 - C. Right to treatment/Right to refuse treatment
 - 1. Substance abuse – **Andrea R. Case**
- VIII. Ethical Issues in Health Care
 - A. Treatment decisions in substance abuse
 - B. Discharge planning/Outpatient care
 - C. Long term care
 - 1. Right to die - Living wills/Health Care proxies
- IX. Social Work Ethics and AIDS
 - A. Role of caseworker in AIDS prevention
 - B. AIDS mandatory testing
 - C. Confidentiality and duty to warn
 - D. Treatment issues
- X. Social Work Ethics in Administration
 - A. Social work ethics/bureaucracy
 - 1. Professional/bureaucratic conflicts

- 2. Relationship with community
- B. Review of case records – **three case studies**
- XI Social Work Ethics in Administration (2)
 - A. Whistle blowing
 - B. Role of media
 - C. Recording/Risk management
- XII. Ethics and Professional Issues
 - A. Appropriate professional role
 - B. Relationships with colleagues
 - 1. Impaired or incompetent colleagues – Andrea R. case
 - 2. Dual relationships
- XIII. Ethics in Social Work Supervision and Education
 - A. Role of supervisor
 - 1. Administrative
 - 2. Educational (need for education on substance abuse, mental health)
 - 3. Supportive
 - 4. Burnout – Chronicity of Andrea R.'s mental health problems
- XIV. Social Work Ethics and Research
 - A. Research Issues and Dilemmas
 - 1. Research questions that arise in each of the three case studies
 - 2. Evaluation of effectiveness in child welfare
 - a. Evidence based practice
 - 3. Confidentiality and informed consent
 - 4. Incentive to participate in Research
 - 5. Dissemination of Findings
 - B. Ethics committee
 - 1. Institutional Review Board (IRB)
 - 2. Interdisciplinary committees – intragency and interagency
 - a. Andrea R. family, Anne M. family, and Mary S. family
- XV The Future of Social Work Ethics
 - A. Privatization
 - B. Non social work management
 - C. Technology
 - D. Cultural diversity
 - E. International

2. Timing within semester:

Each class builds upon knowledge learned through readings, class lectures and discussions, role-plays, videos, and other exercises. First, class 1 provides a foundation on social work values. This class is described more fully under Strategy 2. Then Class 2 looks at ethical issues and dilemmas. Class 3 focuses on ethical decision-making. Class 4 on social justice and conflict of interest and Class 5 on confidentiality introduce major ethical issues and dilemmas. The remaining chapters introduce different fields of practice, beginning with child welfare but then looking at ethical issues and dilemmas that arise in other fields of practice where families in the child welfare system interface, mental health,

health, substance abuse. Also professional issues such as dual relationships and impaired colleagues conflicts, as well as issues around administration, education, and research are addressed.

3. Teaching methods:

There is a multi-modal approach to teaching and learning about ethics. It is assumed that each student will do required reading before each class session. Each class will begin with a PowerPoint lecture followed by discussion of a related theme from each of the case studies. The use of role plays and other class exercises like the Moral Continuum and debate, as well as related videos will supplement learning about ethics.

4. Materials:

Students should receive PowerPoint handouts of all lectures. This is useful for all teaching, but especially helpful when one uses a specific case example from each of the three case studies. The use of PowerPoint helps students move from specific case examples (Andrea R. family, Anne M. family, and Mary S. family) to more general principles about ethical social work practice. The three families are from different social economic backgrounds. The Andrea family has limited income as both parents receive SSI and other public benefits, while the Anne family comes from a middle class background as the father is an insurance agent. The third family is headed by Mary who has worked as a corrections officer. Students can be asked to discuss attitudes toward members of different classes and how this relates to child welfare practice. Issues of racism and xenophobia could be discussed with students in terms of Mary, Susan, and Jason who are African American and Anne, Peter and Thomas in the Anne case who are from Jamaica..

5. Supporting readings:

The following readings are divided according to the session under discussion. This list is very comprehensive. Current readings on new cutting edge issues in social work ethics, as well as older classic materials are included. From this extensive list divided into different topics the instructor can select which readings he/she prefers to use in teaching about social work ethics and are most appropriate to the students in the class. An additional resource is the online journal: *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*, which often has timely relevant articles.

