Ethics and Values in Social Work

An Integrated Approach for a Comprehensive Curriculum

SECOND EDITION

Allan Edward Barsky

OXFORD

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Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Barsky, Allan Edward, author.
Title: Ethics and values in social work : an integrated approach for a comprehensive curriculum / Allan Edward Barsky.
Description: Second edition. | New York, NY : Oxford University Press, [2019] | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2018050444 (print) | LCCN 2018054120 (ebook) | ISBN 9780190678128 (updf) | ISBN 9780190678135 (epub) | ISBN 9780190678111 (alk. paper)
Subjects: LCSH: Social service—Moral and ethical aspects. | Social workers—Professional ethics.
Classification: LCC HV10.5 (ebook) | LCC HV10.5 .B345 2019 (print) | DDC 174/.93613—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2018050444

1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

Printed by Sheridan Books, Inc., United States of America

To my students:
Have faith in yourselves,
Embrace help from others,
And dedicate yourselves to
service, social justice, compassion, and integrity.

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Preface

A MESSAGE FOR STUDENTS

Ethics and values are core components of social work education and practice. The first core competency in the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE, 2015) Educational Policies and Accreditation standards is "Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior." The materials in this textbook have been designed to help you develop knowledge and skills identified in this competency, including the abilities to

- make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
- use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

From a pragmatic perspective, learning about ethical practice can save you the emotional, social, and financial pain of being involved in malpractice lawsuits and professional disciplinary hearings. Although understanding the do's and don'ts of ethical practice can help you avoid legal and ethical problems, a more altruistic goal of ethics education is enhancing the quality of your services as you promote social justice,

human well-being, and respect for the dignity and worth of all people.

This textbook is designed to help you integrate social work values and ethics into all aspects of your social work education and, ultimately, your practice with real clients, colleagues, and communities. Rote memorization of rules and laws is neither sufficient nor interesting. Instead, this textbook invites you to engage personally in a range of learning experiences: reflecting on your own values, analyzing practice situations, role-playing social work–client interviews, and pondering over challenging ethical issues. As you work through the exercises in this textbook, remember that learning can be amusing and imaginative. Challenge yourself to think through situations from other people's perspectives. Do not be afraid to play the devil's advocate, stating positions or asking questions that others might find politically incorrect. Be creative when you think of different ways to resolve ethical issues. Take risks during role-plays. Classroom exercises give you an opportunity to test different ideas, skills, and strategies without posing risks to real clients. The first time I counseled a suicidal client, I had no prior experience with the ethical and clinical issues that arose—not even in a role-play. I knew suicide intervention from a theoretical perspective, but I had little understanding of suicide intervention from an experiential one. Use the case scenarios in this textbook and raise your own questions to help bridge the gap between theory and practice.

If you are looking to this textbook for simple, definitive answers for handling difficult ethical issues, you may be disappointed—at least initially. Although social workers have a range of laws, agency policies, and ethical codes to guide them toward ethical practice, in many situations, the correct response to an ethical problem is not clear. In some cases, there may be conflicting ethical or legal obligations. In other cases, there may be no way to accurately predict which course of action will lead to the greater good—or avoid the greater harm. Being able to manage uncertainty and the stress caused by uncertainty is crucial. This textbook does not necessarily provide you with specific answers to complex ethical problems, but it does provide a range of tools and strategies that can guide you toward solution.

Different programs may use this textbook in different manners, assigning different chapters or modules to different courses or using this entire textbook for stand-alone ethics course. As you move from one course to another, you can refer back to earlier materials to review the basics. You may also refer forward to other materials to explore ethical issues at higher or more in-depth levels. Use the index to see how different ethical issues are applied in different contexts of practice (e.g., how confidentiality may be applied to work with individuals vs. families, groups, or communities). Use the glossary to help you understand key concepts. Finally, use the websites and bibliography at the end of this textbook to locate further readings to assist with class assignments and issues that arise in practice. There is a myriad of resources online and in scholarly journals, with practical information and thought-provoking debates of ethical issues. Your journey of professional development will continue long after you have completed your degree, so it is important to know where to locate ethics resources to support you on this journey.

The image on the textbook cover is entitled *Sharing*. Although the artist, Doris Cyrette, did not specifically design this artwork to reflect ethics, sharing is relevant to social work ethics in many ways. First, as advocates of social justice, social workers need to understand how resources are shared—and could be shared—within society. Should we pursue social justice by distributing resources according to market forces and the ability to pay? Or do governments and communities have an obligation to ensure that all people have access to housing, education, food, mental health services, and other resources, regardless of ability to pay? Second, sharing may refer to sharing our stories, experience, beliefs, and values with one another. Values and ethics do not exist within a vacuum. We need to engage clients, supervisors, coprofessionals, and others in meaningful conversations in order to understand each other's perspectives and work toward ethical solutions for complex problems. Third, sharing can mean giving of ourselves: What can we give of ourselves to pursue the ideals of the social work profession and the people we serve? How can we use our knowledge, skills, motivation,

creativity, time, and energy to pursue what is good? Be inspired. Inspire others.

A NOTE FOR INSTRUCTORS

As we all learned in our introduction to social work courses, social work developed as a unique profession in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Social work pioneers such as Mary Richmond, Jane Addams, Helen Harris Perlman, Florence Kelly, Charles Levy, and Whitney Young each emphasized the importance of ethics and values in guiding all forms of practice. From its historical mandate of ameliorating social problems among the most vulnerable populations in society to its ongoing dedication to facilitating social well-being and social justice, the profession of social work has been defined by its commitment to particular ethical ideals (NASW, 2018). Not surprisingly, ethics and values comprise a core component of social work education (Council on Social Work Education [CSWE], 2015). Although modern schools of social work have access to a number of solid textbooks on social work values and ethics, this textbook is the first to provide a comprehensive plan for teaching and learning values and ethics across the social work curriculum.

Given that values and ethics are already interspersed throughout social work courses and existing textbooks, one might ask why a comprehensive textbook on ethics and values is needed. Having taught at four different schools of social work, I have found that most programs provide students with a solid, general understanding of values and ethics from their theory and practice courses. Unfortunately, there are many gaps in traditional social work curricula. Course content on values and ethics is often repetitive. Students might be offered content on confidentiality in three different courses, for instance, but, each time, the content covers the same basics, never moving to the next levels of understanding, application, and analysis. Often, students do not have a chance to learn ethical analysis at an advanced level unless they take a stand-alone course on advanced ethics. This textbook is designed to remedy these problems by providing a comprehensive set of educational materials that will take students from basic to advanced levels, using an explicit theory for teaching and learning ethics and values. Schools of social work that adopt this textbook will be able to fully integrate ethics and values into their existing courses in a comprehensive manner.

Part I of this textbook focuses on content for students in BSW and MSW foundation courses, consistent with CSWE's Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards. To tailor course expectations to the different needs of BSW and MSW programs, professors may consult the *Instructor's Manual* for specific suggestions and teaching resources for courses at both levels (please see the auxiliary website for this textbook on the Oxford University Press website at http://www.oup.edu). Part II of this textbook focuses on content for students taking advanced or concentration courses in their MSW programs.

Research on ethics education suggests that the most effective programs include a combination of ethical decision making, problem solving, and ethical sensitivity training (Pollock, 2017). It is important to engage students cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally through a variety of case-based discussions, critical thinking assignments, and experiential exercises.

Social work educators often instruct their students to "start with the client." Likewise, I suggest that social work educators "start with the student," ensuring that their educational activities fit with the students' current stage of knowledge and receptiveness to learning (Swindell & Watson, 2006). This textbook adopts a "developmental approach," meaning that students will experience certain types of learning in earlier courses and other types of learning in later courses, helping them work toward higher levels of understanding, application, analysis, and integration of ethics and values content. These stages of learning are informed by theories of moral, cognitive, affective, and behavioral development. Theories of moral development, for instance, suggest that infants are not born with a concept of right and wrong (Kohlberg, Levine, & Hewer, 1983; Sanders, 2018). Eventually, they first learn about right and wrong by following particular authorities (parents, teachers, religious and cultural teachings, etc.). By analogy, when novice

social workers begin their social work education, they are not familiar with the specific ethical standards governing social workers and the social work profession. They need to understand the authorities on social work ethics, including what types of consequences will ensue if they do not follow certain ethical guidelines. Initially, novice social workers may follow a social work code of ethics or agency policy simply because that is the ethical standard, agency rule, or law to be followed. As novices develop into more autonomous professionals, they make more nuanced decisions about ethical behavior. They need to manage their emotions, balance potentially conflicting obligations, and work with professionals who have different codes of ethics (Pugh, 2017). Developing social workers need to learn the rationale behind ethical standards and policies so they can make reasoned choices. Accordingly, this textbook initially provides novice social workers with relatively "black-and-white" ethical principles and standards that they should ordinarily follow. Once they have a basic understanding of these, this textbook will introduce them to more challenging issues that cannot be resolved by simply following one particular rule or standard. Thus, they will learn to assume full responsibility for decisions they make.

Theories of cognitive development suggest that knowledge acquisition occurs through different processes, each depending on the individual's stage of cognitive development (Piaget, 1932/1999). Although theories of cognitive development often focus on stages extending from early childhood to adolescence, developmental theories have been used to enhance adult education curricula. Bloom's revised taxonomy of educational objectives, for instance, identifies six levels of cognitive learning: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating (Pande, 2017). The first level, remembering, suggests that students must first learn how to retrieve, recognize, and recall information about ethics and values from their long-term memories. The second level, understanding, implies that students must be able to construct meaning from this information. Whereas reciting a definition of informed consent would constitute remembering, explaining informed consent in one's own words would demonstrate understanding. The third level, applying, requires the ability to link theory and practice. Thus, a student should be able to describe how to implement an informed consent process with a particular client. The fourth level, analyzing, indicates the ability to break material into constituent parts and assess how these parts relate to each other or to the overall purpose. In terms of informed consent, for instance, a student would need to be able to differentiate components of informed consent (i.e., providing information in user-friendly language, assessing the client's mental capacity and understanding, and ensuring that the client's consent is voluntary). The fifth level, evaluating, requires the ability to critique the theory or knowledge. Evaluating informed consent, for example, might include a critique of this ethical standard from a diversity perspective (e.g., although informed consent refers to obtaining permission from the individual, obtaining permission from a client's family or community might be more appropriate for clients from collectivist cultures). The sixth level, creating, refers to using the knowledge in new or creative manners. A student might build on the diversity critique, for instance, by developing a new ethical standard for informed consent that takes diversity concerns into account. The readings and assignments in this textbook are designed to take students through each of these educational objectives. The materials in Part I focus primarily on recalling, understanding, and applying. Part II includes these three objectives while also providing students with more opportunities to analyze, evaluate, and create. Some ethics textbooks begin by presenting broad philosophical discussions, for instance, comparing deontological and teleological approaches to ethical analysis. Other textbooks begin by presenting students with a framework for determining tough ethical issues. Before students are able to understand and appreciate the importance of these higher level forms of moral reasoning and ethical analysis, students first need a solid grounding in the "black letter" standards and ethical guidelines. When instructors engage students in complex ethical decision making too early, they may hear

student remarks such as, "But what is the answer?" even when there is no clear-cut answer. Accordingly, the initial chapters of this textbook have more focus on helping students make use of authorities (e.g., the NASW Code of Ethics, other codes of ethics, agency policies, and relevant laws) as well as how to find these authorities and what happens if a social worker breaches these authorities. Once students have a firmer grasp of these authorities and how to apply them, they will be better prepared for the higher level ethical understanding and analysis presented in the later chapters.

Ethical decision making requires more than formal, logical reasoning; it also requires attention to emotions such as anger, fear, delight, and caring, which exist in all social relationships (Gilligan, 2016; Shafer-Landau, 2018). Theories of affective development suggest that a person's emotional capacities (called "emotional intelligence") can be cultivated through specific types of learning experiences: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Bariso, 2018; Goleman, 2006). *Self-awareness* requires raising one's consciousness of intuitions and emotional reactions to various situations. Consider a social worker who feels insulted by a client. If the social worker is not aware of feeling hurt, he might lash out at the client. If social workers are to follow the ethical standard about treating clients with respect, they must first have an awareness of their own affective responses. *Self-management* suggests that people can learn to manage their emotional reactions and motives in a deliberate manner. Thus, the social worker who feels insulted may turn to supervision for support—and also continue to treat the client in a respectful manner. *Social awareness* refers to the ability to interpret what others are saying and feeling, and why they feel and act as they do. So, the social worker who feels insulted must strive to understand why the client said what she said. Perhaps the client was anxious or was experiencing other forms of stress. By understanding the underlying motivations and issues of others, social workers can ensure that their own responses are consistent with ethical, competent practice. *Relationship management* refers to engaging others in a manner that promotes positive rapport or other desired results. Accordingly, the social worker engages the client by demonstrating empathy and unconditional positive regard, rather than acting defensively, with accusations or insults of his own. To foster emotional intelligence, this book provides a series of reflective and experiential exercises. Given that self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management are ongoing processes, these exercises also provide students with skills and strategies they can use throughout their careers.

Theories of behavioral development suggest that behaviors can be learned, unlearned, and relearned through a variety of processes: associational learning, operant conditioning, modeling, self-awareness, provision of knowledge, and development of critical thinking skills. Hence, this textbook provides an array of learning experiences that foster commitment to social work values and ethics, awareness and regulation of emotional responses, and skills for putting ethical decisions into practice.

The Transtheoretical Model is a model of behavioral development focusing on readiness or motivation to change (Prochaska & Prochaska, 2016). This model suggests that behavior change occurs through a sequence of steps—precontemplation, contemplation, decision, preparation, action, and maintenance. Initially, in the precontemplation stage, people are not aware there is a problem in their behavior. They are not motivated to change. Upon becoming aware of a problem, the person may experience ambivalence toward change and move into the contemplation stage. The person is unlikely to change behaviors until successful resolution of the contemplation stage, upon realizing that there are more benefits than costs to changing behaviors. Although the Transtheoretical Model was initially developed for people with addictions, it is relevant to social work students in relation to the development of ethical choices and behaviors (Brannen, Boling, & White, 2006). Initially, students may be unaware of potential problems in their usual ethical thinking and professional conduct. After all, students come into social work wanting to help people, so how could anyone find fault with their ethics

and values? As students become more aware of situations where their personal values conflict with the values of social work, their agencies, or their clients, they can start to challenge their thinking and alter the ways that they interact with the people they serve. Consider, for instance, students who value hugs, believing that outward demonstrations of physical affection have a positive impact on human growth and development. When these students hear that hugging clients could be unethical, they may initially resist this notion. Just being told not to hug clients is insufficient to change their behavior. Rather, the process of change must allow the students to process the issues and eventually come to their own understanding about the ethics of hugging clients. Accordingly, this textbook offers a range of exercises to assist students at various stages of change with experiential, affective, cognitive, and behavioral exercises.

