DON’T ROCK THE BOAT: ETHICS AND THE PRESSURES OF SOCIAL WORK IN THE SCHOOLS
AKA:
Making It Work

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OBJECTIVES

- Increase awareness of ethical issues and dilemmas in school settings
- Recognize how job pressures can lead to ethical violations
- Understand new ethical challenges with increased technology
- Understand ethics from perspective of minors
- Develop strategies for recognizing and addressing ethical violations
MUSINGS

- Core values and ethical obligations
  - Our ethical stance really rests on compassionate concern for others not solely in the letter of the law.
- Conflicts among values and duties
- Ethical decision-making strategies
- Lack of understanding & differences in practice between professionals of different disciplines

*Ethics is nothing else than reverence for life.*
~ Albert Schweitzer
ETHICAL VIOLATIONS TEND TO OCCUR WHEN:

- We do not stop to think things through
- We do not recognize an ethical issue
- Begin with good intentions
- We do not pay attention to our inner voice or discomfort
NASW REMINDS SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS

- Always ask: Who is the client?
  - Student
  - Parent
  - School colleagues
  - School district
  - Greater community
NASW POSITION STATEMENT

- Team members are bound to maintain confidentiality.
- Student and family should agree to sharing of the information with team members.
- Information shared should be necessary for the FULFILLMENT OF TEAM EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES.
- The sharing of information should be in best interest of the student.
BEGIN BY REFLECTING

► Why is it important that this information be shared?
► How will the student and the student’s family benefit by a decision to share or not share information?
► Does sharing the confidential information outweigh maintaining confidentiality?
► What will be the effect on the student’s learning?
TYPES OF ISSUES

- Ethics complaints
- Licensing board complaints
- Litigation
USE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- To address Dilemmas
- To improve Decision-making
- Be aware Risk management
ETHICAL RISKS

- Mistakes
- Dilemmas
- Misconduct
SEEK BALANCE

- Legal & ethical rights of students to privacy, confidentiality, and self-determination
- SSWers primary responsibility is to promote the well being of client
- SSWers share the limits of privacy, confidentiality, and self-determination with students and parents initially and as needed through the social work relationship
CONSIDER ETHICS AND...

- Privacy
- Confidentiality
- Privileged communication
- Informed consent
- Service delivery
- Social media and digital technology
- Boundary issues
- Conflicts of interest
- Documentation
defamation of character
- Student records
- Supervision
- Consultation
- Referral
- Abandonment
STANDARD OF CARE

What an ordinary, reasonable and prudent professional, with the same or similar training, would have done under the same or similar circumstances.

Frederic Reamer, March 2015
STANDARDS OF CARE

- Substantive standards of care
  - What we ought to do

- Procedural standard of care
  - Collegial consultation and supervision
  - Literature
  - Policies, regulations, laws
  - Lawyers
  - Code of Ethics
  - Ethics committees
  - Documentation
SUGGESTIONS FOR ETHICAL PRACTICE

- Use a D-M model to help resolve ethical challenges
  - Models can help document steps and situations
  - Don’t forget consultation

- Be familiar with relevant state and federal laws.
  - FERPA, IDEA, HIPAA
  - State laws and regulations
SUGGESTIONS FOR ETHICAL PRACTICE

- Work to establish appropriate local SD policies to help guide practice
  - Districts should have parameters for student & employee behavior
  - Parameters should be made public

- Seek out creative, consensus, or compromise decisions that include all affected parties
SUGGESTIONS FOR ETHICAL PRACTICE

- Take steps to proactively avoid ethical predicaments
  - Making sure everyone understands your ethical obligations and limitations
  - Student and family need to be informed of rights to confidentiality and its limitations
- Have a clear understanding of Need to Know
- Develop & earn trust of clients & stakeholders – trust can help avoid disagreements...Relationship, relationship, relationship
ETHICAL GUIDELINES

- Be familiar with NASW stated values and principles
- Be aware of where your personal and professional values may conflict
- Know and use your sense of self in relation to each client
- Be sensitive about the degree of professional influence you employ
- Know your profession’s Code of Ethics thoroughly
- Be familiar with the federal and state laws that govern your profession’s pupil services practice

RAINES AND DIBBLE D-M MODEL

1. Know yourself & your professional responsibilities
2. Analyze predicament
3. Seek consultation
4. Identify courses of action
5. Manage clinical concerns
6. Implement decision
7. Reflect on the process
REFERENCES