Session One: Social Work Values

Abramson, M. (1996). Reflections on knowing oneself ethically: Toward a working framework for social work practice. *Families in Society*, 77(4), 77.

Brennan, S. (1999). Recent work in feminist ethics. *Ethics*, 109 (4), 858-893.

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Freedberg, S. (1993). The feminine ethic of care and the professionalization of social work. *Social Work*, 38(5), 535-540.

Horner, W. & Whitbeck, L. (1991). Personal versus professional values in social work: A methodological note. *Journal of Social Service Review*, 14(1/2), 21-43.

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Manning, S. (1997). The social worker as moral citizen: Ethics in action. *Social Work*, 42(3), 223.

McGowen, B. & Mattison, M. (1998). Professional values and ethics. In M. Mattaini, C. Lowery, C. Meyer, (Eds.) *The foundations of social work practice: A graduate text* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: NASW Press.

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Webb, S. (1996). Forgetting ourselves? Social work values, liberal education, and modernity. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 28(2), 224-241.

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Session Two: Social Work Ethics and Codes of Ethics

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Kopels, S. (1997). Is the NASW Code of Ethics an effective guide for practitioners? In E. Gambrill, & R. Prueger *Controversial Issues in Social Work Ethics, Values and Obligations* (pp. 120-125). Needham, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Kutchins, H. (1991). The fiduciary relationship: The legal basis for social work responsibilities to clients. *Social Work, 36*(2), 106-113

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Session Three: Ethical Decision Making

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Walden, T., Wolock, I. & Demone, H. (1990). Ethical decision making in human services. *Families in Society*, 71(2), 67-75.

Session Four: Social Justice/Conflict of Interest

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[Van Wormer, K.](#) (2004). Restorative justice: a model for personal and societal empowerment. [Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Social Work](#), 23(4), 103-120.

Session Five

Confidentiality

Alexander, Jr., R. (1997). Social workers and privileged communication in the federal legal system. *Social Work*, 42, 387-391.

Dickson, D. T. (1998). *Confidentiality and Privacy in Social Work: A Guide to the Law for Practitioners and Students*. New York: The Free Press.

Davidson, J. R., & Davidson, T. (1996). Confidentiality and managed care: Ethical and legal concerns. *Health and Social Work*, 21(3), 208-215.

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Session Six: Ethical Issues in Child Welfare

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6. Evaluation plan:

Students are asked to complete evaluations at the end of the course with questions about the amount of learning, the quality of teaching, and possible recommendations for changes. It is also helpful to do a pretest and posttest measurement. One way to conduct a pre- post test measurement is as follows: Students are asked to write the last four numbers of their social security number on a short multiple choice examination administered at the beginning of the course and then repeated at the end, so individual as well as group learning can be measured (See Appendix A).

The use of case examples is also a powerful way to assess student understanding of course content. The exam case example will focus on a family facing similar problems with those in each of the three case studies.

B. Strategy Two: Introduction to Values in Social Work

1. Areas/Issues of the case studies to be highlighted:

The first class focuses on values, as it is essential to have this content at the beginning of the course. An initial issue is an examination of the student's personal values. This investigation is crucial for beginning social work professionals so they need to understand their own values to prevent imposing these personal values on clients. This exercise may be even more important for more mature students who have had many years of life and work experiences.

An examination of student's values begins even before admission to MSW programs when students are evaluated in terms of possessing values appropriate for professional social work. Measuring values or beliefs is extremely difficult, primarily because of a social desirability bias. (Those in the social work field and many others like to think of themselves as espousing a sense of fair play, promoting social justice for all.) Little literature exists in this area, but a recent article suggests that MSW students have values to the left of middle class and working class clients (Hodge, 2003).

The three case studies are particularly useful in looking at value differences, including personal, societal, as well as client, agency, and professional values. Cultural values are part of one's own personal values, as well as those of one's clients.

