Social Work Ethics and Organizational Culture: A Gap in Social Work Education and Social Work Field Education

Stephanie A. Bradford
University of St. Thomas, Minnesota

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.stthomas.edu/ssw_docdiss

Part of the Clinical and Medical Social Work Commons, and the Social Work Commons

Recommended Citation
https://ir.stthomas.edu/ssw_docdiss/24

This Banded Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Social Work at UST Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctor of Social Work Banded Dissertation by an authorized administrator of UST Research Online. For more information, please contact libroadmin@stthomas.edu.
Social Work Ethics and Organizational Culture:
A Gap in Social Work Education and Social Work Field Education

By
Stephanie A. Bradford

A Banded Dissertation in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Social Work

St. Catherine University / University of Saint Thomas
School of Social Work

May 2018
Abstract

Social work education and the signature pedagogy of social work, field education, allow students to learn social work ethics. Within the agency setting of field placement, social work students experience organizational culture and organizational climate. The purpose of this banded dissertation is to understand the relationship between ethics learned within the classroom and field education, specific to organizational culture and organizational climate. Ecological and general systems theory provides the conceptual framework to understand the relationship.

Social work ethics and organizational culture are experienced in field education. Product One, a conceptual paper, asserts the need for understanding organizational culture and its relevance to field education. Understanding ethics and organizational culture is imperative to students’ learning and preparation for field education. Incorporation of organizational culture in social work ethics education will enhance social work education and ethical practice.

A qualitative systematic review research study for Product Two, asked the question how might field education effectively bring students’ attention and understanding to the intersection of social work ethics and organizational culture? Study results indicate the relevance of incorporating organizational culture, organizational climate and social work ethics in teaching social work field education.

A workshop presentation was given at the National Association of Social Workers Ohio Chapter Conference for Product Three. This presentation presented the concept of social work ethics and organizational culture with field education, based upon Product One of the banded dissertation.

Organizational culture and organizational climate are important factors that influence and impact social work ethics and practice. There is a need for these concepts to be incorporated into
social work ethics education and the pedagogy of field education. Without such education, social work students are not adequately prepared for field education or acculturation to the profession and ethical practice of social work.
Dedication/Acknowledgements

Dedicated to the glory of God, in thankfulness for being my rock, strength and guide to complete this journey, fulfilling a God given dream for a DSW; to my daughters, Emily and Natalie, for your love, support and belief in me, you are my inspiration; and thankfulness for the love from heaven of my parents and love of my life, Larry.

Thank you to the faculty and staff, my roommates, cohort 2 - I have learned from each of you and gained my voice. Thank you to my ‘village’-my family, friends, church and Emmaus family-who have walked this journey with me with love and encouragement to take the next step; special thanks to Jane Hoyt-Oliver, PhD, Rebecca Evanoff and Rebecca Fort for your mentorship, support and guidance.
# Table of Contents

Title Page ................................................................................................................. i  
Abstract ...................................................................................................................... ii  
Dedication/Acknowledgements ............................................................................. iv  
Table of Contents ................................................................................................... v  
Introduction ............................................................................................................. 1  
Conceptual Framework .......................................................................................... 4  
Summary of Banded Dissertation Products ..................................................... 5  
Discussion ............................................................................................................... 7  
  Implications for Social Work .............................................................................. 10  
  Implications for Future Research ...................................................................... 12  
Comprehensive Reference List ............................................................................. 14  

Product 1 Social Work Ethics and Organizational Culture:  
Impact on Social Work Field Education .............................................................. 21  

Product 2 Organizational Culture and Social Work Ethics:  
Relationship to Field Education ............................................................................ 44  

Product 3 Social Work Ethics and Organizational Culture:  
Impact on Social Work Field Education .............................................................. 74
Social Work Ethics and Organizational Culture:

A Gap in Social Work Education and Social Work Field Education

The field of social work is a helping profession. Social workers address a myriad of different problems with various types of people. They provide services in different settings and locations within agencies and organizations at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. For these reasons, social work is also known as a profession of many faces (Morales & Sheafor, 1980). Despite these differences, there are central factors within the practice of social work. These include the purpose of the social work profession, social work education, social work ethics, and the practice of social work within organizations or human service agencies.