Theories of acculturation suggest that when people move from one culture into another, a number of factors affect how effectively they adapt. The concept of *maintenance* refers to the degree to which people hold on to their original language, traditions, values, norms, and morals. *Contact* and *participation* refer to the degree to which people adopt the language, traditions, values, norms, and morals of the new culture. Effective acculturation requires a balance between maintaining one's original culture and adapting to the ways of the new culture. Although many people think of acculturation in terms of people who move from one part of the world to another and must learn how to adjust to a new culture, the concept of acculturation also applies to students who move into a new profession, such as social work. *Ethical acculturation* refers specifically to the manner in which people adapt to the values and ethics of the new profession (Paprocki, 2014). Ideally, students learn to integrate their original values and morals with the values and ethics of the social work profession. Integration does not require a complete shedding of personal values and morals, but rather an ability to rely on social work values and ethics when acting in a professional manner and an awareness of potential conflicts between professional and personal values. Three problematic responses to acculturation are separation, assimilation, and marginalization. *Separation* arises when workers maintain their original values and morals but reject social work values and ethics. By holding onto their original values and morals so strongly, they may feel alienated from the profession. *Assimilation* arises when social workers identify with social work values and ethics so strongly that they give up too much of their personal identity. The problem with assimilation in social workers is that it may dehumanize them, as workers may act without the individuality that makes each worker unique. *Marginalization* arises when workers give up their own values and morals but do not yet know or appreciate the values and ethics of social work. Often, marginalization occurs at an early stage of professional development as students are making the transition from nonprofessional to professional (Bashe et al., 2007). The task for social work educators is to help students make a successful transition from maintenance of their original values and morals to a balanced integration with professional social work values and ethics.

Most social work ethics textbooks provide students with a strategic decision-making framework that guides them through the analysis of ethical issues so they can determine the "best" course of action. These textbooks help students develop critical thinking skills for working through ethical dilemmas. They do not, however, provide students with guidance on the process of managing ethical conflicts between social worker and client, client and client, social worker and supervisor, or between other parties that the worker may be helping. This textbook provides students with specific models of conflict resolution to help them work through ethical conflicts with clients, coworkers, and others. The interest-based model, for instance, shows students how to identify common ground and work toward win–win solutions, even when people initially seem to be at complete odds (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 2011). The transformative model shows students how to use respectful communication and develop positive ways of interacting with people, even when there is little or no room for consensus (Institute for the Study of Conflict

Transformation, n.d.). Conflict resolution skills are particularly useful for social workers in the roles of supervisors, mediators, advocates, and facilitators (Barsky, 2017a).

Transforming knowledge into professional conduct is an important aspect of social work education. Learning about social work values and ethics does little good unless the social worker can translate these values and ethics into meaningful behaviors. The fact that social workers know how to determine an ethically correct response to an ethical problem does not ensure that they will behave in an ethically correct manner. Social workers may know, for example, that it is unethical to impose their cultural values on clients. Without sufficient clarification of their own values, however, they may impose values unintentionally. Similarly, social workers may know the right way to respond to an ethical problem but feel afraid to act ethically given the risks of losing their jobs or facing retribution from others who disagree. To act ethically, students must develop the moral strength to do what is right even when the challenge seems daunting. They must also learn how to manage risks deliberately and effectively. By engaging students at affective, cognitive, moral, and behavioral levels, this textbook is designed to help students not only understand values and ethics but also raise their capacity for integrating values and ethics in all aspects of their professional practice.

If you have used the first edition of this textbook, you will note a number of changes in this edition. I have made extensive updates regarding the new laws, ethics codes, research, and applications to new and emerging areas of social work. In particular, revisions to the NASW Code of Ethics in 2018 introduced significant changes to standards related to informed consent, confidentiality, and the use of technology. New case examples deal with current ethical issues, such as responding to terrorism risks, managing conflict between professionals from different disciplines, and using video conferencing, online social networking, social robots, and other forms of technology in practice. The two completely new chapters relate to private practice and international social work. I have also incorporated feedback from students, educators, and practitioners who have participated in my classes, trainings, and conference presentations. Since making my writing and videos available online, social workers from around the globe have also contacted me with suggestions, critiques, case examples, and questions. I truly appreciate their input.

The study of values and ethics often involves analysis of complex laws, policies, values, and ethical standards. In writing this book, I have tried to be careful with the accuracy of information I provide and my choice of words to explain various concepts. As you work through this text, you may question certain information or statements. I welcome your questions and feedback. I may be able to clarify information or provide support for what I have written. If I have provided misinformation, I will provide corrections online and in future editions. Feel free to email me at barsky@barsky.org or view my website at http://www.barsky.org.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Barsky has a background in social work, law, ethics, and mediation. He has taught at a university level since 1989 in four schools of social work (University of Toronto, Ryerson University, University of Calgary, and Florida Atlantic University, where he is a full professor). He was also a visiting professor at Bar Ilan University in Israel. He has chaired the National Ethics Committee of the National Association of Social Workers and was awarded the NASW's "Excellence in Ethics Award" in 2015. From 2015 to 2017, Dr. Barsky served on the National Task Force on Social Work and Technology. He also chaired the NASW's Code of Ethics Revision Task Force, leading to the 2018 revisions to the Code. Dr. Barsky's other book authorships include *Conflict Resolution for the Helping Professions* (2017), *Interprofessional Practice with Diverse Populations* (2010, co-edited), and *Clinicians in Court*.

Acknowledgments

To paraphrase from John Donne's "Meditation 17," no author is an island. Throughout the processes of writing, reviewing, rewriting, reviewing, and rewriting this textbook, I have been surrounded with incredible waves of support. First, I thank all the bright and energetic students from my ethics classes for being my teachers, as they have helped me learn as much as I have taught. Second, I thank Dr. Naelys Luna and the Sandler School of Social Work at Florida Atlantic University for providing excellent teaching opportunities where I could develop and hone many of the educational materials that I have incorporated in this book. Third, I thank Dana Bliss and the other staff at Oxford University Press for their wonderful encouragement, ideas, feedback, editing, and support throughout the publication process. Fourth, I thank Deanne Bonnar (Boston University), Laura Kaplan (University of Northern Iowa), Pam Graham (Florida State University), José Torres (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Katherine Van Wormer (University of Northern Iowa) Steve Marson (University of North Carolina-Pembroke), Pam Graham (Florida State University), Dawn Hobdy (National Association of Social Workers, Office of Ethics and Professional Review), David Barrry (Bowne, Barry, and Barry, Attorneys at Law), Makeba Green (Bowie State University), and Jim Raines (California State University-Monterray Bay), who provided constructive criticism and insightful suggestions for improvement on earlier proposals and drafts. Fifth, I thank the National Association of Social Workers and the Association of Social Work Boards for collaborating with me on a number of ethics-related projects. And finally, I thank my dear husband Greg and daughter Adelle for all their moral support and sacrifices, allowing me to spend far too much time in my office when I should have been out playing with them.

The cover image, *Sharing*, is courtesy of Canadian Ojibway artist Doris Cyrette.

PART I

FOUNDATIONS OF VALUES AND ETHICS

Case 1: *Sandra is a social worker providing counseling to a client named Colby. Colby discloses that he has been having sex with professional sex trade workers (prostitutes). Although he claims to be using condoms, Sandra is concerned about the safety of Colby's wife. How should Sandra balance her ethical obligation to keep Colby's information confidential with possible ethical, moral, or legal obligations to protect Colby's wife from emotional or physical harm?*

Case 2: *Sofia is a Christian social worker providing community organization services for a neighborhood with a large Muslim population. When community leaders ask her to help them develop programs that instill Muslim morals and beliefs, Sofia feels conflict between her religious beliefs and her professional value for diversity. How should Sofia show respect for the community's beliefs and right to self-determination in light of the potential conflicts with her personal and professional belief systems?*

Case 3: *Stacey works for child protective services. During a child neglect investigation, she discovers that the parents leave Chauncey (their 8-year-old child) unattended after school because both need to work in order to pay the bills. They have recently immigrated to the United States, so they have no family or friends to help with child care. They have taken precautions to ensure that Chauncey is safe, but the law says that 8-year-olds cannot be left unattended. Stacey believes Chauncey is better off with the parents' plans rather than being placed in foster care. How should Stacey reconcile her legal, clinical, and ethical obligations toward the child and family?*

Case 4: *Sutcliffe provides counseling to people with learning disabilities. One of his clients, Calvin, starts to exhibit hallucinations and delusions that are more characteristic of schizophrenia than learning disability. Sutcliffe continues to provide counseling even though he has never received training to help people with schizophrenia. Calvin hears voices that tell*

him to set fire to a house. The owner of the burned house sues Sutcliffe for malpractice. What is the extent of Sutcliffe's legal or moral liability to the owner?

Case 5: *Shelley is a social worker who provides support services to elderly clients in a nursing home. Several clients inform Shelley that they have been mistreated by the nursing home staff. Upon hearing about this mistreatment, Shelley feels angry toward the nursing home staff. With the consent of the clients, Shelley refers them to an ombudsman responsible for investigating allegations of elder abuse. Although Shelley has helped her elder clients respond effectively to an abusive situation, what ethical and practical concerns arise in this case?*

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this introduction, you will be able to

- Explain the meanings of ethics, values, laws, agency policies, morals, professional ethics, personal ethics, ethical issues, ethical breaches, ethical dilemmas, beliefs, feelings, convictions, rules, and principles.
- Identify the similarities and differences between these concepts.
- Provide examples of each key term.
- Make appropriate citations to sources of laws and ethics.

These cases[1] portray five very different situations, yet all have one thing in common. They all involve a social worker who needs to make choices based on her[2] assessment of the values and ethics that apply to the particular situation. As you may hear throughout your professional social work education, values and ethics pervade all areas of practice. In many situations faced by social workers, the choices are easy and clear. In other situations, the choices are difficult and not so clear. This text is designed to help you integrate social work values and ethics in all aspects of your practice, whether you are faced with issues that are clear or unclear, easy or difficult.

Learning social work ethics does not mean simply memorizing specific rules and standards of practice for every situation that may arise. Ethical practice requires professional self-awareness, critical thinking, and the ability to manage complex information, values, and principles from a variety of sources. This textbook is designed to provide you with a practical understanding of the principles and standards that guide social work practice, as well as frameworks for raising awareness of your own values and biases, for thinking through difficult ethical issues, and for working with others to decide how to respond to such issues.

To begin your exploration of values and ethics, this introduction provides a definitional framework for the key terms used throughout this textbook. To provide you with practical understandings of each term, I will relate each term to the case scenarios at the top of this chapter. As you work through later chapters in this text, refer back to the definitions in this section whenever you have questions regarding how certain terms are being used.

ETHICS VERSUS VALUES

In common parlance, some people use the terms *ethics* and *values* interchangeably. In professional discourse, these are two distinct but related terms. *Values refer to the ideals to which an individual, family, group, organization, or*

[1] The term *case* refers to a situation involving a social worker and people with whom the social worker is interacting (clients, coworkers, others in the community). I use cases throughout the book to explore how values and ethics apply to various scenarios that a social worker may experience.

[2] To manage the issue of how to use male and female pronouns, I have rotated the use of "he/his" and "she/hers" throughout the text. Case examples will include men and women in various roles, including social worker, client, supervisor, and other professionals. The pronouns "they/their" may be used for people whose genders are nonbinary.

community[3] *aspires*. Values identify what people believe are good, worthy, or valuable (Pollock, 2017). Values reflect a priority of preferences. All people have values, though different people may have a different selection or ordering of values. In Case 2, Sofia indicates that she values diversity. This means diversity is important to her. Values do not declare specific ways of behaving. Although Sofia values diversity, this information alone does not tell us what rules she lives by or how she will act in a particular situation. Diversity is not her only value. She may also value privacy, life, safety, authority, or an infinite number of other possible ideals or priorities. Assume that Sofia's highest value is diversity, followed by peace, honesty, and humility, in that order. This set of interconnected values may be called Sofia's *value system*.

Ethics refer to guidelines that define what types of behavior are appropriate and what types of behavior are inappropriate.[4] Different individuals, families, groups, organizations, or communities may declare or abide by different ethics. In Case 1, Sandra's ethics include a rule requiring her to maintain the confidentiality of information received from clients. If Colby discloses his affair to a friend rather than a social worker, the friend may not have an ethical rule regarding confidentiality. Ideally, ethical rules provide clear direction on how people should behave. In some situations, however, individuals contend with two or more conflicting rules. Although Sandra has a rule stating she should maintain client confidentiality, she may also have a rule stating she should protect people from harm. In other situations, the person's ethical rules do not anticipate a particular set of circumstances. Consider an unemployed single woman who asks a fertility doctor to implant six embryos even though she already has six children. The doctor believes that patients should have the right to choose how many children they would like to have but feels uncomfortable about the choice this particular patient is making. If the fertility clinic has never had to consider such a request before, its ethics policies may not provide the doctor with sufficient guidance on how to manage this issue.

Whereas values identify a person's sense of "what is good," *ethics* identify a person's sense of "what is right" (Dolgoff, Harrington, & Loewenberg, 2012). Thus, Sofia's value for diversity suggests that diversity is something good, an ideal worthy of pursuing. If Sofia wants, she can take this value and translate it into an ethical rule that describes what type of behavior is right and what type of behavior is wrong; for instance, as a social worker, she should not impose her values or beliefs on clients. If she persuades Muslim clients to accept Christian beliefs, for instance, her behavior would be inappropriate or unethical according to her own rule against imposing values. Remember, values are priorities or ideals, whereas ethics are rules of behavior that should be based on these priorities or ideals. In essence, ethics are "the application of values to human relationships and transactions" (Levy, 1993, p. 1).

ETHICS VERSUS LAWS, AGENCY POLICIES, OR MORALS

Ethics refers to guidelines for behavior, indicating what types of conduct are appropriate or inappropriate. Whether these guidelines are enforceable, however, depends on whether and how these guidelines are formalized. In some situations, ethical guidelines are implicit, with no formal mechanism for enforcement. In

[3] For ease of reference, I may refer to "individuals, families, groups, organizations, or communities" collectively as "people." Given that social workers practice with all types of client systems, specific cases used throughout this textbook will demonstrate how values and ethics apply with each of them.