It is difficult to study values in the abstract and students should be asked in the beginning of this ethics course to discuss their values in respect to the client and the family in the case study. What does a student feel about parents who have substance abuse problems? Should there be universal health care so the families can have better access to needed health and social services? Who is the primary client in a family known to child welfare, the identified client/patient, his/her parents, or the family as a whole? Does a family in the child welfare system deal with health and social problems differently than in the student's own family? What is the cultural background of the student and how does this affect his/her values? What is the racial/ethnic background of each of the three families and how might this relate to their being identified as in need of services, as well as their access and utilization of public child welfare and other social services?

A challenge that beginning students often encounter is when the problem resonates with similar issues they have encountered in their own families. For example, a student with a history of mental illness in his/her family may have differing beliefs about the Andrea R. family. Sometimes the student might think that as mental illness is such a central issue in this family, the caseworker should be more active in requiring that Andrea R. receives treatment for her mental health problem. Others might be more supportive and connected to Andrea R.'s child because he is the child in a family with mental health issues.

In studying values as related to these case studies, it is important to look at relevant agency's values, both the values of the public child welfare agency, as well as other agencies that the child and families encounter. Does the school have different values than the public child welfare agency? What impact if any does this have on the three families?

The student must look at client values evident in the case studies. These values may be very different from the worker and within the same family there may be major differences between child and his/her parents' values, which is elucidated in the Mary S. case.

Finally, the student must develop a growing awareness of what professional values are pertinent in this case. The values or principles as laid out in the Code of Ethics are all helpful here, service, social justice, dignity and worth of person, importance of human relations, integrity, and competence. The student has to learn the importance of providing service to each of the families, that there be need for involvement with all family members and that child welfare, substance abuse, and school services need to be coordinated.

The social worker needs to advocate against social injustice and realize the oppression and discrimination that may have contributed to unemployment, substance abuse, mental illness, and child neglect in this family. In all his/her contact with the child and other family members, the social worker needs to treat

clients with respect and dignity. This may be challenging if the social worker is critical of the parents' behavior and blame them for the child's problems. An important social work value reinforces human relations. The social worker has a responsibility to strengthen the child's relationship with his/her family. With the value of integrity social workers need to be trustworthy in their contacts with all family members. This may not always have been apparent in the worker's contact with each of the families because the nature of confidentiality was not discussed and there seem to have been a major turnover of caseworkers with this family. There is also a possibility that the caseworker was not regarded as trustworthy by child or his/her parents. A social worker assigned to this very complicated, challenging case needs to espouse the value of competence and enhance his/her skills if necessary. Expertise in substance abuse, family therapy, and mental health assessment are clearly necessary in order to provide competent services.

2. Timing within the semester:

This class will be taught at the beginning of the semester course on Social Work Ethics.

3. Teaching methods:

The class will begin with a lecture about values and then move into a discussion about personal, social, agency, client and professional values relevant to each of the families.

Content about values can be conveyed in several ways. First, the class can begin with a short lecture about what values are and what type of values are important to consider, and when values conflict. Also the values (principles) in the Code of Ethics should be included in the lecture. There also should be discussion, especially about personal values and value conflicts. The teacher needs to create a safe environment so students feel comfortable in sharing their own values within the classroom.

Three specific exercises may be helpful in examining values – one a more general model, the second specific for child welfare, and the third especially tailored for this course. The first exercise called the Moral Continuum uses a visual method to make students more aware of their own value differences (McAuliffe, 2002). The teacher continually adds and changes the original story to illustrate to students how their own values may differ. For example, this following case study could be used in that way. Should Jason stay with his grandmother or be returned to his mother? The teacher could ask students who agreed 100% with having Jason stay with his grandmother to stay on one end while those who felt 100% that Jason should be returned to his mother should stay on the other end, while students who had conflicting opinions have the option to stand in different locations. This could set the groundwork for a discussion about the conflict between respecting the self-determination of diverse clients.

Another value exercise looks at social justice issues in regard to child welfare reporting (Congress, 1999). The class is divided into two groups, one group is given the case of a middle class woman with the possibility of child abuse, the other the case of a poor family suspected of child abuse. Each group is asked to say whether they would file a report with the Central Registry. The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate that often poorer families are more likely to be referred for child abuse services. This exercise can be used as a departure point to discuss factors of oppression and discrimination that may have influenced each of the families. This exercise can also be used in Class IV on social justice. A final value exercise involves role-play. Students are asked to participate in role-play interviews with diverse family members at different points in this case study. For example, having a role-play of the two interviews that took place with the Mary S. case, one with Mary S. and the other with Jason might have been fruitful in learning more about the values that influence each of them.