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) establishes the mandates and expectations for both baccalaureate and master’s level social work education within the United States. The CSWE’s (2015) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) identifies that the purpose of the social work profession is to “promote human and community well-being” through the enhancement of the “quality of life for all persons, locally and globally” (p. 5). CSWE identifies field education as the signature pedagogy of social work. Through a competency-based education framework, with nine identified competencies, the CSWE’s EPAS directs that social workers must understand the profession’s ethical values and standards, which is evidenced by demonstrating ethical and professional behavior.

According to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) (2017), a foundational premise and “the core of social work” is professional ethics (p. 2). The NASW Code of Ethics illustrates the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of social work and serves to guide all social workers and social work students in ethical practice. The NASW Code of Ethics may also be used by organizations and human service agencies as a frame of reference for ethical
standards and practice. The first competency of the CSWE’s (2015) EPAS is to “demonstrate ethical and professional behavior”, making “ethical decisions through the application of the NASW Code of Ethics” (p. 7). Social workers and social work students will thus learn about social work ethics through their social work education and the social work pedagogy of field education.

The ability to integrate both personal and professional ethics is necessary and important for social workers. Vallereal (2005) purports that this integration is “either self or organizationally imposed” (p. 64). Vallereal further asserts that the acceptance of professional ethics as personal ethics is “honest ethical practice” (p. 67).

Professional social workers and social work students at the bachelor or master’s level will most often seek work and/or field education placement within a human service agency or organization. The types of organizations sought will vary, though each will have its own identified mission, vision, goals, purpose, and population to be served. Kungelman-Jaffee (1990) describes organizations as “social units deliberately constructed to seek specific goals” (p. 18). Organizations are each unique, malleable, and subject to change and will incorporate contradictions, paradoxes, ambiguities, and confusion (Bellot, 2011). Two particular contexts within organizations are organizational culture and organizational climate.

Organizational culture is considered to be the beliefs, values, and norms that are fundamental within an organization’s operations (Ouchi & Wilkens, 1985; Glisson, 2007; Trevino, Butterfield, & McCabe, 1998). The way an organization’s environment is perceived is known as its organizational climate. Organizational climate is created as workers “share the same perception of how the work environment affects them as individuals” (Glisson, 2007, p. 739). Organizational culture and organizational climate have been researched and studied by multiple
disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology and psychology, since the 1970s (Ouchi & Wilkens, 1985; Glisson, 2007). This research has contributed to understanding the role of organizational culture within an organization. Organizational culture has been used to determine and predict the relationship and behaviors of workers, including performance, worker morale, service quality and delivery, the effectiveness of an organization, and the influence upon ethical and unethical behavior (Glisson, 2007; Kaptein, 2011; Agbenyiga, 2011; Trevino et al., 1998).

Social workers, as professionals and/or as students, are required to practice ethically. This is mandated by the professional standards set forth by the NASW (2017) Code of Ethics and the educational standards established by CSWE (2015). Learning and understanding the concepts of ethical social work practice will occur within the classroom through the explicit and implicit curriculum. It will also occur within an organization, in conjunction with demonstrated behaviors and experience, during field education placement.

In the research that comprises this banded dissertation, it is asserted that organizational culture and organizational climate will have an effect upon the learning, understanding, and practice of social work ethics. It is proposed that organizational culture may not be specifically included in the teaching of social work ethics, though organizational culture and organizational climate will be experienced during the field education placement. This raises the question of what social work students learn about social work ethics through the explicit and implicit curriculum and through the field education placement. The purpose of this banded dissertation is to study and understand the relationship between social work ethics as learned within the classroom and as learned and experienced within the field education placement, specifically in relation to organizational culture and climate.
Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this banded dissertation is based upon the theory of ethics in conjunction with ecological and general systems theory. For the purposes of this banded dissertation, the theory of ethics is based upon Barker’s (1995) definition of ethics and the NASW (2017) Code of Ethics. Barker (1995) defines ethics as “a system of moral principles and perceptions about right versus wrong and the resulting philosophy of conduct that is practiced by an individual, group, profession or culture” (p. 124). The core assumptions of ethics theory are that key beliefs and standards guide behavior and practice, and that dilemmas occur due to conflicting values. Core concepts of this theoretical framework include right and wrong values, codes of ethics, and moral behavior. The theoretical proposition is that a lack of understanding regarding ethics and standards will prevent a social worker’s ability to recognize ethical dilemmas, and non-adherence to ethical standards will result in unethical behavior. The NASW Code of Ethics is illustrative of the theory of ethics, as it provides ethical principles, ethical standards, and social work values while giving guidance for ethical social work practice.