[4] Ethics may also be defined as the study of right and wrong behaviors and how people should make such decisions (Ethics & Compliance Initiative, n.d.). The three branches of ethics are meta-ethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics. *Meta-ethics* investigates the sources of ethics and the nature of morality (e.g., universal vs. situational). *Normative ethics* refers to the study of how people should live and behave. *Applied ethics* is a specific type of normative ethics. Applied ethics refers to the study of moral judgments in the context of specific life situations; for instance, particular practice issues faced by social workers or other professionals (Pollock, 2017). To apply and analyze ethics at an advanced level, social workers should study all three branches of ethics.

Case 1, Colby's personal ethics tell him that it is OK to have extramarital sex as long as he uses condoms. If he does not use condoms, he may feel guilt-ridden or blameworthy, but there is no law stating that he must use condoms.

Laws are guidelines for behavior enacted by the state and enforced by the state (e.g., by local, state, or national governments, courts, police, and public justice systems). Many laws are based on ethics (Janebová, 2012). For instance, criminal laws that prohibit murder, theft, rape, and other acts of violence are based on the ethical principle of preventing harm to others. Divorce laws that establish parental rights and responsibilities toward their children are based on the ethic of ensuring that children's needs and interests are satisfied. Mental health laws that allow the state to commit suicidal patients to psychiatric facilities are based on the ethic of preserving life. Thus, Calvin, in Case 4, could have been committed due to his auditory hallucinations and risk of harming others. Likewise, in Case 3, Stacey is required to follow a law requiring children to have appropriate supervision. The law deems parents to be "neglectful" if they leave young children unattended for extended periods of time.

The consequences for violating laws vary depending on the specific law that has been broken. Such consequences range from imprisonment to fines, community service, probation, losing civil rights, terminating parental rights, or public censure. These consequences are intended to deter people from certain types of behavior, ideally promoting ethical behavior. Not all laws are ethical (Johns, 2016). For instance, a law that discriminates against African Americans, immigrants, Jews, gays, or any other identifiable group is considered by the social work profession to be unethical. In some situations, a particular law may be viewed as ethical by one segment of the population but unethical by another. Unethical laws, such as those authorizing slavery, may be challenged and changed over time. In fact, challenging unethical laws is a key aspect of a social worker's obligations to promote social justice (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2018, Part 6).

As Table I.1 indicates, not every law is ethical, and not every ethic is reflected in the law (Koocher & Keith-Spiegel, 2016). Quadrant A describes behaviors that are legal and ethical. For instance, it is legal to offer counseling services to clients, and it is also ethical to do so. Quadrant B describes behaviors that are ethical but illegal. In a state that prohibits providing services to undocumented aliens, for instance, a social worker could argue that it is ethical to do so based on the principles of justice and respect for the dignity of all people. Quadrant C describes behaviors that are unethical but legal. Standard 1.13(b) of the NASW Code of Ethics says social workers should not accept gifts from clients; if there is no law specifically prohibiting receipt of gifts, then it could be unethical for a social worker to accept a gift but still be legal to do so. Quadrant D indicates behaviors that are both unethical and illegal. For instance, it is both illegal and unethical to physically assault a client. When laws and ethics align (under quadrants A and D), social workers have consistent guidance on how to behave. When there are conflicts between laws and ethics, social workers are faced with ethical dilemmas.

TABLE I.1 Ethical Versus Legal Behavior

	Legal	Illegal
Ethical	A. *Ethical and Legal*	B. *Ethical but Illegal*
Unethical	C. *Unethical but Legal*	D. *Unethical and Illegal*

Agency policies are behavioral guidelines created by an agency and enforced by an agency. In some situations, agency policies can also be enforced through court proceedings.[5] Although many agency policies are not specifically intended to formalize ethical rules, other agency policies are specifically intended to do so.

[5] Agency policies may establish the terms of the contractual relationship between the agency and its employees. If this contract is breached, the party hurt by the breach can go to court to sue for damages.

For instance, an agency policy may require employees to maintain the confidentiality or privacy of clients served by the agency. In Case 5, the nursing home may have policies on the appropriate treatment of its residents. Agency policies may also establish procedures for an ombudsman to investigate any complaints by the residents. Finally, agency policies may establish consequences for violating agency policies. Typical consequences for serious breaches of policy include suspension or termination of employment. For lesser breaches, agencies may simply require greater supervision or further training to ensure that the employee does not commit further violations. As with laws, agency policy may or may not reflect the ethics of particular individuals or groups. In Case 1, assume that agency policy tells Sandra to maintain client confidentiality even though her client's extramarital sex could put his wife at risk. Although the agency may think maintaining confidentiality is ethical, Sandra's ethics may tell her otherwise.

Morals[6] *are first-order convictions about what types of behavior are right or wrong.* Similar to ethics, laws, and agency policies, morals are rules of conduct, or guidelines that distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior. Unlike laws and agency policies, morals are not legislated by an external body, and they are not limited to a specific professional role (such as social work). People often adopt morals from their social context, including their family, religious or spiritual community, cultural community, neighbors, and close friends.[7] *Universal morality* refers to moral systems that are common to all people, religions, cultures, and social institutions (e.g., the notion that murder is wrong). *Particular morality* refers to moral systems that are specific to certain cultures or social groups (e.g., the belief among Christians that salvation is achieved by accepting Jesus Christ) (Beauchamp & Childress, 2012). Morals are considered "first-order convictions" because they are central to the person, guiding his or her understandings about good and evil without requiring the person to make conscious attempts to reflect upon why certain behaviors are right or wrong (Frunză & Sandu, 2016). In contrast, ethics are considered "second-order convictions" because they require the person to reflect on his or her values and morals in order to determine what types of behavior are considered right or wrong (Hinman, n.d.). We speak of "social work ethics" rather than "social work morals" because social workers should use second-order convictions, taking their professional role and context into account. Thus, in Case 3, we could consider how morals and ethics may have guided Chauncey's parents' belief that it was appropriate to leave Chauncey unattended while they were working. Perhaps the parents were operating on the moral principle that says people should be self-reliant. If so, they may not have thought about asking others for help with Chauncey. Self-reliance is something they learned from their upbringing, rather than something they follow because it is a law or official policy. Self-reliance is a way of life for them, not a choice that they deliberated over before coming to the conclusion that it was better to leave Chauncey unattended rather than ask for help.[8]

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS VERSUS PERSONAL ETHICS

Professional ethics are rules that guide social workers or other professionals in the choices that they make in their professional capacities. Personal ethics are rules that guide people in their private lives, in their roles as parents, family members, friends, neighbors, citizens, and

[6] Some people confuse the terms *morals* and *mores*. Mores are social customs or norms of behavior that are enforced by others in the same cultural group (e.g., through social approval or disapproval). Thus, morals are convictions whereas mores are behaviors.

[7] Some people equate morals with beliefs about right and wrong from a religious context. Although people may derive morals from their religions, one does not have to be religious to have morals. Further, religious people derive some of their morals from nonreligious sources.

[8] Some theorists use morals and ethics interchangeably, referring to both first- and second-order convictions.

so forth.[9] As a social worker, you will find that many of your personal ethics fit well with your professional ethics. For instance, if you believe in your personal life that it is important to confront racism and oppression, your ethical obligation as a professional social worker to promote social justice will simply be an extension of your personal ethics. In many situations, however, you will find that your personal and professional obligations are different.[10] As a private person, for instance, you may provide friends with whatever advice you want, regardless of whether you have professional training to provide advice (e.g., "You should get married before you have a child"). As a social worker, however, you are not permitted to provide advice to clients unless that type of advice is within your specific training and area of competence. In Sofia's case, described earlier, the worker may be facing a conflict between her personal morals and professional ethics. In her personal life, she is an evangelical Christian and she believes the teachings of Christ are good. In her private life, Sofia reaches out to friends and acquaintances to teach them the gospel of Christ, as per Matthew 28:19, "Go forth and make disciples of all nations." In her social work role, however, she is bound by a social work ethic that prohibits evangelizing clients. According to the NASW Code of Ethics (2018, Ss.1.06[b] & [c]), for instance, social workers should avoid exploiting vulnerable clients for their own religious purposes, and they should maintain appropriate boundaries with clients. Thus, what may be ethically appropriate in Sofia's private life is not ethically appropriate in her professional role (Valutis & Rubin, 2016). Further, social workers should not reinterpret their professional ethics through the lenses of their personal morals or religious beliefs (Chechak, 2015). Rather, they should be aware of their personal morals, religious beliefs, and professional ethics, as well as of any differences between them.[11]

Professional ethics tend to be more formalized than personal ethics. Most individuals do not create a list of ethical rules that they intend to follow. In contrast, professional ethics tend to be codified in agency policies, laws, or professional codes of conduct and standards of practice. Further, social work textbooks, including the present one, provide social work professionals with guidelines for making informed ethical decisions. Although the public education system provides students with some training on how to make ethical decisions in their personal lives, professional education helps developing social workers understand that they will be held to much higher standards when they are acting in professional capacities.

ETHICAL ISSUES VERSUS ETHICAL DILEMMAS AND ETHICAL BREACHES

Ethical issues refer to any situations involving an ethical question—a question of right or wrong behavior—to be decided. Each of the five cases at the top of this chapter reflects an ethical issue. *An ethical dilemma is a specific type of ethical issue in which the choice of how to respond to the issue is particularly difficult due to conflicting ethical obligations* (Weinberg, 2016). When someone is faced with an ethical dilemma, there is no clear, singular response that satisfies all the considerations that need to be taken into account. Case 1 involves an ethical dilemma because Sandra must choose between competing ethical obligations: Should she honor Colby's right to privacy and confidentiality concerning his extramarital sex activities, or should she promote health and safety by ensuring that

[9] Some theorists equate personal ethics with morals. Throughout this textbook, references to ethics will focus on professional ethics. Rather than referring to personal ethics, I will refer to morals.

[10] Case 1 at the top of this chapter provides another example of potential conflict between professional ethics and personal morals. Sandra has a professional duty to protect the confidentiality of her client, Colby, but her personal ethics may be telling her that his sexual activities with prostitutes are immoral and potentially harmful to Colby's wife.

[11] Consider court clerk, Kim Davis, who refused to assist same-sex couples file for marriage licenses despite a court order requiring her to do so. She prioritized her religious beliefs over her professional and legal obligations (Chechak, 2015).

Colby's wife knows that he may have a sexually transmitted disease? Case 2 involves an ethical dilemma because Sofia feels that she must choose between her personal Christian values and beliefs and her clients' Muslim values and beliefs. Ethical dilemmas are often marked by conflicts among ethics, values, morals, laws, rules, or agency policies. In some situations, ethical dilemmas are created because ethics, values, morals, laws, rules, and agency policies do not provide clear guidelines. With advances in biotechnology, for instance, professionals have had to figure out how to respond to ethical issues raised by the prospects of cloning, embryonic stem-cell research, artificial intelligence, and genetic engineering. In some situations, codes of ethics, agency policies, and laws are completely absent. In other situations, codes of ethics, agency policies, and laws are just developing, as professions, agencies, and lawmakers struggle with building consensus on what is right and wrong when responding to these issues. An ethical dilemma is defined from an objective perspective: Could reasonable people differ on the appropriate behavioral response to a particular situation? Consider the issue of same-sex marriage and religious freedom. One social worker might say that she believes the correct response is clear and unambiguous—social workers have an ethical obligation to serve same-sex couples even if they believe homosexuality goes against their religious beliefs. Although subjectively this worker does not view this situation as a dilemma, it is a dilemma if other people can reasonably disagree with her conclusion.

Whereas an ethical dilemma has no clear-cut or universally acceptable answer about right and wrong conduct, *an ethical breach is a clear violation of a specific ethical rule*. In Case 4, Sutcliffe provides services to a client with schizophrenia even though Sutcliffe has no experience or training for work with this population. Sutcliffe has violated the social work ethic of practicing only within one's area of competence (NASW, S.1.04). In other words, choosing to practice outside his competence was an ethical breach, not an ethical dilemma. Reasonable social workers would generally agree that social workers should practice within their areas of competence. There is no conflicting ethical rule, value, law, or agency policy that would raise the prospect of a dilemma in this situation.

Although this text highlights situations requiring social workers to make challenging decisions on how to act ethically, remember that social workers also make many decisions that do not involve difficult ethical issues. When a client enters your office, for instance, do you initially say "Hello," "Pleased to meet you," or "Thank you for coming"? Ordinarily, the choice among these three greetings does not involve a significant ethical question. The term *zone of moral indifference* describes choices that a professional can make without having to worry about moral or ethical issues; all the choices would be considered appropriate (Figure I.1). A greeting such as "Oh no, not you again," however, would go outside the zone of moral indifference because it violates the ethic of showing respect.

VALUES VERSUS BELIEFS, CONVICTIONS, FEELINGS, OR ATTITUDES

A belief is an understanding of a particular phenomenon. Beliefs may be based on fact or fiction, accurate perception or misperception, and sound reasoning or faulty reasoning. Beliefs may also be based on faith, such as faith in a higher power, a trusted friend, or parents. In Case 3, Stacey believes Chauncey is better off with the parents' plans rather than being placed in foster care. Her belief is based on her assessment of the situation, having completed a home visit in which she spoke to family members and observed Chauncey directly. Her belief may be affected by her values. If she values the autonomy of the family, for instance, she may be more likely to favor solutions that respect the family's right to decide what is right for the child.

Convictions are beliefs that are strongly held. People may hold tightly to convictions for various reasons. In some situations, convictions are based on religious faith. In other situations, convictions are based on information that has been indoctrinated into people by parents, teachers, media, or other important influences in their lives. In Case 2, Sofia's convictions may include a firm belief that Jesus Christ is the son

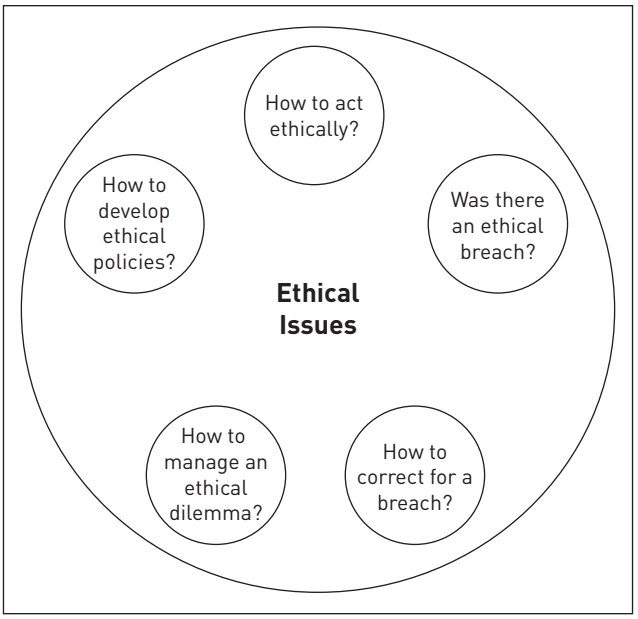


FIGURE 1.1 Ethical issues

of God and the Messiah. You could not easily sway her from this conviction by presenting evidence or well-reasoned arguments to the contrary. Her convictions about Jesus affect her values and ethics because she believes it is important to follow the moral teachings of Jesus (for instance, do unto others as you would have them do unto you).