4. Materials needed:

Materials needed include handouts about values, also copies of the Code of Ethics, and case vignettes demonstrating social justice issues. A copy of each of the case examples should also be distributed. Students also need a bibliography with relevant articles and books on values. A white strip laid out across the classroom is helpful in using the moral continuum exercise. Sometimes a video can be used to demonstrate value conflicts.

5. Supporting readings:

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6. Evaluation plan:

There can be several types of evaluation, testing about knowledge of values and satisfaction with how the content is conveyed. In terms of objective measurement, students can be given a short answer test or asked to identify values in this or other case vignettes. Students can also be asked to evaluate this teaching method, to ascertain if looking at values through the case study

made them more aware of their own values, client values, agency values, and professional values.

CONCLUSION

A. Recap

This guide uses the three case studies to discuss values, relevant laws, the Code of Ethics, ethical issues, dilemmas, and ethical decision making. This material is discussed in the context of child welfare and other related fields. Students also look at the case examples through multiple lenses, as a caseworker, a supervisor, a policy maker, an administrator, and a researcher.

B. Suggestions for Future Courses

A more specific course can be developed based on these case examples that focuses on Legal and Ethical Issues in Child Welfare: Areas of Concordance and Difference. Also these case studies can be introduced in modules that are part of different courses, such as HBSE, practice, policy and research. Teachers in HBSE can look at issues of oppression and discrimination with each of the families, practice classes can look at how the case workers could have acted differently to facilitate work with the families, policy classes can study how policy and legal issues impact on the families, and research classes could think of some of the researchable questions raised by the families, as well as ethical issues in conducting research with the families.

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APPENDIX FOR TEACHING GUIDE FOR SOCIAL WORK ETHICS

PRE POST TEST – This 70 question test on social work ethics should be administered at the beginning and end of the class to evaluate how much students have learned.

1. The NASW Code of Ethics provides answers to all social work ethical dilemmas
Yes No
2. There is one right answer for ethical dilemmas in social work.
Yes No
3. Which of the following statement is true?
 - A. Ethical dilemmas are easily resolved.
 - B. Social workers usually agree on their resolution.
 - C. A conflict in values may lead to an ethical dilemma.
 - D. An understanding of one's values is not necessary for ethical decision making.
4. Most social workers resolve ethical dilemmas quickly.
Yes No
5. Ethical decision making
 - A. Should involve the Code of Ethics
 - B. Consideration of values
 - C. Attention to the most vulnerable
 - D. All of the above
6. The current Code of Ethics states that confidentiality should be protected except for compelling professional reasons.
True or False
7. The two principal philosophical principles for resolving ethical dilemmas are
 - A. Right and Wrong
 - B. Beneficence and Malfeasance
 - C. Beneficence and Non-malfeasance
 - D. Beneficence and Wrong
8. Deontological thinkers favor
 - A. Absolute principles
 - B. Consequential arguments
 - C. Beneficence
 - D. Non-malfeasance
9. A person who always thinks in terms of consequences is using a

approach.
 - A. Deontological
 - B. Absolutist
 - C. Rule based
 - D. Teleological

10. Social workers usually use a combination of deontological and teleological approaches in resolving ethical dilemmas.
True False
11. The Code of Ethics provides absolute answers to ethical dilemmas.
True False
12. Assessing one's values is _____ in ethical decision making.
A. A final step
B. Of minimal importance
C. The most important
D. A first step
13. Which of the following statements is false
A. One should mainly consider relevant laws in ethical decision making.
B. The NASW Code of Ethics, laws, and regulations should be part of ethical decision making.
C. Laws and the NASW Code of Ethics may conflict.
D. One should consider the NASW Code of Ethics in ethical decision making.
14. Which of these situations constitutes an ethical dilemma?
A. A client shares with you that he is HIV positive but does not want you to tell his wife
B. A child very much wants to return to live with his birth mother, but you know there has been a history of drug abuse
C. A managed care company calls and insists that you fax a client's record immediately.
D. All of the above.
15. What is the main advantage of developing different scenarios in the process of resolving ethical dilemmas?
A. It will provide answers to ethical dilemmas
B. It makes ethical decision making more interesting.
C. It helps the social worker anticipate different consequences.
D. It speeds up ethical decision making.