The ecological theory maintains a systems perspective with the assumption that there is interactive and interdependence within all systems, environments, and persons. Within these interactions and relationships, there is reciprocal influence, connectedness, complexity, transactions, and adaptations that occur at all levels: micro, mezzo and macro (Murphy & Dillon, 2011; Gitterman & Germain, 2008). This theory proposes that effective intervention can occur by understanding persons, their environments, and the interactions that occur between them.

General systems theory emphasizes “the reciprocal influences between people and the environmental circumstances they encounter” (VonBertalanffy as cited in Walsh, 2010, p. 231). General systems theory, therefore, makes the assumption that any change, behavior, or
interaction will affect and create change within a system. This will occur at any level: micro, mezzo or macro; it will be reciprocal, ongoing and constant. Thus, the proposition of general systems theory is that persons and environments are interactive and effect change within systems such as individuals, families, communities, or organizations.

The theory of ethics is foundational to the conceptual framework for this banded dissertation. The ecological theory allows for understanding the different systems/environments, interactions, and interdependent relationships in which social work students function, experience social work education, and learn social work ethics. Through the ecological framework, social work students are identified to be involved in the systems of their individual schools, institutions, social work departments, specific field agencies or organizations, social work faculty, field instructors or supervisors, and personal and professional ethics.

The conceptual framework of general systems theory provides a way of understanding, identifying, and addressing the relationships, homeostasis, boundaries, and flow of information between these systems. This framework establishes a construct for being able to determine and evaluate what the relationship is (if any) between the learning of ethics within the classroom and the learning of ethics within the field education placement—specifically the relationship to organizational culture and organizational climate.

**Summary of Banded Dissertation Products**

This banded dissertation consists of three products: (a) a conceptual paper, Social Work Ethics and Organizational Culture: Impact on Social Work Field Education; (b) a qualitative systematic review, Organizational Culture and Social Work Ethics: Relationship to Field Education; and (c) a presentation, Social Work Ethics and Organizational Culture: Impact on
Social Work Field Education, given at the 2017 NASW Ohio Chapter Conference. This presentation was based upon Products One and Two.

The First Product, *Social Work Ethics and Organizational Culture: Impact on Social Work Field Education*, a conceptual paper, proposes the importance of understanding social work ethics as learned within social work education and its relationship to what is learned about social work ethics within the field education placement, specifically to organizational culture and organizational climate. The review of literature provides information regarding ethics, social work education, field education, organizational culture, and organizational climate. There is, however, a lack of information that addresses the relationship, impact and/or effect organizational culture and organizational climate will have upon the learning of social work ethics during the field placement. The purpose of the paper is twofold: (a) to add to the literature the importance of understanding the relationship of organizational culture and organizational climate to social work education, ethics, and field education and (b) to incorporate the teaching of organizational culture into social work education in order to enhance the learning of social work ethics and preparation for field education placement.

The Second Product, *Organizational Culture and Social Work Ethics: Relationship to Field Education*, is a qualitative systematic review. This qualitative systematic review addresses the question, “How might field education effectively bring students’ attention and understanding to the intersection of social work ethics and organizational culture?” A premise of this qualitative review is that organizational culture (broadly) and organizational climate (specifically) are important sources of influence and invite ethical consideration. The results of this qualitative systematic review make a case for the relevance of the incorporation of organizational culture, organizational climate, and social work ethics in teaching social work field education.
The Third Product, *Social Work Ethics and Organizational Culture: Impact on Social Work Field Education*, is a presentation based upon the concepts of Product One and the findings of Product Two. Following a peer-reviewed acceptance, paper three was presented at the 2017 NASW Ohio Chapter Conference on November 17, 2017. The conference theme was “Social Workers Stand Up.”

**Discussion**

In fulfilling the purpose and mission of the social work profession, social workers practice in a myriad of settings and provide a multitude of services at micro, mezzo and/or macro levels. Through social work education and the directives of the CSWE’s EPAS, social work students learn practice skills, ethics and professional behavior, cultural diversity, issues of social, economic and environmental justice, policy, and research and engage in the social work pedagogy of field education. Social work ethics and the experience of work or field education within an organization is foundational to social work practice for students and professionals. Social workers and social work students are expected to engage in ethical practice and to uphold the values and standards of the social work profession within all settings.

