

Embedding the Code of Ethics into field education

CSSW Supervisor workshop

Janet Bradshaw - February 2015

How do we bring the Code of Ethics to life?!

- Code of Ethics

AASW Code of Ethics

“...(the Code) of the AASW expresses the values and responsibilities which are integral to, and characterise, the social work profession.” (AASW Code of Ethics, 2010 p 10)

- CAT Learning Plan and assessment report
- Learning Area 1 – Values and Ethics
- Relevance to all 9 Learning Areas

Ethical issues and dilemmas in practice



AASW Code of Ethics and ethical dilemmas

- “This Code intentionally does not specify what a social worker should do in the case of an ethical dilemma. The social work profession acknowledges that practice is contextual and that many factors will influence decision making.”
(AASW Code of Ethics, 2010 p.15)

Some practice examples

- What are some of the ethical issues and dilemmas you deal with in your agency/field of practice?
- Which ones are most common?
- Which ones cause the most uncertainty or discomfort?
- Briefly discuss these with 2 or 3 other people

A few more examples

- Differences in ethical issues between urban and rural practice
- Managing dual/multiple relationships
- Job sharing/having 2 part time jobs (in similar areas of practice)
- Being a sole practitioner
- Boundary issues
- Limited resources/areas of expertise
- Social policy
- Distribution of resources

How the profession views ethical issues over time...

Some examples to reflect on:

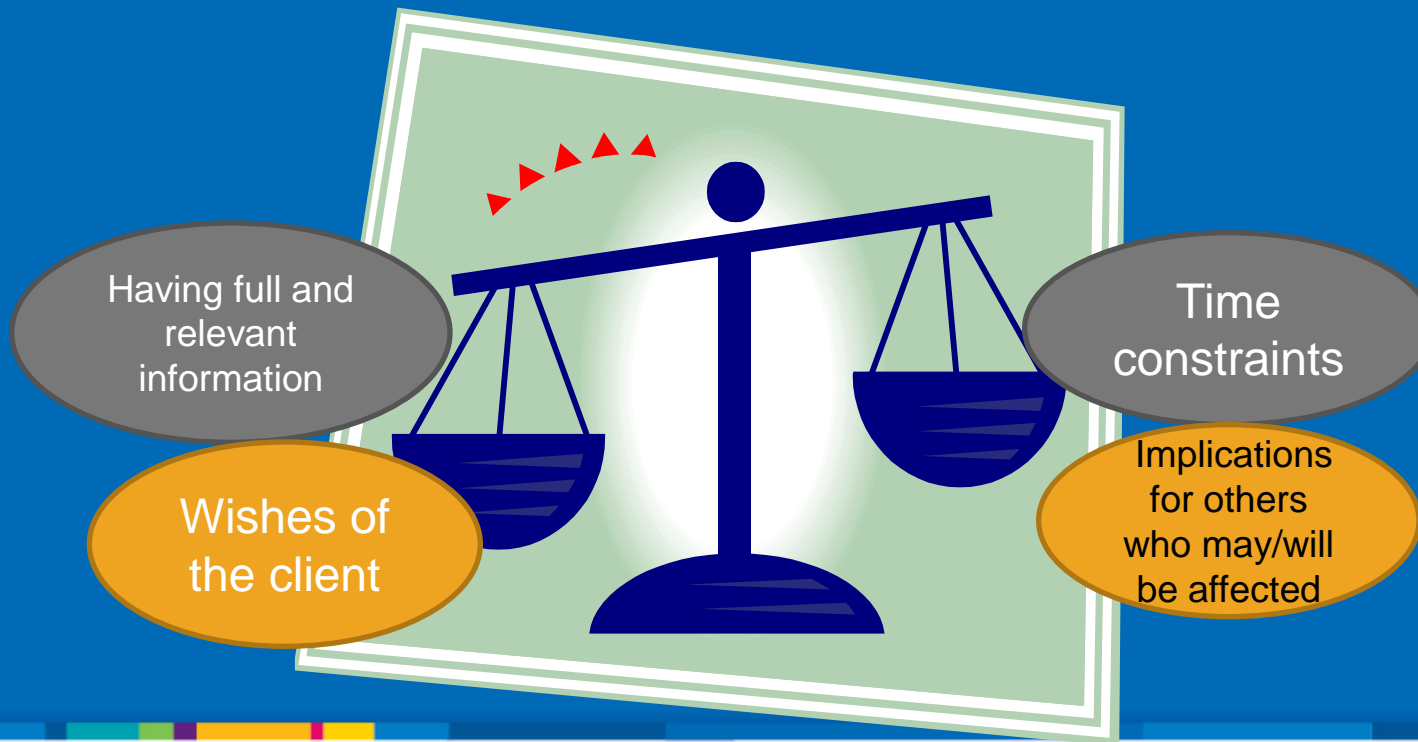
- Removal of children from families
- Mental health services
- Hospitals
- Changes to legislation (eg; Freedom of Information, Privacy)
- Technology
- Storage of information/files
- Social Media
- Cultural awareness

How will our practice be judged 20 years from now?