25. Ethical dilemmas can occur in the following interdisciplinary settings:
- A. Hospitals
 - B. Child welfare agencies
 - C. Schools
 - D. All of the above
26. Ways of safeguarding confidentiality have changed over the years.
True False
27. A major ethical concern in regard to online counseling is
- A. Clients will not pay for services.
 - B. State credentials of therapist may not be available.
 - C. Sessions will be shorter.
 - D. Disabled people will not have access.
28. Which issue presents new ethical challenges for the social worker:
- A. People live longer.
 - B. New born babies have lower birth weight.
 - C. There is a limited supply of vital organs for transplants.
 - D. All of the above
29. Which statement is correct:
- A. It is easy to provide cultural competent services.
 - B. Social work services must be provided in the language of the client.
 - C. Clients must know in great detail cultural characteristics of their clients.
 - D. Social workers should strive to know about their clients' cultures.
30. Ethical challenges in terms of cultural diversity occur in the following areas:
- A. Child welfare
 - B. Mental health
 - C. Health care
 - D. All of the above
31. Which statement best describes how social workers should handle confidentiality:
- A. Confidentiality is impossible in modern times.
 - B. The safety and security of the client can affect confidentiality decisions.
 - C. The main ethical problem with diagnostic assessment is confidentiality.
 - D. Social workers should not provide on line therapy.
32. Interdisciplinary consultation can threaten confidentiality.
True False
33. Social workers
- A. are more concerned about hard data than doctors.
 - B. share the same concept of client as lawyers do.
 - C. often have a different concept of client than lawyers.
 - D. may not be able to work collaboratively with other disciplines.

34. The most challenging issue in terms of cultural diversity is:
- A. Deciding when to accept cultural practices that are very different.
 - B. Attending agency cultural diversity sessions.
 - C. Working to assimilate culturally diverse clients.
 - D. Maintaining a cultural melting pot
35. As the field of ethics is always changing, social workers can best .
- A. Study ethics in school
 - B. Consult agency doctrines
 - C. Take continuing education on ethics
 - D. Use their own judgment
36. The NASW Code of Ethics
- A. was first developed over 100 years ago when the profession developed.
 - B. has remained relatively unchanged since the beginning
 - C. applies to all professionals
 - D. originally had only 14 principles.
37. The reason(s) why professional organizations have Codes of Ethics are
- A. Help practitioners resolve ethical dilemmas
 - B. Protect the public from incompetent practitioners
 - C. Provide self regulation of members
 - D. All of the above
38. The NASW Code of Ethics began to resemble the current Code in
- A. 1902
 - B. 1955
 - C. 1979
 - D. 1996
39. The following provisions were first added in 1993
- A. informed consent and confidentiality
 - B. dual relationships and impaired colleagues
 - C. bartering and dual relationships
 - D. technology and group work
40. The following issue has the most provisions in the current Code
- A. Self-determination
 - B. Cultural competency
 - C. Research
 - D. Confidentiality
41. An ethical concern about managed care is
- A. Limits to service
 - B. Confidentiality
 - C. Reliance on technology
 - D. All of the above