A feeling is an emotion or affective response such as fear, anger, excitement, eagerness, or hurt. In Case 5, Shelley feels angry toward the nursing staff for abusing clients. Sometimes, people use the word *feel* when they mean *think* or *believe*. Believing and thinking are primarily cognitive processes. If a social worker tells a client, "I *feel* you have made remarkable progress," the worker probably means "I *think* you have made remarkable progress." In this case, it would be more precise to say "think" rather than "feel." Feelings affect and are affected by values and beliefs. If a man believes that God will protect him from harm, he may feel calm or secure even in the face of danger. If a woman values privacy, she may feel particularly infuriated when someone invades her privacy.

An attitude is a complex mental state in which the interactions of a person's values, beliefs, and feelings predispose her to particular opinions or behaviors. In Case 4, Sutcliffe provided services to a client even though he was not competent to do so. If Sutcliffe valued his independence and believed that people with schizophrenia were not so different from his other clients, he may have been operating under the attitude of "I am a good social worker; I don't need anyone's help to serve Calvin." Unfortunately, this attitude may have led Sutcliffe to breach his ethical obligation to provide clients with competent services.

As discussed in Chapter 1, social workers should be keenly aware of their values, beliefs, convictions, feelings, and attitudes so they do not impose them on clients. Although Shelley is angry toward the nursing staff, her awareness of this anger permits her to act professionally and seek a positive response for her clients. If she were not aware of her anger, she might have responded defensively or aggressively.

RULES, STANDARDS, AND PRINCIPLES

Ethical rules, ethical standards, and ethical principles are all guides for professional behavior. Although some people use these terms interchangeably, there are significant differences. *Rules and standards tend to be more specific*

guides for professional conduct, whereas principles tend to be more general (Beauchamp & Childress, 2012). In Case 1, Sandra may consider two broad ethical principles: maintaining a client's confidentiality and protecting people from physical harm. Her decision on whether to inform Colby's wife about his extramarital sex could be aided by a more specific ethical standard; for instance, "Social workers should maintain client confidentiality, even if a client discloses having unprotected extramarital sex" or "Social workers should report all incidents of unprotected extramarital sex to the Department of Public Health." Most codes of ethics include both general principles and more specific standards of conduct. The advantage of general principles is that they can be applied across a broad range of situations. The advantage of specific rules or standards of conduct is that they provide more detailed directions about how to respond, provided that the rules or standards cover the specific situation under consideration. Similarly, laws and agency policies may utilize a combination of specific rules and standards as well as broad principles in order to balance the needs for clear directions and coverage of a wide range of situations.

The primary difference between rules and standards is that rules prescribe mandatory and universal expectations about conduct, whereas standards merely state the customary or ordinarily accepted ways that professionals should conduct themselves. In other words, rules state specifically what social workers *must or must not do*, without leaving room for exceptions or professional discretion. In contrast, standards explain how social workers *should or should not* conduct themselves based on the general consensus of the profession. Social workers may deviate from the expected norms or standards of the profession provided that they can provide appropriate ethical justification. Consider, for instance, a rule that prohibits social workers from having sex with clients. This rule is not a general expectation but a firm directive. As a rule, it does not leave social workers room to argue that sex with clients may be justified in certain circumstances. In contrast, a professional standard that says social workers should respect a client's right to self-determination suggests that self-determination is a general expectation, not a rule that applies steadfastly in all cases or social contexts. There are many exceptions to self-determination in practice—for instance, in work with clients who are actively suicidal. In this situation, social workers may be able to justify deviating from the general standard of self-determination because the value of protecting life supersedes the value of respecting client autonomy.[12] Standards suggest that social workers should ordinarily behave in a particular way, but there may be situations in which alternate forms of behavior could be ethically justified. Codes of ethics typically state their professional expectations in terms of standards rather than rules (NASW, 2018). Using standards balances the need to state the usual expectations for conduct while providing some room for deviation from the standards based on appropriate ethical justification. Federal and state statutes generally provide their expectations in terms of rules rather than standards. Because rules are stated in a mandatory manner, they are easier to enforce than general expectations or standards.

REFERENCING ETHICS AND LAWS

Have you ever heard that you are legally obliged to report suspicions of child abuse? You probably have. But do you know what specific law creates this obligation and what this obligation specifically says? Do you know the legal consequences for failure to report? Whenever you are analyzing a situation with ethical and legal implications, the most persuasive sources are the original sources. This means going to the specific code of

[12] I say that the worker "may be able to justify" rather than make a definitive statement about being able to justify because some people might argue that clients have a right to terminate their lives in certain circumstances (e.g., clients who specify in their living wills that they would like life supports to be withdrawn if they experience a persistent vegetative state).

ethics,[13] agency policy, or statutory law that spells out the relevant ethical guidelines, agency rules, or legal obligations. If you rely on a secondary source, such as a textbook or the Wikipedia website, you take your chances. Is the secondary source accurate? Is it up to date? Does the secondary source apply to your jurisdiction? Many laws affecting social workers vary from state to state. Your analysis and arguments will be much stronger if you rely on original sources.

To access primary sources of laws, you may need the assistance of a librarian with experience in legal research. Legal information gateways for particular areas of law make it relatively easy to find state and federal laws (e.g., for child welfare laws, see http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/state/index.cfm). General legal search engines, such as LexisNexis, Legal Information Institute (n.d.), and WestLaw, provide more comprehensive databases but may be more difficult to navigate. You may also find useful legal resources in the bibliography to this textbook. Still, remember that the laws cited in this textbook could be outdated tomorrow if new laws are passed or existing ones are amended.

When you cite a code of ethics, make sure that code is applicable. The NASW Code of Ethics (2018) applies to social workers who are members of this association. Although nonmembers could be held to similar standards, they have not agreed to be bound by this code. If a situation involves psychologists, nurses, or other professionals, consider their codes of ethics. Do not assume they have the same obligations as social workers.

Whenever you write or speak about ethical issues, consider providing specific citations to laws and ethical standards. Specific citations add credibility and weight to your ethical reasoning and arguments. Citations also permit others to critically analyze and respond to your assertions. Rather than stating that the NASW Code of Ethics endorses client self-determination, for instance, identify the specific standard (S.1.02) that describes self-determination. Rather than writing that state laws require social workers to report child abuse, indicate the specific section of the law (e.g., Florida Statutes, § 39.201).[14] I hope you will find that the use of legal and ethical references throughout this textbook provides a good model for identifying and using specific citations in your own ethical analyses and advocacy.

TEXTBOOK OVERVIEW

Now that you have a better understanding of the key values and ethics concepts, this section provides an overview of the rest of the textbook. By having a clearer picture of the contents, you will be able to utilize these materials more effectively. I have written each chapter in a manner to complement the other educational materials used in your curriculum. Different schools and professors may use these chapters in different manners, for instance, as required readings or suggested readings and for some or for all of your courses. Each chapter begins by identifying its learning objectives. Each chapter then presents theory and knowledge, explaining important concepts and demonstrating how they apply to case situations. Each chapter concludes with a summary, discussion questions, and exercises designed to reinforce your learning—helping you remember, understand, apply, evaluate, and innovate from the core content of the chapter. Part I focuses on remembering, understanding, and applying the content. Part II goes into more depth, particularly in relation to specific areas of practice and challenging ethical issues.

To lay the foundation for your education on social work ethics and values, Chapter 1 begins with introspection: What are your own values? How can you identify them? How can you raise your awareness of what they mean? And how may they affect you as a professional social worker? Once you have a clearer sense of your own values, Chapter 1 provides a framework for attending to and appreciating the values of

[13] See the Bibliography for websites containing codes of ethics that may be relevant to social workers.

[14] The § symbol means "section." The 39 indicates the chapter of the legislation, and the .201 indicates the specific section within that chapter.

others. Finally, Chapter 1 introduces you to the values of social work from historic and current perspectives. The exercises in this chapter will help you compare and contrast your values with those of the profession and others, providing a basis that you will need for whatever ethical issues you may face in practice.

Chapters 2 and 3 explore the values and ethics underlying social work theory. As you will learn in your social work theory courses,[15] knowledge has a political aspect; knowledge is not neutral. Thus, it is important to understand the worldviews and predilections that underlie theory and knowledge, including those of social work, psychology, sociology, medicine, law, and other disciplines that inform social work practice.

Chapter 4 focuses on values and ethics as they apply to the research process: What are the ethical issues to be considered when research involves human subjects? How can social work researchers ensure that clients have free and informed consent? How can researchers protect clients' privacy? What institutional safeguards can be used to ensure that researchers respect all client rights and minimize any risks?

Chapters 5 to 9 delve into values and ethics as they apply to social work with various types of clients: individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. To provide you with a solid foundation for ethical practice with various client systems, these chapters focus on the more "black-and-white" ethical rules defining what types of behavior are appropriate and what types of behavior are inappropriate. These chapters are meant to complement your practice courses, so they will have a very practical focus: How do you discuss confidentiality and informed consent with clients? How can you ensure that you do not impose values on clients? How do you tell if you are competent to work with a particular client and client concern? How do you operationalize values such as respect, empowerment, and the strengths perspective? As you work through these chapters, remember that ethics is not simply about complying with the minimum standards enunciated in codes of ethics or standards of conduct; ethics helps you aspire to the highest ideals of the profession (Corey, Corey, & Corey, 2019).

Chapter 10 examines values and ethics in the context of social policy. Although only a minority of social workers specializes in policy work, all social workers have an ethical obligation to promote social justice and to advocate social change at a policy level. This chapter illustrates ways to incorporate values and ethics into the analysis of policies as well as the promotion of policy change.

Even though this book presents topics in a sequential manner, chapters may be read out of sequence. Chapter 1 is a seminal chapter and should be read first, even if you do not work through all the exercises. Otherwise, the rest of the chapters in Part I may be used in any order.

Part II requires foundational knowledge of values and ethics, including a practical understanding of the black-letter ethical rules that guide social work practice. Part II begins with a framework for ethical analysis, decision making, and consensus building. This framework is designed to help social workers manage challenging ethical issues, including situations where there is no clear right answer or when the choice is between two or more problematic actions. Part II also goes into greater depth, breadth, and specificity regarding work with specific population groups (children, elders), contexts of practice (mental health, criminal justice, private practice, international social work), and advanced social work functions (administration, supervision, psychotherapy). Ideally, you will find that this textbook is not only a useful supplement to your coursework but also a valuable resource for ethical issues throughout your career.

KEY POINTS

- Values reflect our priorities as individuals, groups, or professionals.
- Ethical principles and standards are guidelines for behavior, with principles being more general than standards.

[15] E.g., courses with titles such as "Human Behavior in the Social Environment."

- Whereas personal morals (first-order convictions) do not require people to consciously reflect on why certain behaviors are right or wrong, ethics (second-order convictions) require people to reflect on their morals and values to determine the appropriateness of different behaviors.
- Although certain ethical principles may be reflected in laws, laws do not necessarily reflect ethics, and ethics are not always enforced through laws.
- To support ethical arguments with accurate and credible information, social workers should cite primary sources such as specific laws, agency policies, and ethical standards.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. *Understanding*: Describe each of the following terms in your own words and provide examples of each: ethics, values, laws, morals, and beliefs.
2. *Distinguishing*: Compare and contrast the terms within each of the following sets:
   a. Values, ethics, and morals
   b. Ethics, laws, and agency policies
   c. Ethical issues, ethical dilemmas, ethical breaches, and zones of moral indifference
   d. Professional ethics and personal ethics
   e. Values, feelings, beliefs, and convictions
3. *Applying—Issue, Dilemma, and Breach*: Review Case 3 at the top of this chapter. Identify whether this case involves an ethical issue, an ethical dilemma, and/or an ethical breach. Explain why you believe this case involves an issue, dilemma, and/or a breach (i.e., link your conclusion with the definitions of issue, dilemma, and breach presented in this chapter).
4. *Applying—Law, Rule, Feeling, and Belief*: Patty is a probation officer working with Theo. Theo was convicted for theft and ordered by the court to remain on probation for 1 year. Theo breached one of the conditions of his probation by entering the store where he was initially caught stealing. Patty thinks Theo is a good kid who has had a tough life. She feels sorry for him. She wants to give him a second chance. For Patty, respecting the individual is more important than respecting property. Unfortunately, Theo's court order says that he must go to jail if he breaches any conditions of his probation.

   Review this case and identify one example of each of the following: a law, an ethical rule, a value, a feeling, and a belief. Explain how each example relates to that specific concept. For instance, "Theo's probation order is an example of a *law* because it is a rule that was enacted by the court—an agency of the state—and enforced by the criminal justice system—also an agency of the state."
5. *Applying—Professional Ethic, Personal Ethic, Belief, and Conviction*: Felicity facilitates a group for people with early stages of dementia (memory problems). Felicity personally feels that society should take primary responsibility for taking care of people with dementia. Her parents always told her, "We are our brothers' and our sisters' keeper," and this is a credo that she has come to live by. As a social worker, Felicity understands that families often provide the primary support for individuals in need. She knows that one of her professional responsibilities is to help people take care of their own family members. She feels sad when she sees elders being neglected or mistreated by family members.

   Review Felicity's case and identify one example of each of the following: professional ethic, personal ethic, belief, and conviction. Explain how each example relates to that specific concept.
6. *Applying—Legal Citations:* Go to the following website to locate your state's laws: http://statelaws.findlaw.com. Find the laws pertaining to each of the following topics: social work licensure, living wills, gambling, and reporting elder abuse. Provide a citation to the specific law using APA format (see https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01 for guidance on APA format).

Chapter 1

Values—Mine, Theirs, and Ours

Samantha is a social work student who is providing services to Homer, a homeless man. Homer has no money, no job, no family, and no idea about how he will obtain his next meal or bed. When Samantha asks Homer about the dearth of his resources and support, Homer does not seem to think any of these items is important. In fact, Homer is quite content with his life. He is happy to have the freedom of living on the street. Samantha has trouble accepting this and offers to help him find a real job, a good home, and a chance to re-assimilate into productive society.

Social work regards itself as a "value-based profession," meaning that its mandate, goals, and methods are guided by a particular set of professional values (Chechak, 2015). *Values are deeply held preferences or ideals to which a person, family, group, community, organization, or nation aspires.*[1] Values reflect who we are and what we stand for. They also predispose us to certain choices and ways of behaving. For families, groups, communities, and professions, values foster common bonds, visions, and purposes (Miller, Smith, Kliewer, Rosenthal, & Wedel, 2016).