Through their field education placement, social work students have the opportunity to integrate learning of theoretical and conceptual constructs into the practical world of social work (CSWE, 2015). Field education, a laboratory for social work students, allows for “learning by doing” (Sunirose, 2009). Castro-Atwater and Hohnbaum (2015) propose that field education within an organization allows a student to become a “transitional professional” (p. 272). They assert that students will be able to identify with and learn from organizational professionals. This may include “questionable experiences” (p.272), such as unethical behaviors.
The premise to this banded dissertation is that social work students will experience and be influenced in their learning, development and practice of social work ethics, and their acculturation as professional social workers by the organizational culture and organizational climate of an organization. Thus, social work students need to have an understanding of organizational culture and organizational climate, and their impact upon social work ethics and practice. Therefore, social work education needs to include organizational culture, organizational climate, and social work ethics within its curriculum, particularly in the preparatory teaching for field education. The findings of this banded dissertation give evidence that this topic is important and relevant to social work classroom education and social work field education.

The literature reviews for all three Products in this banded dissertation identified a research gap. Current literature includes information regarding ethics, social work ethics, social work education, social work field education, and organizational culture and organizational climate. The literature relevant and specific to organizational culture, organizational climate, and human service organizations is limited, with the exception of literature related to child welfare agencies. No literature was discovered that identified a relationship between the learning of social work ethics and the experience, understanding, or effect of organizational culture for social work students within the social work pedagogy of field education.

Through the research of the qualitative systematic review, three broad themes and topics emerged. The first theme, the process of ethical development, is illustrated by Papouli (2016a, 2016b). Through two studies, Papouli provides evidence that students integrated theory and practice, and learned about ethics and values during field placement from both positive and negative ethical experiences. The development of social work ethics also occurred as students were able to practice within the field, be aware of ethics within every occasion, and view field
instructors as ethical role models and managers as ethical leaders. The process of ethical development included ethical engagement identified as “regular discussion of ethical issues in daily practice” (Papouli, 2016a, p. 385). A non-supportive work environment was identified as effecting and creating stress which subsequently affected a student’s ability to practice ethically and led to “poor ethics learning outcomes” (Papoulia, 2016, p. 386). This evidences a relationship between the effect of the field education placement and organizational culture and climate in the development of social work ethics.

The resources related to ethics and organizational culture that are available to social workers is a second identified theme. The primary resource identified for students was their field instructors or supervisors, followed by peer consultation, learning opportunities within the organization, and the NASW Code of Ethics. Consultation and use of the NASW Code of Ethics as a resource for resolving ethical matters was limited in frequency (Dodd, 2007; Smith, Cleak, & Vregdenhill, 2015). Social workers tended to accept situations as a “fixed reality” when they had no resources and tried to change situations on their own, but they felt powerless and did not risk changing the situation (Papadaki & Papadaki, 2008, p. 176).

The third identified theme is the context of organizational culture and organizational climate. Papadaki and Papadaki (2008), Papouli (2016a, 2016b), Dodd (2007) and Roeder (2009) all indicate a relationship between organizational culture, organizational climate, social work ethics, and ethical practice. Topics of confidentiality, interprofessional relationships and teamwork, interagency work, agency policy with fiscal issues and delivery of services, clients, and organizational management and leadership were specific topics related to the context of organizational culture and organizational climate (Smith et al., 2015). These concepts were considered to be relevant to social work education and social work field education.
The research acknowledged the importance for social work students to be aware of the areas identified through these themes. The research both references and recommends that the areas of these themes should be addressed in social work education and preparation for field education. Though there is no direct recommendation to include the concepts of organizational culture and organizational climate within social work education and social work ethics, there is a significant implication for the relevance of this inclusion.