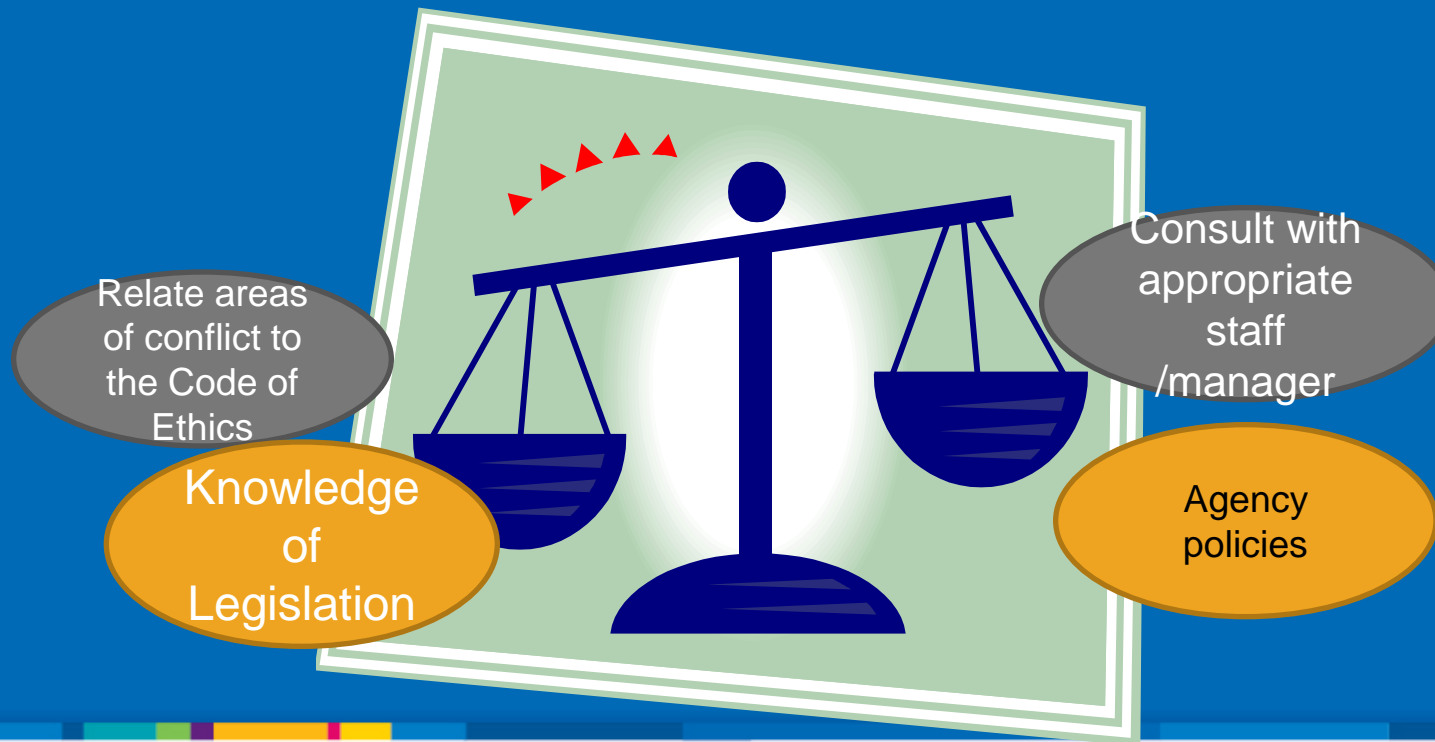
Weighing up ethical dilemmas



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Weighing up ethical dilemmas



Resolving ethical dilemmas

- There is usually not a “simple” or an “ideal” way to resolve difficult ethical dilemmas – that is why you need to approach them thoughtfully, systematically, and analyse and reflect on your processes and practices.
- What are some of the processes you currently use to help you work through ethical issues/dilemmas?
- Are they formal or informal processes?
- Do you use specific ethical decision making models – if so, which ones?

Ethical decision making models

- Many different models that can be used
- Some examples are listed in Chenoweth & McAuliffe (2012) *The road to social work & human service practice* (3rd ed.) pp.112 – 124
- Ask students which models they have learnt at Uni (and ask them to bring in material they have studied so it can be used in applying practice examples)

How do we embed ethical decision making processes into field education?

- Whose responsibility?
- All key players have a role in ensuring this occurs (Uni, Field Educator, student)
- What do you see as your role?
- What other resources would be useful to assist you in this?

Student progress

- How much is the student able to demonstrate a willingness to engage in discussions relating to ethics?
- How much is the student developing throughout the placement (skills, knowledge, understanding, confidence, etc.) and relating this back to the learning areas of the CAT
- Ability to distinguish between personal feelings/values and professional standards

Some strategies/tools for supervision

Direct observation & specifically linking feedback to the Code of Ethics

Co-working

Modelling

Reflecting

Analysis of agency records – review of case notes, minutes, newsletters etc. What is recorded? How is it recorded? What type of language is used?

Role plays/simulations eg; phone calls, assessments, interviews, chairing a meeting,, etc.

Presentations – eg; to other students/staff, Committees, Community groups, etc.

Discussion of an article/book chapter/ section of the Code of Ethics

Review of an policy – are there things in the policy that need to be questioned/challenged?

Review of social policy/ issues in the newspaper – how are they considered/relevant within the agency?

Interviewing a range of workers (Social Work or multi-disciplinary) to get different perspectives on an ethical issue

(Adapted from Cleak & Wilson, 2013 p 83)

Supervision sessions

Agenda

1. Discussion of an ethical issue or dilemma
2. Relate Code of Ethics to a specific area of practice
3. Applying an ethical decision making model to an example of practice on placement

As a field educator...

- What strategies do you already use in supervision?
- Are there other strategies you could try?
- What additional support might you need to assist you in this area? Who might be able to provide assistance with this (eg; in your agency, professional body, University, etc.)?

Further resources

- AASW website: <http://www.aasw.asn.au/practitioner-resources/ethics-standards>
- AASW Ethics consultation service

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