Two types of values are instrumental and terminal values. *Instrumental values* are ideals related to ways of behaving, such as acting in a polite, empathic, and generous manner. *Terminal values* are ideals related to desired end states, such as fairness, good health, social justice, and peace (Miller et al., 2016). In the forgoing case example, consider how Samantha's and Homer's values are different. Consider also whether Samantha's values are superior to Homer's, or vice versa. A person's values are neither right nor wrong, so social workers should not judge other people's values. Samantha should not ask Homer to defend the correctness of his values. They are what they are, and she should respect them.

[1] For a comparison of values and ethics, see the introduction to Part I.

As guides to how we conduct our lives, values are important. Ironically, many people are unaware or only vaguely aware of their values and how they affect important choices in their lives. For social workers, values are particularly important because they guide our professional conduct. In this chapter, we begin with ourselves. The section on values clarification provides us with a framework for becoming more mindful about our values and their meanings. After raising awareness of our own values, the next section explores how we can gain appreciation for the values of clients, coworkers, and others. If we are to avoid imposing our values on others, we need to be conscious of our own values, as well as those of others. The third section explores the historic and current values of social work, providing definitions and examples of the core values of the profession. The final section delves into some of the ongoing challenges of values awareness and clarification. As the following chapters demonstrate, values inform the ethical standards that guide social work theory, research, practice, and policy.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this chapter, you will be able to

- Raise awareness and clarification of your own values.
- Explain the importance of understanding differences between your values and those of others.
- Attend the values of others without imposing personal biases.
- Identify and describe the historical and current values of the social work profession.

VALUES CLARIFICATION

Values clarification refers to a process of raising self-awareness by reflecting critically on deeply held preferences, giving names to them, and examining the meaning of each of these values or preferences and how they fit together as a system. Although you can reflect by thinking quietly to yourself, reflection can be enhanced through discussions with others, completing values clarification surveys, or through journaling—writing down thoughts and experiences in order to examine them more fully (Kirschenbaum, 2013; Swindell & Watson, 2006). Values clarification is an ongoing process, particularly for professional social workers who must continuously re-appraise their values to ensure they are using these values appropriately in their work with various clients. Values clarification, per se, does not tell people what their values should be, but rather, what their values are. As a developing social worker, you can use values clarification to gain a clearer and more specific understanding of your own predilections. Ethical social work requires the disciplined use of self (Kaushik, 2017). If and when you find that your values are inconsistent with those of your clients or the social work profession, you will be in a better position to make conscious and deliberate decisions about how to resolve these value conflicts. Social work ethics tells us not to impose our values on clients. To avoid imposing values on clients, it is vital to be aware of our values.

Piaget (1932/1999), one of the leading researchers on cognitive and moral development, determined that children learn values and morals as a result of interactions with their environment. Children aged 3–10, for instance, tend to accept rules given to them by people in positions of authority, particularly teachers and parents. Young children determine what is good or fair in terms of whether a particular act or event fits into the simple rules that they know. For instance, they come to understand that "telling the truth" is good because persons in authority tell them it is good. Also, they know they may be punished for lying and rewarded for telling the truth. As their cognitive ability develops, they have greater capacity to consider rules critically and make up their own minds about what is good. Whether older children think critically about their values depends on the opportunities promoted by their families, schools, houses of worship, or other social milieus. Some parents and social systems encourage questioning, while others encourage acceptance of certain values and beliefs without critical thinking. As a social work student, thinking critically about

your values is vital to professional development. Consider: To what extent have your family members, schools, houses of worship, and others encouraged you to question the values and beliefs that they have tried to instill in you?

People tend to view their own values as the best values. If people doubted their values were the best, then they could change them. Values evolve, but because values are deeply held, value evolution is typically a gradual process. One of the biggest challenges for social work students is to truly re-assess their values as they apply to social work practice. For instance, a student who values her faith in Jesus might believe it is appropriate to encourage clients to accept Jesus into their lives. From the student's initial perspective, she is helping the client. Although social work ethics specifically prohibit workers from imposing specific forms of religion on clients, this student may originally question why this prohibition is necessary. She may experience this prohibition as contrary to everything she has learned through her own religious upbringing. Through values clarification, the student may come to understand that her faith in Jesus is not her only value and, further, that there may be more than one way to express this value (e.g., incorporating some of Jesus's teachings that are consonant with ethical social work practice, such as showing respect for all people and not judging them). Throughout your social work career, you may experience conflicts between your professional and personal values. When working in a professional capacity, we may need to suspend our personal values in order to do what is right for our clients. Charles Levy, one of social work's leading ethicists, suggests that being a social worker means giving up part of one's autonomy, relinquishing certain rights to function freely (Dolgoff, Harrington, & Loewenberg, 2012).

To begin the process of values clarification, we will reflect on the items listed in Tables 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3. These lists identify values that may be held by different people and with different levels of intensity. The lists are not meant to be exhaustive but simply to provide a sample of values to initiate the process of values clarification in different realms of life. Table 1.1 focuses on values relating to one's overall priorities in life. Rate each value in this table on a scale of −3 to +3, with +3 being something that you find highly desirable and −3 something you find very undesirable (essentially, a vice).[2] A rating of 0 would be something that you rate as unimportant or that you have no strong convictions about. The last two rows are blank, allowing you to add two additional values that you want to rate (e.g., additional values that you would rate highly desirable or highly undesirable). Guard against any inclinations to mark all or most values as "highly desirable." To gain a sense of how each value truly rates in relation to others, you must begin to make distinctions in how strongly you rate each item. To aid in making these distinctions, rate no more than three values as "+3" (highly desirable) and no more than three values as "2" (very desirable). Remember, there are no "right" or "wrong" answers about your values. Also, remember that you can change your answers as you reflect further on these values, now as a student and later as a professional in practice.

Now that you have rated your values, consider what each one means to you. For each value that you rated as +3 or −3, write two or three sentences explaining your understanding of these values. Each value listed could have different meanings to different people, so it is important to clarify your own understandings. Once again, there is no right or wrong answer about how you understand a particular value. Being as specific as possible, however, will help you gain a better appreciation of your values. If you have difficulty defining a particular value, feel free to consult a dictionary or search for the meaning of the value in scholarly literature. Do not simply rely on someone else's definition. Describe the value in your own words, illustrating what it means to you. Give an example of how you have put this value into practice in your personal life.

[2] The values clarification charts in Tables 1.1, 1.3, and 1.4 build on the format developed for Bobek and Gore's (2004) Inventory of Worker Values, with additional values including ones from the NASW Code of Ethics (2018).

TABLE 1.1 Values Clarification Chart: Overall Life Priorities

"In terms of my overall values in life, I rate _____ as"	Rating						
	Highly undesirable			*Neutral*	*Highly desirable*		
1. Physical safety	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
2. Emotional pain	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
3. Personal happiness	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
4. Material wealth	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
5. Leading a meaningful life	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
6. Authority	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
7. Family	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
8. Friends	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
9. Community responsibility	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
10. Open communication	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
11. Privacy	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
12. Social justice	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
13. Anger	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
14. Integrity (honesty)	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
15. Shame	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
16. Sanctity of life	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
17. Individual choice and autonomy	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
18. Religion/Faith	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
19. Vanity	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
20. Greed	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
21. Solitude	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
22. Competition	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
23.	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
24.	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3

Consider "family" as a value. When different people say they value family, they may or may not be talking about the same thing. For some, valuing family means getting married, having children, and taking care of one another. For others, valuing family means loving and caring for people who are considered family, even if they are not related by blood or marriage. Getting married or having children may not be important to them. In some cultures, valuing family refers to extended family (e.g., aunts, uncles, and cousins). In other cultures, valuing family refers to the whole community.

"Social justice" is another value that evokes different images for different people. Some people view social justice as equality, having everybody treated exactly the same. Others view social justice as respecting differences, treating people differently because they have different needs, wants, or opportunities (Beauchamp & Childress, 2012). What do you think about social work's role in addressing disparities in housing, healthcare, education, safety, and employment (Bisman, 2014)? Consider, for instance, whether universities should offer affirmative action programs for student applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds. Your answer depends, in part, on how you define social justice and how important that value is as compared to other values (e.g., autonomy, universality, competition). Your understanding of social justice is also affected by your life experience. If you have experienced extensive discrimination as a member of a minority group, for instance, you may have a different understanding of social justice than someone from a socially privileged background who has not experienced discrimination.

Once you have defined your key values, consider where conflicts may exist between them. By comparing pairs of values, you can identify potential tensions and contradictions. Suppose you indicated that you valued both "open

communication" and "privacy" very highly. Open communication could refer to the importance of sharing thoughts, feelings, and opinions with close friend and confidants. Privacy could refer to the importance of having your own space, without interference from others. There is nothing wrong with valuing open communication and privacy at the same time. Still, you should be aware of ways that these values may be at odds. Suppose you fail a test at school, leaving you feeling sad and embarrassed. As someone who values open communication, do you share this information with your partner or close friends? Or, as someone who values privacy, do you keep this information to yourself? If you think you would share the information, this may indicate that you value open communication more than you value privacy. By considering other situations when open communication and privacy may conflict, you can further clarify your order of priorities in relation to these values.

Social workers often face circumstances in which values come into conflict. By gaining a better understanding of your own system of values, including how you prioritize them, you will be better prepared for making tough choices in a deliberate, strategic manner.

The values in Table 1.1 relate to overall life priorities. We can also look at values in relation to specific areas of life, for instance, work, medical care, religion, or friendships. The values in Table 1.2 relate specifically to priorities in relation to child rearing. To discern your values in relation to child rearing, rate each of the values in this table on the same scale as you used for Table 1.1. Add two additional child-rearing values to this chart and rate them.

To clarify your values further, write definitions for each of your highest priorities and identify potential conflicts, as you did for the values in Table 1.1. Another way to clarify values is to explore their sources; that is, how you learned or acquired your values. For each of your highest values, identify the major source(s) from which you acquired your values: for example, did you acquire a particular value from your parents, grandparents, cultural community, primary education, secondary education, religious scripture, the legal system, or media (e.g., movies, television, Internet)?

Consider "children learning to be independent." If you rated this as highly desirable, reflect on your own upbringing. Perhaps your parents encouraged you to be independent, teaching you how to do things for yourself or offering praise when you reached each new milestones of independence. Perhaps your school prepared you with life skills (cooking, cleaning, budgeting, and earning a living) so you would not need to depend on others. Alternatively, consider whether your values developed as a reverse reaction to what your parents or others tried to instill. Perhaps you felt your parents smothered you with guidance and support, not allowing you to develop independence. Consciously or unconsciously, you may have decided that independence was important for you or your children.

TABLE 1.2 Values Clarification Chart: Child Rearing

"In terms of values that are important to raising children, I rate _____ as"	Rating						
	Highly undesirable			*Neutral*	*Highly desirable*		
1. Obedience to authority	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
2. Impulsiveness	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
3. Love	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
4. Timeliness	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
5. Emotional expressiveness	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
6. Deceitfulness	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
7. Being brave	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
8. Personal hygiene	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
9.	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
10.	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3

Consider also whether values promoted for boys and girls in your family were different. Some families encourage boys to be more independent while encouraging girls to be more dependent, or perhaps more relational. Whereas "dependence" sounds pejorative, "relational" has positive connotations, including involvement in caring relationships and showing concern for others rather than just for oneself. Which values did you learn from your family? If your family instilled different values for boys than for girls, what was the nature of these differences?

By reflecting on the sources of your values, you will gain a better understanding of how values can be transmitted. You will also gain a better appreciation of how values develop within a social context. What may seem like the best values to one person may seem questionable to another person, in part because of the different families, cultures, and communities in which each grew up and currently lives.

Table 1.3 lists values in relation to work (employment). Add two additional values and then rate each value in this table from −3 to +3.

One reason for including an exercise on work is to help you identify your values as they relate to your impending career as a social worker. As you reflect on the values you rated as highly desirable, consider how well they fit with your career plans. If you indicated a high rating for "high salary" or "prestige," for instance, is this something you are likely to find within social work? If you rated "meaningful work" highly, then what type of meaning would you expect from a career in social work? For each of the values that you rated highly, write a paragraph on the extent to which this value fits or conflicts with a social work career. Feel free to use an introduction to social work textbook to help you assess the goodness of fit between your values and your intended career.

Obviously, there is considerable variation between different social work jobs. If you are working in the criminal justice or child protection system, for instance, there may be a higher emphasis on authority and structure than in, say, a position within a community outreach program for at-risk elders. A career in social work administration tends to be higher paying than a career in frontline case management. A social work position in which you act as an advocate for social justice may be more meaningful than a social work position in which your primary task is to administer eligibility forms for food stamps. By reflecting on your values in relation to work, you can gain insight into whether social work is a good fit, as well as which types of social work practice fit best with your highest values. Identify

TABLE 1.3 Values Clarification Chart: Work

"In terms of my values in relation to work, I rate _____ as"	Rating						
	Highly undesirable			*Neutral*	*Highly desirable*		
1. High salary	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
2. Meaningful work	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
3. Creativity	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
4. Authority (someone with power to provide directions)	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
5. Intellectual stimulation	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
6. Prestige (high status)	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
7. Equal status (between men, women, administrators, frontline workers, and all people in agency)	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
8. Autonomy (free of control from others)	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
9. Structure (guidelines concerning what to do or not to do)	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
10.	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3
11.	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3

one type of social work practice that you are considering. Write a paragraph describing how well this type of work fits or conflicts with your highest values.

APPRECIATING THE VALUES OF OTHERS

Now that you are more aware of your own values, you are in a better position to enhance your appreciation for the values of others. *"Appreciating others' values" means striving to understand their ideals and deeply held preferences*. When others have values that are similar to our own, it is relatively easy to understand and demonstrate respect for their values. When others have values that conflict with our own, we should resist the temptation to judge or condemn their values. Attribution theory suggests that people have a tendency to assign positive thoughts and feelings to people with whom they agree but negative thoughts and feelings to people with whom they disagree (Barsky, 2017a). Consider a social worker who values collaboration and social well-being. This worker might think that business people have poor morals because they value competition and profits rather than collaboration and social well-being. The worker's thought patterns may lead her to feel disdain and anger toward business people. By attributing negative thoughts and feelings to business people, the worker has difficulty maintaining respect for their dignity and worth. Rather than attributing negative thoughts and feelings, the social worker should try to understand the values of business people from their perspectives.

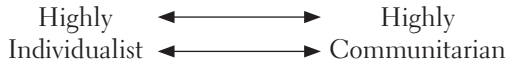
The process of appreciating begins with attending to other people's values with an open mind and an open heart, neither assuming nor judging. Because values reflect what people view as *good* rather than what is *right*, remember: Appreciating does not mean analyzing whether the other's values are correct, desirable, or proper. Social workers respect all people, even when they have significantly different values (NASW, 2018).