Further evidence of the identified gap was illustrated by the comments and discussion received during the workshop presentation of Product Three at the 2017 NASW Ohio Chapter Conference. Participants acknowledged the topic as being important, valuable, and relevant; admittedly, they had not considered the relationship of social work ethics and organizational culture, nor had they considered students’ experiences during the field education placement. Participants reported gaining a different perspective on understanding students’ learning, behaviors, and interactions with the field placement and organizations upon realizing the effects an organization’s culture has on social work students. Many acknowledged that the topic provided clarification and validation for students’ negative experiences during field education due to organizational culture and climate

**Implications for Social Work Education**

The focus of this banded dissertation has asserted strong implications for social work education and the pedagogy of social work related to field education. Each product is based upon social work education, the teaching of social work ethics, and field education as directed by CSWE (2015) and its nine educational competencies. This banded dissertation has introduced the concepts of organizational culture and organization climate relative to social work students’ experiences within the field education placement. The literature review and research findings
give evidence of a gap in social work education and social work field education in terms of how organizational culture and organizational climate are experienced within the field education placement. However, in many cases these concepts are not a part of social work education, social work ethics, or preparation for field placement. Without the inclusion of organizational culture and organizational climate in the context of social work education and ethics, social work students are not adequately prepared for what they will experience within a field placement organization. The findings of this banded dissertation indicate that social work organizational culture and climate do affect social work students’ ethics, practice, and experiences during field education.

Silverman (2014) asserts that it is important and necessary for social workers to “have an awareness of the importance of organizational assessment; an understanding of organizational purpose and culture; and, finally, an understanding of organizational systems inclusive of subsequent alignment of people and processes” (pp. 93-94). The ability to understand, adjust, and balance the interactions and tensions that occur within the organization, while implementing the mission and practice of an organization are difficult and may have significant impact upon the quality of the work experience (Spitzer, Silverman, & Allen, 2015). Silverman (2014) has identified this as organizational awareness, which includes awareness of organizational assessment, organizational purpose, organizational culture, and organizational systems (p. 2). Silverman advocates for organizational awareness to be considered a new social work competency. This dissertation supports Silverman’s advocacy for the CSWE to include organizational awareness as an additional competency in its EPAS. This would ensure that organizational culture and organizational climate would be included in social work education, social work ethics, and teaching for field education.
Implications for Future Research

The findings of this banded dissertation suggest a strong implication for future research that specifically addresses the relationship of organizational culture and social work ethics during field education placement. The research studies of the qualitative systematic review, though small in number, provided significant data regarding this topic. These studies need to be replicated while giving specific identification to organizational culture, organization climate, and social work ethics.

Without a CSWE competency for organizational awareness, research is needed to identify social work students’ understanding and awareness of organizational culture and organizational climate during their field education. Do social work students have an awareness of social work ethics related to and affected by organizational culture? Including field instructors and supervisors in the research regarding students’ awareness and understanding of organizational culture both broadly and specific to their own organizations is also necessary. Without the understanding or acknowledgement of organizational culture and social work ethics by these primary resources, social work students may not effectively learn or experience these concepts. A mixed methods study would be a significant research approach to addressing this.

Research is also needed to identify and address organizational culture within human service organizations. This research would fill the identified gap within the literature between social work education, ethics, and social work field education as related specifically to organizational culture.

Conclusion

The future of the social work profession is determined by social work education. Through education that provides knowledge, academic excellence, research, evidence-based practice, and
values and ethical standards—and includes the social work pedagogy of field education—social work students will enter the profession being able to practice as ethically competent professional social workers. The inclusion of organizational culture and organizational climate within social work education, ethics, and field education will enhance student learning, ethical development, and acculturation to the social work profession. This will allow students to enter the field of social work as competent, ethically practicing social work professionals.
Comprehensive Reference List


Spitzer, W., Silverman, E., & Allen, K. (2015). From organizational awareness to organizational competency in health care social work: The importance of formulating a “professional-in-
“environment” fit. Social Work in Health Care, 54, 193-211. doi: 10.1080/00981389.2014.990131


10.1093/bjsw/bct038
Social Work Ethics and Organizational Culture:

Impact on Social Work Field Education

Stephanie A. Bradford

St. Catherine University / University of St. Thomas

Author Note

The author wishes to thank Dr. Catherine Marrs Fuchsel and Sky Niesen Smith for their guidance and editorial comments in the preparation of this manuscript. The author would also like to thank Dr. Jane Hoyt-Oliver, Rebecca Fort and Rebecca Evanoff for their support, encouragement and listening in the process of the conceptualization and writing of this article.
Abstract

Using the ecological framework, this conceptual paper asserts the need for students to understand organizational culture and its relevance to field education. Social work ethics and an understanding of organizational culture are imperative to students’ learning in field education since integration of classroom learning, theoretical concepts, practice skills, and ethics all occur in field education. Students also encounter and experience agency milieu, organizational culture and organizational climate in their field education. Student acculturation to the profession, ethical behavior, and practice are all impacted by organizational culture and organizational climate during field education. Incorporation of organizational culture into ethics education for field education will enhance social work learning and ethical practice.