42. Which of the following statements is true?
- A. Social workers do not know how to use DSMIV
 - B. Social workers should never use DSMIV
 - C. Social workers always use DSMIV accurately
 - D. Social workers may over diagnose or under diagnose.
43. Technology may pose a threat to maintaining confidentiality
- True False
44. Confidentiality should be violated when
- A. A client threatens to kill herself
 - B. A client threatens to kill herself
 - C. A client speaks of abusing her child
 - D. All of the above
45. Suicidal risk
- A. Is easy for the clinician to assess
 - B. Is not covered in the NASW Code of Ethics
 - C. Overrides confidentiality
 - D. Is related to limitation in service
46. In a managed care environment
- A. Fees are higher
 - B. Confidentiality may be compromised
 - C. Visits are restricted to six sessions
 - D. Clinician can make all treatment decisions.
47. Technology
- A. Provides new challenges in protecting confidentiality
 - B. Is incompatible with ethical practice
 - C. Is not an issue for a direct service clinician
 - D. Refers mainly to computers
48. It is easy for the skilled clinician to assess homicidal risk.
- True False
49. The Tarasoff decision
- A. Refers to privileged communication
 - B. Has the same effect in all states
 - C. Established a precedent in duty to warn
 - D. Upholds confidentiality
50. In working with a client with suicidal or homicidal risk the first thing a social worker should do is
- A. Refer to the Tarasoff Decision
 - B. Make a careful assessment
 - C. Call the police
 - D. Refer to one's supervisor

51. In applying the Tarasoff decision in work with clients social workers should
- A. Call the client's relatives
 - B. Find out state laws and interpretations of the Tarasoff decision
 - C. Disregard the Tarasoff decision unless one lives in California
 - D. Refer to another social worker
52. Privileged communication refers to an ethical principle.
True False
53. Privileged communication originally applied only to
- A. Clergy person and parishioner
 - B. Husband and wife
 - C. Lawyer and client
 - D. All of the above
54. The Supreme Court Decision around privileged communication
- A. Did not apply to social workers
 - B. Acknowledged privileged communication in only a few instances
 - C. Recognized as privileged the communication between social worker and clients
 - D. Supported privileged communication in law suits regarding social workers
55. All of the following circumstances can negate privileged communication except for:
- A. The client is dangerous to himself and others
 - B. The judge rules that the social worker's testimony is essential to the case
 - C. There is suspicion of child abuse or neglect.
 - D. The social worker does not like to appear in court.
56. The Code of Ethics has always focused on impaired colleagues and dual relationships.
True False
57. Which statement about impaired colleagues is correct?
- A. Impairment only refers to alcohol abuse..
 - B. Social workers should not talk to colleagues about a substance abuse problem.
 - C. Social workers should first talk to a colleague about a substance abuse problem.
 - D. NASW should never be contacted about a substance abuse problem.
58. Some of the signs of impairment might be:
- A. Monday absenteeism.
 - B. Irritability.
 - C. Smell of alcohol.
 - D. All of the above.
59. Social workers never have problems with both impairment and dual relationships.
True False
60. Dual relationships refers only to sexual contact.
True False

61. Substance abuse in a social worker can be an agency secret.
True False
62. Which statement is true about impaired colleagues?
A. Denial is not often a first response to confrontation about a substance abuse problem.
B. Social workers should go to employers after talking to a colleague if there is no action taken.
C. Licensing agencies should not be involved with impaired colleagues.
D. Social workers should call NASW first.
63. Dual relationships refers to
A. Sexual relationships.
B. Business relationships.
C. Social relationships.
D. All of the above.
64. There is less controversy about the following ethical principle:
A. Social workers should avoid sexual relationships with current clients.
B. Social workers should not engage in dual relationships with former clients
C. Social workers should not have a social relationship with current clients.
D. Social workers should avoid sexual relationships with former clients.
65. In assessing the possibility of a dual relationship with a former client the social worker should look at
A. The length of time that has elapsed since the social work relationship.
B. The type of social work relationship.
C. The diagnosis of the client.
D. All of the above.
66. Social workers should be sensitive to cultural differences in considering dual relationships.
True False
67. A key issue to consider in dual relationships is
A. If social worker wants it.
B. If client requests it.
C. Risk of exploitation and harm to client.
D. Degree it will help client.
68. The following group of social workers have been particularly concerned about dual relationships:
A. School social workers
B. Hospital social workers
C. Rural social workers
D. Substance abuse social workers

69. The main argument that has been made in support of dual relationships with previous clients is:
- A. A client is always more vulnerable.
 - B. Clients can grow and change
 - C. There is continued risk of exploitation
 - D. Dual relationships can help former clients.
70. Dual relationships can be a problem area in supervision.
True False