Use your coursework, readings, and class activities to practice attending to others' values (Forehand, 2005). Every time you read a book chapter, article, or other assigned material in your social work program, pause to reflect on the values that underlie the author's writing. The author's values are typically reflected in the focus and perspectives represented in the writing. When comparing a chapter written by a psychologist to one written by a social worker, you may find that the psychologist focuses on individual mental illness, whereas the social worker focuses on the stresses that occur in the relationships between people. By attending to their values, you can appreciate that the psychologist has a high value for the mental well-being of the individual, whereas the social worker has a high value for positive social functioning.

During classroom discussions, attend to the values that may be motivating the thoughts and opinions of others. If your policy class is discussing the merits of a tax decrease, what values may be leading some people to support the idea and others to reject it? Those favoring a tax decrease may value *individual responsibility*, having people depend on themselves rather than depend on the government. Those opposing a tax decrease may value *distributive justice*, using the tax system to promote an equitable sharing of resources.

When attending to values of diverse populations, think in terms of relativity (more or less) rather than strict categories. A relative approach focuses on the degree to which a person or group values a particular ideal. One method of viewing values in relative terms is to place them along a continuum rather than in categories. *Consider the value of individualism. According to this value, the individual is important, and each person should do what is best for himself or herself*. If one categorized people according to this value, one could say that a person was either individualistic or nonindividualistic. In reality, people have varying degrees of individualism. They may value individualism to a certain degree but balance individualism with another value, communitarianism or the common good (Dirilen-Gumus, 2017; Etzioni, n.d.). *According to communitarianism, the interests of the social unit are more important than those of the individual, and each person should suppress individual wishes in order to do what is best for the community (e.g., kinship group, neighborhood, society)*. By looking at individualism and

communitarianism as a continuum, you can view people's values in terms of where they fit along this line:



If you compare mainstream American values with traditional Asian values, for instance, you will see that Asians tend to be more communitarian, and Americans tend to be more individualistic (Appleby, Colon, & Hamilton, 2011). Consider a friend or classmate who comes from a different ethnocultural background than you. Is this person more individualistic or less individualistic than you are? What differences in attitudes, opinions, or behaviors are you using to reach this conclusion? Remember, although research may demonstrate certain cultural tendencies, these tendencies do not apply to all people from a particular diversity group. To avoid the problems of overgeneralizing and stereotyping, we should consider within-group and individual differences.

When attending to value differences between people from different cultures, other important value pairings to consider are hierarchy–egalitarianism, mastery–harmony, masculinity–femininity, and uncertainty–certainty (Dirilen-Gumus, 2017; Shiraev & Levy, 2004).[3] Hierarchy–egalitarianism refers to preferences regarding the power distance between people. *People with higher value for hierarchy prefer greater power differentials between people in certain types of relationships, for instance, parents and children, elders and nonelders, husbands and wives, teachers and students, government leaders and the populace, clergy and parishioners, or helping professionals and clients. People with higher value for egalitarianism prefer lower power differentials between such pairings.* If you were raised in a family with rules such as "children should be seen but not heard" or "don't question your elders (or teachers, doctors, etc.)," this suggests that your family valued hierarchy. If your family encouraged children to speak their minds and express differences directly with parents, elders, and other adults as equals, this suggests your family valued egalitarianism. Mainstream Americans tend to have a higher value for egalitarianism as compared to traditional Latinos or Asians (Arikan & Ben-Nun Bloom, 2015; Shiraev & Levy, 2004).

The mastery–harmony continuum relates to how people view their relationships with society and natural resources. *People with higher value for mastery prefer to exercise control over their piece of the world. People with higher value for harmony prefer to fit in and conserve the world in its natural state* (Dirilen-Gumus, 2017; Lum, 2004). Assume you inherited a tract of land that was rich in trees and wildlife. Would you see yourself as an owner, with the rights or responsibility to determine the best use of the land and then implement changes to fulfill its best use? Alternatively, would you see yourself as the guardian of the land, with responsibility to preserve the land, rather than violate or exploit it? Mainstream Americans tend to value mastery whereas Native Americans tend to value harmony (Appleby et al., 2011).

Masculinity and femininity refer to predilections that we typically associate with being male and female. *People with high value for masculinity tend to prefer decisiveness, responsibility, liveliness, and high ambitions. People with high value for femininity tend to prefer consensus building, caring for the vulnerable, gentleness, and modesty* (Shiraev & Levy, 2004). Although these predilections are affected by gender, different men and women possess varying degrees of masculine and feminine values. Different cultures also value masculinity and femininity to varying degrees (Cyr, Gefen, & Walczuch, 2017). Consider your hopes for your children or grandchildren. Would you find it more gratifying if they grew up to be teachers, social workers, or nurturing parents (lifepaths associated with femininity) or more gratifying if they grew up to be successful athletes, stockbrokers, or inventors (lifepaths associated with masculinity)? Mainstream American culture tends to give

[3] Additional value pairings include future–past, direct–indirect, task–relationship, emotional expressiveness–emotional restraint, and risk-taking–security.

higher value to masculinity; to illustrate, compare the salaries of teachers and stockbrokers. Can you think of a culture that gives higher value to feminine careers and attributes?

The uncertainty–certainty continuum relates to the degree to which people are comfortable with ambiguity. People with higher value for certainty prefer social systems that provide clear beliefs, rules, order, and structure. People with higher value for uncertainty prefer nonconformity, unpredictability, creativity, and new forms of thinking and behavior (Shiraev & Levy, 2004). People with fundamental or orthodox religious beliefs value the certainty provided by the clear rules, traditions, rituals, and norms that go along with strict adherence to their religious scriptures. Artists, explorers, and radical social workers value the uncertainty inherent in processes of creating, traveling to new places, and promoting fundamental social change. When you plan a vacation, do you prefer to stay at home or go somewhere familiar, or do you prefer to head into uncharted territories, taking the chance of getting lost, not knowing the language and customs, or ending up somewhere other than where you intended?

How we respond to others depends on our knowledge, thoughts, emotions, and awareness. If we lack knowledge of others' values, how can we possibly attend to what they hold most important in their lives? By striving for greater knowledge and information about their values, we increase the chances of responding in a manner that respects their values. When we gather information about others' values, we do so through the filters of our thoughts and emotions. While our cognitive and affective processes may help us understand others' values more clearly, they can also blur or confuse our perceptions and understandings. Consider an elderly client who yells at you when you explore the possibility of his moving into a nursing home. You asked about the nursing home because you were concerned about his ability to live on his own, but you were not trying to tell him what to do. His yelling could make you feel defensive. You might think he is angry, irrational, or obstinate. You may need to take a step back from your initial thoughts and feelings to explore his underlying values. Perhaps his response to the nursing home suggestion reflects his value for independence. Perhaps it also reflects his value for respect, which he defines as showing reverence for one's elders. Once you have tuned in to possible values, you can check out whether your insights are accurate. "When you say that a nursing home is unacceptable, is this because independence is very important to you . . . or are there other reasons that a nursing home would be unacceptable?" By raising your awareness of emotional responses, you can gauge whether your feelings are biasing your appreciation of your client's values. If you feel attacked when the client yells, you might initially think the client values control or disrespect. In other words, feeling attacked has affected your understanding of the client's values. Further reflection might remind you that the client values independence. His yelling simply signaled his fear of losing something he values dearly.

At various stages of your social work education and career, you may think that you are attending well to others' values, only to be surprised that you have missed something or unintentionally imposed your own biases. None of us is perfect, so acknowledging mistakes and humbly moving ahead is part of being a professional social worker. This brings us to the next topic: understanding the values of social work.

HISTORIC AND CURRENT SOCIAL WORK VALUES

When social work applicants and incoming students are asked why they want to pursue a career in social work, the common refrain is that they want to help people. But what does "help" actually mean? Although helping people is a cornerstone of social work, many professions help people: Doctors and nurses help by providing medical care, lawyers help by providing legal advocacy, scientists help by inventing, journalists help by facilitating access to information, and waste management workers help by disposing of garbage. *What makes social work unique is its historic and ongoing mission to work with and on behalf of people with the greatest social needs and vulnerabilities*. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) expresses the mission

of social work in the preamble to the Code of Ethics as follows:

> The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living. (NASW, 2018)

In its definition of social work, the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW)[4] describes social work values and principles as follows:

> Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility, and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledges, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. (IFSW, 2014)

Professional social work in the United States grew out of charity organizations (Richmond, 1917) and the settlement movement, particularly the Jane Addams Hull House settlement association (Ehrenreich, 1985). Hull House was designed to serve an impoverished community in Chicago where a largely immigrant population suffered from disease, crime, and unemployment. Under the traditional model of helping, nonprofessional social workers and society matrons visited the poor during the workday but returned to their middle- or upper-class homes every evening. Unfortunately, many of these helpers imposed their values on those they helped, often assuming that differences in culture, ethnicity, and customs brought on the social problems experienced by the immigrants. Addams's model of helping required helpers to live where they worked and to respect the dignity and worth of all people, including differences in their culture, ethnicity, and customs. *Addams's model not only reflected the value of helping those in greatest need, but also helping through an equal partnership. Addams's model emphasized community as a value.* Offering help to one person at a time was not sufficient, particularly for people experiencing a combination of poverty, poor education, discrimination, and lack of opportunity. By valuing community and equal partnership, Addams's model demonstrated that one of the most effective ways of helping people is to help them help themselves (Jane Addams Hull House Association, n.d.).

As you study the history of social work, you may hear about the tension between macro and micro practice (with macro practice focusing on community work and public policy development and micro practice focusing on social work with individuals, families, and smaller systems).[5] Whereas Addams's macro model emphasized the importance of working with communities, Richmond's micro (casework) model focused on helping individual clients, supporting their health, social functioning, growth, and adaptation to the stresses in their social environments (Richmond, 1917). Although some social workers still value one method of practice over the other, the generalist model of social work suggests that all methods of practice

[4] The IFSW is an international organization of professional social work associations representing more than 125 countries (see http://www.ifsw.org for more information).

[5] Social work may also be divided into three categories—micro, mezzo, and macro—with mezzo practice including work with middle-sized systems, such as groups and organizations. Different people use different definitions of micro, mezzo, and macro practice, so it is helpful to define specifically which client systems are included when utilizing these terms.

are equally valuable: policy affects practice, practice affects policy, individuals are affected by families and larger systems, and families and larger systems are affected by individuals (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2018a, 2018b). A combination of methods is required to promote health, social well-being, growth, and social and economic justice. Thus, the generalist model combines the values derived from Addams's and Richmond's approaches in one value base for the whole social work profession.

Social work values define how the profession views people, its preferred goals for clients and society, and its preferred means of achieving those goals (Levy, 1993). The NASW Code of Ethics (2018) identifies six core values for the profession: (1) service, (2) social justice, (3) dignity and worth of the person, (4) importance of human relationships, (5) integrity, and (6) competence. This list represents a consensus among the NASW membership concerning social work's highest moral preferences. Each ethical standard in the Code of Ethics is based on one or more of these values. Social work values and ethics are not just minimum standards to which practitioners are held accountable but ideals to which all social workers should strive. Other social work textbooks and codes of ethics may describe social work values in different terms. The reason that this textbook focuses on values as described in the NASW Code is that this code is the most commonly used and overarching one for social workers in the United States.[6] This textbook also includes two additional core values: human rights and scientific inquiry. These values are included in the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE, 2015) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EP 1.0). Although they are not specifically mentioned in the NASW Code as core values, they are implicit in many of the standards related to social justice, diversity, and competence.

The following sections define the core values. Understanding the scope of each value is just one step toward integrating these values into your professional persona. As you work through your courses and field education, strive to incorporate these values not only in your behaviors at work, but also in your professional identity (i.e., who you are as a professional social worker). What do these values say about me as a professional and as a person? What do I do when my personal values seem to conflict with my professional values and obligations? It is easy to say that you believe in social work values; however, true professional commitment comes through the passage of time and meeting everyday challenges that make applying certain values not so easy.

1. Service

The value of service suggests that social workers give high priority to helping others. *By valuing service, social workers subjugate their personal desires in order to focus on the needs, interests, and wishes of the people they serve*. When a social worker says she chose this profession because helping others is meaningful work, she is expressing service as a value. Indeed, if you have chosen social work primarily for the pay, you might find that you will have to become an advocate for better pay for this oft-undervalued profession.

Social work is an altruistic profession. In theory, what could be nobler than valuing service? In practice, applying this value can be quite challenging. Assume that a client discloses that he became wealthy by defrauding widows with a phony investment scheme (e.g., a Ponzi scheme). He shows no remorse and even gloats about how devious he was. He now wants your help with a marital conflict. Although his current issue is unrelated to his past misconduct, you find his conduct and attitude reprehensible. Your first inclination is that you do not want to assist him. You understand that social workers believe all people deserve help, regardless of their ethnicity, culture, religion, socioeconomic

[6] If you are operating under another code of ethics (such as one specifically for group workers, family mediators, parenting coordinators, or feminist social workers), you will need to understand the specific values enunciated in these codes. Websites for alternative codes of ethics are listed in the bibliography. In Part II, we will explore dilemmas that arise when social workers have conflicting values and obligations from different codes of ethics or agency policies.

status, or even history of criminal, immoral behavior. Still, you feel conflicted. Even if you agree to serve him, will you be able to serve him to your best ability?

Before you say that you can accept service as a core value, reflect on whether you possess any other values that may conflict with service:

- In Table 1.1, how did you rate "competition"? If you place a high value on competition, you may believe that the market should determine what services people should receive. If people can pay for services, then they are entitled to them. In other words, people have to fend for themselves. Competition may run contrary to service because service suggests that social workers are our brothers' and sisters' keepers. Social workers help clients in need, even if they cannot afford to pay market rates for such services.
- In Table 1.3, how did you rate "prestige"? If you rated prestige highly, you may place your status and concerns higher than the needs and wishes of your clients. To do what is best for clients, social workers often have to get their hands dirty, performing "grunt work" that receives little or no recognition. In my own practice, I have assisted clients by helping them to the toilet, making countless calls to secure a safe bed for the night, and allowing clients to vent anger toward me until they calmed down and could be safe with others. Some incoming social work students envision themselves conducting exhilarating 50-minute psychotherapy sessions with highly motivated clients in an office with fabulous furniture, state-of-the-art technology, and splendid views. At the risk of understating the obvious, a lot of the most significant social work practice is not so glamorous.