*Keywords*: ethics, organizational culture, organizational climate, field education
Organizational Culture and Social Work Ethics:

Relationship to Field Education

Stephanie A. Bradford

St. Catherine University / University of St. Thomas
Abstract

Social work students are prepared for field education, the signature pedagogy of social work education, by learning the core values, ethics, ethical dilemmas, and skills of social work. They learn about culture and diversity, though not necessarily about the culture or climate of organizations and social service agencies. This qualitative systematic review addresses the question, how might field education effectively bring students’ attention and understanding to the intersection of social work ethics and organizational culture? Through a thematic approach, the findings identified four broad topics, categorized as: (a) ethical development, (b) resources related to ethics and organizational culture, (c) the context of organizational culture and organizational climate, and (d) guidelines and recommendations. A premise to this qualitative systematic review is that organizational culture (broadly) and organizational climate (specifically) are important sources of influence and invite ethical consideration. Results of this qualitative systematic review make a case for the relevance of the incorporation of organizational culture, organizational climate, and social work ethics in teaching social work field education. The studies reviewed particularly point to the need for increased preparation of students entering and functioning within field education.

*Keywords*: ethics, organizational culture, organizational climate, field education
Social Work Ethics and Organizational Culture:

Impact on Social Work Field Education

Stephanie A Bradford

St. Catherine’s University / University of St. Thomas
Abstract

Social work ethics and an understanding of organizational culture are imperative to students’ learning in field education. Integrating classroom learning, theoretical concepts, practice skills, and ethics, while also encountering and experiencing agency milieu, organizational culture and climate, occurs in the field education placement. Student acculturation to the profession, and ethical behavior and practice are impacted by organizational culture during field education. Using the ecological framework, this workshop will address the importance of understanding this relationship to enhance social work learning, ethical practice, and the need to incorporate organizational culture into ethics education as a part of students’ preparation for field education.

Keywords: ethics, organizational culture, organizational climate, field education
Social Work Ethics and Organizational Culture:

Impact on Social Work Field Education

This presentation was given for the 2017 NASW Ohio Chapter Conference, held November 16-18, 2017 at the Quest Conference Center in Columbus, Ohio. The theme of the conference was “Social Workers Stand Up”. The presentation was scheduled for and given on Day 2, November 17, 2017, Breakout F: 3:30pm – 5:00 pm, Ohio Room, second floor. The presentation provided 1.5 continuing education units (National Association of Social Workers) for social work, counseling and chemical dependency and met the requirements for ethics training.

This presentation was related to the banded dissertation topic of ethics and organizational culture. Specifically, the presentation was based upon the conceptual paper written for Product One of the banded dissertation. The presentation was given from the following PowerPoint.
Social Work Ethics and Organizational Culture: Impact on social work field education

Stephanie A Bradford, MSSA, ACSW, LISW-S
NASW State Conference – Columbus, Ohio
November 17, 2017

Objectives:
- demonstrate a foundational knowledge or organizational culture and organizational climate
- integrate this knowledge to social service organizations that host as field education sites
- integrate and apply ethics knowledge with organizational culture
- demonstrate understanding of the relationship and effect of organizational culture, organizational climate and ethics upon social workers and their social work practice
Overall objective: make an awareness or identification of at least one concept regarding the impact of organizational culture and social work ethics upon you as a social worker, in either a current or past field placement or work organization.

ETHICS

- Foundational premise and "core of social work"
- Ethics involve behaviors reflective of what is right or wrong, morally good or bad
- Ethics can be understood as making wise and moral decisions, often in the face of legitimate and competing demands
NASW Code of Ethics --- aspirational

Code of Conduct - Ohio Counselor, Social Worker, Marriage and Family Therapist Board --- law

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) – mandate/expectations for social work education

“Social workers’ core values and ethical beliefs are the profession’s linchpin and have matured considerably during the past century”

(written in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the NASW)
Ethical Dilemma

- A situation in which you have to make a difficult choice (Merriman-Webster)
- Occurs where there are conflicting issues
- No clear right or wrong response
- Involves conflicting values
- There is tension

Ethical decision making

- 2017 revision of NASW code:
- “ethical decision making is a process. In situations when conflicting obligations arise, social workers may be faced with complex ethical dilemmas that have no simple answers”
Ethical engagement:

- a way of social workers being helped to develop ethical competence through regular discussion of ethical issues in daily practice;
- regularly incorporating and discussing social work ethics into daily practice the more likely social workers will learn to act ethically and competently in professional practice.

*Doel et al (2009)

Models for Ethical decision-making

- Always being talking about ethics
- Consult, Consult supervisor, Consult the code of ethics, peer consultation
- Consult some more
- Don’t be afraid to bring up ethics; ask the question about it
- Ask yourself – How would this look as headlines on front page
ETHIC Model – Elaine Congress

E – Examine relevant personal, societal, agency, client and professional values
T – Think about what ethical standard of the NASW Code of Ethics applies to the situation as well as about relevant laws and case decisions
H – Hypothesize about possible consequences of different decisions
I – Identify who will benefit and who will be harmed in view of social work’s commitment to the most vulnerable
C – Consult with supervisor and colleagues about the most ethical choice

COVER Model – Mitchell and Yordy

- Memorize phrase:
- “First I Ask Some questions to COVER my bases”
- F – Facts
- I – Issues
- A – Alternatives
- S – Stakeholders
- After fact finding then use COVER
Cover

- C – Codes; identify and analyze legal and ethical codes to inform decision
- O – Outcomes; identify the pros/cons outcomes for each alternative course of action
- V – Values; review your personal and professional values, i.e. golden rule
- E – Editorial; analyze the “publicity effect” of any major decision (can/will I stand by this if word gets out?)
- R – Rules; evaluate each alternative as if it were to become the “rule for others to follow”, gives importance to all decisions vs “it is just one small violation”

Culture

- The customs, habits, skills, technology, arts, values, ideology, science, and religious and political behaviors of a group of people in a specific time period” (Barker 1995)
- Inclusive of all that humans do, beliefs and values, rules and behaviors to follow to be a part of a particular group, society or organization(Fusch et al 2016; Botz-Bornstein, 2012 as cited by Fusch et al 2016)
Organizational Culture

- Beliefs, values and norms fundamental to the operations of an organization
- The way things are done, the norms and expectations
- Shaped by interactions of individuals and leadership behaviors, through practice, policies and procedure
  "the behavioral expectations that members of an organization are required to meet in their work environment"
  (Verbeke et al, 1998)

Organizational Climate

- The way the environment is perceived by the workers
- Workers "share the same perception of how the work environment affects them as individuals (Glisson, 2007)"
Psychological Climate

- An individual employees' perception of the psychological impact of their work on their own functioning and well-being

- Similar perceptions, put together as a whole will describe organizational climate

Field Education

- Signature pedagogy of social work
- Field placement/education “learning by doing” (Sunirose, 2013)
- Student position in field placement agency, "guests" in a host agency
- Student becomes a “transitional professional” (Castro-Atwater and Hohnbaum, 2015)
Psychological Climate

- An individual employees’ perception of the psychological impact of their work on their own functioning and well-being
- Similar perceptions, put together as a whole will describe organizational climate

Field Education

- Signature pedagogy of social work
- Field placement/education “learning by doing” (Sunirose, 2013)
- Student position in field placement agency, “guests” in a host agency
- Student becomes a “transitional professional” (Castro-Atwater and Hohnbaum, 2015)
“What students learn about ethics during their field placements is likely to be among the most important and compelling lessons gained during the course of their careers” (Reamer as cited by Papouli 2016)

Field experience – the ethical issues, problems and dilemmas encountered by students will challenge their personal values, beliefs, attitudes and ethical reasoning skills (Papouli, 2016)

Organizational culture and organizational climate used to determine and predict relationship and behaviors of workers

Influence upon ethical and unethical behaviors

Influences delivery of services
Organizational awareness

- Important that social workers have an awareness and understanding of organizational purpose, organizational systems, organizational culture and to know of organizational assessment
- Without this organizational awareness social workers enter the profession with disadvantage for having ability to make impact and influence within the agency/organization

(Silverman, E. 2014)
Organizational awareness

- Important that social workers have an awareness and understanding of organizational purpose, organizational systems, organizational culture and to know of organizational assessment
- Without this organizational awareness social workers enter the profession with disadvantage for having ability to make impact and influence within the agency/organization

(Silverman, E. 2014)
References