Even if you feel ready to embrace service as a core value, be prepared for challenges. Social workers are human, with human needs and frailties. Although we aspire to be focused on the needs of others, we must take care of ourselves so that we can care for others. Caring for ourselves without putting our needs above those of our clients requires a fine balance.

2. Social Justice

Broadly speaking, *social justice refers to a world in which everyone is treated fairly*. By valuing social justice, social workers commit themselves to rectifying social injustices such as discrimination, poverty, unemployment, oppression, lack of opportunity, and social exclusion. Whereas some professions claim to be objective, neutral, or apolitical, social work takes firm positions on social justice issues and is necessarily political (Simms, 2015). If a client experiences racism, for instance, some mental health professionals would focus on helping the client cope with the racism. Social workers would not only help clients cope but would also strive to remedy the racism (e.g., by offering advocacy, education, or community empowerment strategies) (Appleby et al., 2011). Although social workers do not impose their values on clients, this does not mean they are value-free. They promote equality, respect, fairness, and inclusion throughout their practice (NASW, 2018). The International Federation of Social Workers (2018) explains social justice in relation to five strategies:

- Challenging discrimination.
- Promoting respect for diversity and strengthening inclusive communities.
- Working toward access to and equitable distribution of resources.
- Challenging unjust or oppressive policies and practices.
- Building networks of solidarity to promote inclusive and responsible societies.

Many social workers view social justice from a progressive or liberal perspective (Miller et al., 2016), supporting equal rights and believing that government plays a key role in promoting social and economic opportunities. Some social workers adopt a more conservative approach, focusing on personal responsibility and freedom from government control. The NASW Code of Ethics (2018) does not dictate how social justice should be achieved; however, it does say

that social workers should advocate for social justice and challenge discrimination based on age, gender, sexual orientation, race, and other factors (Standard 6.04[d]).

Few incoming social work students would say that they value *social injustice*. Different students, however, may have different understandings of social justice, and some of these definitions might conflict with social work's view of social justice. Consider the plight of undocumented noncitizen workers, sometimes disparagingly called "illegal aliens." Some might say that people working in this country illegally should be locked up or sent back and, at the very least, denied the privileges of citizens, such as medical care and schooling for their children. They do not want to encourage more "illegals" to come, and they want to protect America from being taken over by foreign criminals. Is their response socially just? Given social work's historic alliance with the most vulnerable members of society, social work would advocate finding solutions for the needs and interests of undocumented noncitizen workers and their families. Given your understanding of the issues, how easy or challenging would it be for you to advocate for vulnerable undocumented noncitizens?

3. Dignity and Worth of the Person

Social workers value the dignity and worth of all individuals, meaning that everyone deserves respect. Racism, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, sexism, heterosexism, and other forms of bigotry have no place in social work. Social workers do not merely tolerate people from diverse backgrounds; they embrace diversity. Valuing the dignity and worth of all people translates into working with clients on the issues, concerns, and goals that they want to pursue. Whereas physicians and others using the traditional medical model diagnose patients and tell them what type of treatment they need (Brok, 2017), social workers work collaboratively with clients to assess what is going on in their lives and to help them make self-determined choices about how to proceed (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2018b). Honoring client self-determination shows the utmost respect for the client's strengths, dignity, and autonomy.

As with other values, respecting the worth of an individual is often much easier to say than to carry out in practice. All of us are prone to biases such as racism, sexism, or religious chauvinism (the belief that one's own religion is superior and other religions have less value). We may have acquired biases and stereotypes from our families, peer groups, stories, or media (American Bar Association, n.d.). We may treat others disrespectfully, not intentionally, but out of ignorance or haste. We may mean to do well by others, but our actions may have negative impacts. Take the Golden Rule, "Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you." The intent of this biblical principle is to encourage people to treat others well, promoting reciprocity and mutually beneficial relationships. If you take the phrase literally, however, it says to treat others the way you want to be treated, not how they want to be treated. I am Jewish, so I appreciate hearing people say "Happy Chanukah" to me rather than "Merry Christmas." If I greet Christian or atheistic clients with "Happy Chanukah," however, am I showing respect, taking their religious sensitivities into account? Though this example may sound trivial, it demonstrates how easy it is to demonstrate disrespect, even when you intend to treat others with benevolence. Now, imagine how different people may want to be treated differently, particularly when they come from different cultures, political ideologies, sexual orientations, abilities, or other diverse backgrounds.

One of the greatest risks to demonstrating respect to clients is imposing values or beliefs on clients. Consider a client who tells you that she is being abused by her husband. She does not want to leave him because she loves him and needs him. Would you advise her to leave her husband because he is abusive? If you do, you may be imposing your values and beliefs. How do you know whether leaving her husband is better for her? By trusting clients to make their own decisions, social workers are respecting their dignity and worth. For beginning social workers, this may sound counterintuitive. Shouldn't social workers tell clients what they believe? If a social worker can persuade a client to leave an abusive relationship, isn't this respecting the clients' dignity? Consider how you feel when

someone tells you what to do, particularly if it is a professional who hardly knows you or your situation. Contrast this with your feelings when someone offers you moral support, showing confidence that you will make the right decisions for yourself.

4. Importance of Human Relationships

Human relationships are integral to effective social work practice. *Social workers help clients by developing affirming relationships with them.* To engage clients in helping processes, social workers listen to clients, offering concern, support, empathic understanding, genuineness, and unconditional positive regard. Developing a positive therapeutic relationship with clients is a fundamental component of the helping process (Rogers, 1957). Clients who feel valued and respected will be more open, confident, and willing to take the risks that are involved in any change process. By demonstrating unconditional positive regard, social workers build trust with clients, who learn they can say anything and not be judged or embarrassed by the worker.

Social workers also demonstrate their value for "social relationships" through the ecological perspective. Social workers view clients in the context of their social environment, essentially their relationships with other individuals, family members, groups, and organizations. The ecological perspective directs social workers to consider problems as interactional rather than individual. Instead of looking at a client as having an individual problem called alcoholism, for instance, social workers look at alcoholism as a phenomenon that exists within the context of a family and community: What is going on in the family and community systems that encourages the person to drink, or prevents the person from dealing more effectively with the alcohol-related problems? Instead of blaming an individual for being unemployed, social workers look at what is going on in the individual's family, community, and former workplace that contributed to the employment issue. Social workers help individuals relate more effectively to their families, workplaces, and communities, but help does not stop there. Social workers also help families, workplaces, and communities provide a more supportive environment for the individual.

Once again, before you claim "human relationships" as a core value, reflect on the values you identified earlier in this chapter and how they might conflict with this value. In Table 1.2, for example, how did you rate "children learning to be independent"? If you rated this item highly, you probably place high value on autonomy and personal responsibility. These values are common among mainstream Americans, particularly men. Having these values may offer a number of advantages: motivation to work hard rather than depend on others, willingness to accept responsibility for making changes, and confidence in one's abilities to make changes and achieve personal goals. A person with high value for autonomy, however, may feel too ashamed to ask for help. Asking for help may be tantamount to admitting weakness or inability to accept personal responsibility. When we teach children to be independent, we may be rejecting interdependence, which is inherent in valuing human relationships. Social workers believe that it is all right for people to rely on one another. In fact, for people to reach their highest potentials, relying on one another is vital. In essence, *no man or woman is an island*, and *it takes a village to raise a child*.[7]

Consider your own inclinations when you are facing a problem (e.g., difficulty at school, financial stress, conflict with your spouse or partner). Do you try to solve the problem on your own, or do you reach out for help from a family member, friend, or professional? On the continuum of "highly autonomous to highly relational," would you place yourself at either of the extremes, or closer to the middle?

5. Integrity

Integrity refers to the importance of honesty, reliability, and responsibility. *Social workers demonstrate integrity by being open and honest, by following through on their professional*

[7] These well-known axioms reflect the value of human relationships.

obligations, and by being accountable for their actions. Although it is morally correct for all people to act with integrity, professional social workers hold themselves to a higher standard than the general public because they are working with vulnerable people, including young children, frail elders, people with mental illness, and clients experiencing high levels of social stress. Different people have different views on what constitutes integrity, so it is important to understand as specifically as possible what the profession of social work means by integrity. Social workers maintain a *fiduciary* relationship with clients, meaning that they must be very careful to do what is good for their clients, given their clients' reliance on them (Morrison, 2016). Social workers must not exploit clients or be perceived to be exploiting them. Integrity is vital to building trust. When clients believe their workers are tainted by dishonesty, inconsistency, or irresponsibility, they may find it impossible to develop the confidence necessary for them to work together.

Various situations raise different challenges about what it means to act with integrity. In terms of honesty, for instance, is it all right to tell a "little white lie" in order to save a person from embarrassment? Would you tell a friend that his new hairstyle looks great in order to boost his ego, even though you think the style looks ridiculous on him? Would you act differently if this were a client rather than a friend? In terms of responsibility, must social workers always follow agency policies—even if the policies are discriminatory? In terms of accountability, are social workers always responsible for what happens to their clients? Consider a client who commits suicide. At what points do clients, families, and communities have to accept responsibility rather than simply hold a social worker to account?

One might think that anyone who goes into professional social work must be doing so for the right reasons and must possess a relatively high value for integrity. One might be surprised at how often social workers act in a manner that conflicts with integrity—for instance, taking advantage of clients by having sex with them, breaching agency policy or ethical standards, and intentionally misguiding clients (Reamer, 2015b). Sometimes these acts are based on poor judgment in a particular situation rather than faulty values. Sometimes these acts are committed while the worker is under extreme stress—for instance, putting inaccurate information in client records due to fatigue from working overtime, or exaggerating one's efforts in order to look good to a supervisor who has unreasonably high expectations. Acting under stress does not excuse workers from acting dishonestly, but the context does help us understand the causes of the behavior. Social workers must not only want to act with integrity; they must commit themselves to developing working environments that promote integrity. Acting with integrity requires the willingness and ability to apply moral reasoning, as well as the capacity to empathize with the experiences and views of others (Morrison, 2016).

6. Competence

Competence means having the knowledge, skills, and self-awareness required to perform social work tasks in an effective manner. The specific skills and knowledge required depend on the specific tasks to be undertaken. In the foundation courses of your social work program, you will learn basic knowledge (e.g., systems theory, developmental theory, and the generalist planned-change process) and basic skills (e.g., attending to a client's nonverbal behavior, reflecting feelings, paraphrasing thoughts, and asking open-ended questions). Your foundation courses are intended to provide you with the competence to practice as a generalist social work practitioner (CSWE, 2015). Upon completion of these courses, you should be able to engage clients, conduct basic psychosocial assessments, guide clients through the planned-change process,[8] and evaluate their progress. While you will become competent to work with a range of clients with different presenting problems, be careful to stay within your competencies. If you are not competent to handle a particular situation, then the value of

[8] Sometimes called the "generalist intervention model."

competence suggests that you should link clients with another worker who possesses the required skills and knowledge (e.g., your supervisor, a more experienced worker, or a professional with specialized training).

When people are experiencing social problems, many different kinds of people can provide help: family, friends, neighbors, charity workers, and professionals. What distinguishes professional help from the other types of help is the use of professional knowledge and skills. When a client asks for help, a social worker cannot simply give advice from personal experience or intuition. The social worker should apply professional knowledge and skills as appropriate to the situation.

For most social work students, embracing competence as a value is relatively easy. After all, they are taking courses in a professional degree program. The decision to pursue a degree in social work generally means that the person wants to improve his or her competence through education. Unfortunately, some students struggle with why professional knowledge and skills are important. They believe that they possess all the knowledge and skills they need, for instance, as natural-born social workers or as people who have developed social work skills through general education and life experience. They are only enrolled in a social work degree program because they need the credential to practice or to be eligible for promotion. The challenge for these students is to learn how additional knowledge and skills can enhance their ability to practice effectively. In fact, competence is not something that we achieve through completion of a single social work program. Developing competence is an ongoing process. All social workers may continue to gain competence, learning how to carry out certain functions more effectively, being open to the knowledge from new research findings, honing skills with different population groups, engaging in continuing education, and making use of supervision and consultation. Thus, a commitment to competence is an ongoing endeavor.

Building competence is not just a duty but a potential source of happiness, pleasure, or fulfillment. Competence provides what Aristotle (2013) called *eudaimonia*, a sense of self-worth or well-being. In other words, competence offers social workers a sense of self-gratification or meaning from the ability to do their jobs in a skilled, proficient manner.

7. Human Rights

Human rights refer to the system of privileges, civil liberties, and entitlements that every person should enjoy by virtue of his or her status as a human being. The value of human rights is related to the value of dignity and worth of the person, as treating people with respect includes respect for their human rights. The CSWE suggests that human rights include the rights to freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, healthcare, and education (CSWE, 2015). Note that human rights are not the same as the *civil rights* that a national government may grant to its citizens. Under the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution (1868), U.S. citizens enjoy the rights to life, liberty, and property. However, the Constitution recognizes these rights for citizens only. Social workers value human rights for all people, regardless of their citizenship status. Similarly, various pieces of state and federal legislation grant rights to defined groups—patients, taxpayers, veterans, and so on. These are not human rights because they are restricted to particular groups. At an international level, the United Nations has passed a variety of human rights codes, conventions, and charters that identify a broad range of human rights, including the rights to life, liberty, and security of the person, as well as the right to equality before the law (United Nations, 1948). Social workers believe in advancing human rights for clients and society in general, regardless of whether current laws acknowledge or protect those rights. The value of human rights overlaps with social justice in the sense that social workers advocate and take action against forces that oppress people or deny them their rights.

8. Scientific Inquiry

Scientific inquiry refers to learning about a particular phenomenon through sound processes of

investigation. Social workers value a variety of scientific methods of inquiry, including quantitative and qualitative research, deductive and inductive reasoning, and experimentation and observation. There is no singular, correct way that social workers learn about individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and society. Regardless of which method of scientific inquiry is being used, social workers should incorporate the highest standards of rigor for that method (Rubin & Babbie, 2017).

The social work value of scientific inquiry is related to the values of competence and respect for the dignity and worth of all people. To practice competently, social workers need to know and understand the most current theory and research. To respect the dignity and worth of clients, social workers need to understand which interventions are most effective for each client. Thus, social workers do not conclude their education when they graduate with a social work degree. Rather, social workers continue to learn throughout their careers, reading theory and research from academic literature, participating in research and evaluation in their agencies, engaging in online learning, and monitoring their work in a strategic manner to determine the effectiveness, ethicality, and efficiency of their work.

THE ONGOING CHALLENGES OF VALUES CLARIFICATION AND AWARENESS

This chapter has introduced you to the basics of understanding values. By reflecting on your own values, you have gained better insight into the ideals that motivate you and the way you interact with others. To gain an appreciation for others' values, you have learned how to view values from a relational context. For instance, how are a client's values similar to or different from your own, or how are the values of a minority group similar to or different from those of the majority population? Finally, by describing the core values from the NASW Code of Ethics and CSWE Accreditation Standards, this chapter has introduced you to some of the primary ideals to which the profession aspires.

The processes of clarifying your own values and appreciating the values of others do not end with this chapter. Continue to reflect on your core values, noting how they may be affecting your decisions and reactions when working with clients. Continue also to attend to the values of others, listening with an open mind and an open heart.

Although the NASW Code of Ethics is one of the primary sources on social work values, it is not the only source. Many, if not all, of your social work textbooks will refer to social work values. They may focus on the core values from the NASW Code, or they may promote additional values: for instance, preserving life, protecting privacy, doing good, and preventing harm (Dolgoff et al., 2012). In addition, many social workers subscribe to different codes of ethics. They may belong to international, state, or local social work organizations that have their own codes of ethics or laws governing social work practice. They may belong to professional organizations in specific fields of practice, for instance, the Association for Specialists in Group Work, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, Clinical Social Work Association, Association for Conflict Resolution, National Organization of Forensic Social Work, School Social Work Association of America, or the NAADAC Association for Addiction Professionals. Social workers may also belong to professional associations for practitioners from particular diversity backgrounds or perspectives, such as the National Association of Black Social Workers (n.d.), Feminist Therapy Institute, North American Association of Christians in Social Work, National Rural Social Work Caucus, or Latino Social Workers Association.[9] When social workers are sued for malpractice, however, courts often rely on the standards established the NASW Code, whether or not the worker subscribes to

[9] See the Bibliography for website addresses containing the codes of ethics of these organizations. You can find additional professional codes of ethics on the website of the Center for the Study of Ethics in the Professions at http://ethics.iit.edu.

an additional code.[10] Finally, each agency has its own set of values. In many cases, these values are stated explicitly in agency mission statements and policies. In other cases, agency values are implicit in the type of work performed and the manner in which it is carried out.

Because of the introductory nature of this chapter, I do not intend to cover all social work values at this point. Remember that while the values enumerated in the NASW Code are broadly accepted, they are not the only values to consider throughout your professional education and practice.

KEY POINTS

- Social workers should be aware of their values to ensure that their practice is informed by their professional values and to avoid imposing their values on clients.
- To clarify their values, social workers should reflect critically on their deeply held preferences, give names to them, and examine the meaning of each of these values or preferences and how they fit together with their personal and professional value systems.
- As part of its historic mission, social work attends to the needs of and empowers people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty.
- Social work embraces eight core values that inform ethical practice: service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, competence, human rights, and scientific inquiry.
- When acting in professional capacities, social workers should prioritize professional values over personal ones.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. *Appreciating Values*: Refer to the case scenario at the top of this chapter. What values can you infer from Homer's statements? What values does Samantha demonstrate in her responses? Whose values are right? Should Samantha help Homer find a good home and a good job? Why or why not?
2. *Comparing Values*: Imagine that you have a client named Cloé. She tells you she exaggerated on her resume to get a job. Without exaggerating, she would not have met the minimum requirements that were advertised for the job. She claims she was unemployed for 3 months and was about to be evicted from her apartment. She needed money desperately for food and rent. What does this scenario tell you about how Cloé prioritizes values such as honesty, shelter, security, and survival? How are your value priorities similar to or different from Cloé's?
3. *Contrasting Values*: Assume you have an 18-year-old client, Cecilia, who tells you that she wants to marry Hardik, a man she loves dearly. Her parents object to the proposed marriage because Hardik comes from a different religious and ethno-racial background, Hindu and Indian. Cecilia says she would feel guilt-ridden if she defied her parents' wishes. Describe the values that Cecilia and her parents may be expressing in this situation. How are your values similar to or different from theirs?
4. *Prioritizing Values*: Suppose you are working with Clyde who says that he values having fun, but also taking work seriously. These values seem to conflict. Is it possible for him to truly value both of these? Why or why not?
5. *Elder Interview*: Ask one of your parents, grandparents, or another elder from your family or community to speak with you about values. Engage this elder in a discussion about which personal values are most important. Also, ask about the sources of these values. Invite your elder to share stories of how he or she has put these values into practice, or to discuss occasions when these values have been challenged. Be

[10] The NASW is recognized as the most authoritative association for social work given its historical role in the development of social work as a profession, its broad membership, and its well-developed Code of Ethics.

prepared to define values in plain language and to help your interviewee identify values in different areas of his or her life. Take notes, so you can report back to the class.

6. *Values—From Words to Meanings*: When people say they value "family," "work," "education," or "democracy," we may think we understand what they are saying because we are familiar with these words. Still, different people could mean different things with the same words. For each of these values, write down your definition of what that value means to you and give examples of how this value is manifest within your family, if it is a value for your family. Compare your definitions and examples with those of another person in your class.
7. *Core Social Work Values*: For each of the following scenarios, identify which core social work values (if any) are reflected by the social worker's actions: (1) service, (2) social justice, (3) dignity and worth of the person, (4) importance of human relationships, (5) integrity, (6) competence, (7) human rights, (8) scientific inquiry, or (9) none of the above. If more than one value applies, explain how.
   a. Cloris asks her social worker if she can see what the worker wrote in her case records. Initially, the worker thought about removing a certain page because some notes on that page were not very flattering. The worker ultimately decided to show her the whole case file because she did not want to deceive the client.
   b. Charlie asks his social worker to help him apply for Medicaid so he can access treatments that he could not otherwise afford. The worker personally believes that people should pay for their own medical bills. Still, the worker follows her professional duties and helps Charlie with his request.
   c. Shainy wants to know whether her work is being effective. She decides to document her interventions and outcomes in order to evaluate them, incorporating what she has learned in her research class.
   d. Sinbad advocates for a change in child welfare policy that would allow for greater involvement of extended family members when there are concerns about child abuse or neglect.
   e. Squiggy is concerned about discrimination against people with AIDS. He talks to his senator about passing legislation to protect them.
   f. Shevaun has a client who wants help with her fear of flying. Shevaun does not think she has enough experience and training in this area, so she refers the client to someone who specializes in aviophobia.
   g. Chad calls his social worker an idiot because he is frustrated by lack of progress. The social worker tells Chad he is being childish and that he should find another worker.
   h. Sharna works with people with Down syndrome. One of the common complaints she hears is that others call them "tards" and other derogatory names. Sharna develops a social media campaign to educate the public on how to treat people with Down syndrome more respectfully.
   i. Chana tells her social worker that she is a miserable person who has "lied on my taxes, cheated on my husband, and created a fake contest on the Internet to scam elders." Her worker says that he is not there to judge Chana, but to offer support and help her maximize her own potential.
8. *Alternative Social Work Values*: Select an ethics article or textbook by a key social work ethicist—for instance, Charles Levy, Frederic Reamer, Kimberly Strom-Gottfried, Norman Linzer, Elaine Congress, Eileen Gambrill, Donald Dickson, Sarah Banks, or Ralph Dolgoff. What does this author say about the core values of social work, and how are these similar to or different from those identified in the NASW Code of Ethics?
9. *Emotional Reactions*: For each of the following scenarios, describe how you might feel. How might your emotional reactions either help or hinder your ability to assess the client's values and motivations?

a. A charming client tells you that you have the most beautiful eyes. The client invites you to dinner to thank you for all the help you have provided.
b. You are running a support group for Marines who have returned home after experiencing trauma in a foreign war zone. Several group members suggest that it would have been better to just "nuke the whole country."
c. You have been helping the Muslim community build a community center. The all-male organizing committee proposes a policy requiring all women who enter the center to wear *hijabs* (veils) to cover their faces.
d. You are working with a 10-year-old client who discloses that his father calls him a "little sissy" because he likes to play with dolls.

Chapter 2

Theory, Values, and Ethics—Macro Perspectives

Broadly speaking, *a theory is an explanation of a particular phenomenon*. The word *theory* is derived from the Greek *theoria*, meaning contemplation or reflection. In other words, theories help people think and make sense of things around them (Harrington, 2004). In social work and related helping professions, theories are used to understand human behavior and processes of change (Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research, n.d.). In this chapter, we focus on the interplay between values, ethics, and macro theories of social work[1]; that is, theories related to larger social systems such as business organizations, professional associations, ethnocultural groups, neighborhoods, religious communities, political systems, and nations. In Chapter 3, we will focus on the interplay between values, ethics, and theories related to micro systems, particularly individuals and families. In this chapter, we explore the value-laden nature of theories and how social work values and ethics affect the choice of theories used by social workers. We also explore the value base of other helping professions, including medicine, psychology, law, psychiatry, and nursing.

DECONSTRUCTING THEORIES FROM A VALUES PERSPECTIVE

Standard 1.04 of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics requires social workers to practice within their areas of competence. Social workers acquire competence through a combination of classroom and online education, on-the-job training, supervision, and practice experience. One of the core elements of social work education is teaching

[1] This chapter explores values and ethics as they relate to *theories* used to understand macro systems, including neighborhoods, communities, and nations. For exploration of values and ethics in relation to macro *practice* issues, see Chapters 9 and 10.

students how to apply theory to practice. The ability to apply specific theories to practice is one of the key ways that professional social work differs from lay help (i.e., help from families, friends, peers, and others without professional education). For students entering social work, the vast range of theories to choose from may seem overwhelming (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2017a). So, how should social workers assess theories and determine which ones to apply?

Ideally, social workers should utilize theories based on logic and sound evidence; that is, on information and knowledge that has been substantiated through scientifically accepted methods of research (Weisz & Kazdin, 2017). In the social sciences, the complexity of the human condition is so great that it is difficult, if not impossible, to prove any theory with 100% certainty. In other words, most social theories are hypotheses or propositions that require further testing and research to determine their accuracy (Rubin & Babbie, 2017). A feminist theoretical perspective, for instance, strives to describe and explain the inequality that exists between men and women. Research to support the feminist theoretical perspective includes studies of income disparities, power disparities, and political disparities. Ongoing research is necessary to explore whether these types of disparities are improving or getting worse, and what factors may be contributing to the maintenance or amelioration of these disparities. Whether social workers decide to incorporate the feminist theoretical perspective in practice, however, depends not only on the veracity of the research evidence to support it but also on the values and ethics that underlie feminist theoretical perspectives. Feminism provides a lens for social workers to reflect upon other theories, taking values such as social justice, gender analysis, caring, empathy, empowerment, and diversity into account (Turner & Maschi, 2015; Wendt & Moulding, 2016). Although these values are consistent with social work values, nonfeminist social workers may hold a different system of priorities and therefore choose different theoretical perspectives to guide their practice.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this chapter, you will be able to

- Assess the underlying values of theories that purport to explain the nature of organizations, neighborhoods, communities, societies, and other macro systems.
- Critique theories according to how well they fit or conflict with social work values and principles.
- Compare and contrast the values of different helping professions, including how value differences may affect their theoretical perspectives.

Learning new theories does not mean you must accept them. Regardless of whether a particular theory fits with your value system, it may be worth learning. If you maintain an open mind, you may learn that the theory has some value. Alternatively, the more you learn about the theory, the better prepared you will be to describe what is problematic about the theory, including concerns about its moral and ethical underpinnings.

Consider Marxist theory (Marx & Engels, 1848). Say "Marxist" aloud. When you hear yourself say this word, what thoughts and feelings does it arouse? For many Americans, the term *Marxism* is equated with the totalitarian regime of the former Soviet Union.[2] Thus, it elicits images of repression, government confiscation and control, conformity, and failed society. For Americans raised to value democracy, capitalism, and constitutional freedoms (such as freedom of speech, religion, and the press), the term *Marxism* may arouse feelings of repulsion, anger, contempt, or derision (e.g., the mottos, "Better dead than red" and "Communism equals control"). Given the images and feelings that Marxism evokes, why should social workers study Marxism and seriously consider how it might be

[2] Note, in the 2016 presidential primaries, how some media cast Bernie Sanders as a socialist or communist, alleging he supported the policies and practices of the Soviet Union.

relevant for practice in today's world? The answer lies in the values underlying Marxism.[3]

Deconstructing theory refers to analyzing the components of a theory to gain a better understanding of its propositions, perspectives, assumptions, and underlying values. *To deconstruct a theory, consider three questions*:

1. What does the theory say about the nature of people?[4]
2. What does the theory say about how people change?
3. What is the theory's preferred view of how people should be? (Levy, 1993; Lum, 2004)

In terms of the nature of people, Marxism suggests that all people have individual needs, capacities, pleasures, and productive forces. Marxism critiques capitalism for creating and maintaining gross inequalities between the owners of capital and the proletariat (i.e., the masses who provide labor but receive inadequate compensation and are unable to accumulate wealth) (Harvey, 2018). Marxism posits that the best way to create change is through revolution, raising the consciousness of the proletariat so they will demand change and overthrow the system of capitalism. The preferred view of people under a Marxist system is one of equality, in which each person receives an equal share of society's wealth and production, regardless of his or her job or other social status (Marx & Engels, 1848). Marxism replaces capitalistic competition with cooperation—one family of humanity in which everyone supports one another so that all people can reach their potentials (Dowd, 2002). Although this paragraph just begins to explain the essence of Marxist theory, it demonstrates three primary values of this theory: equality, collaboration, and maximizing human potential. One could question whether Marxism has ever fulfilled these values—or could fulfill them. In theory, however, Marxism does support certain values that are consonant with social work (Garrett, 2009).

Once again, this analysis is not intended to suggest that you must adopt Marxist theory in your approach to social work; however, it might encourage you to reflect on your own biases and responses when you are studying different theories and to analyze each theory according to its underlying values. This section has provided a framework for assessing which values form the basis of a particular theory. The following sections define social work values and demonstrate how to compare and contrast the values of a theory with core social work values.

DEFINING VALUES FOR THE PURPOSES OF CRITIQUE

Before we can critique theories in relation to social work values, we must define what we mean by social work values. Different social work practitioners, theorists, agencies, and associations may define them differently. The NASW Code of Ethics identifies the six core values of social work as (1) service, (2) social justice, (3) dignity and worth of the person, (4) importance of human relationships, (5) integrity, and (6) competence. The most relevant of these values for critiquing theories are social justice, dignity and worth of the person, and importance of human relationships, because these values relate to how social workers view people, change processes, and desired outcomes.[5] Additional social work values that can be used to critique theories are empowerment, strengths, beneficence, nonmaleficence, equality, and autonomy.[6] The NASW Code subsumes these principles under the values of social justice and dignity and worth

[3] Marxism is related to other theories you may study, including conflict theory and structural theory.

[4] "People" may refer to individuals, families, groups, organizations, or communities.

[5] As the introduction to Part I indicates, "service" refers to the importance of helping others, integrity refers to the importance of acting honestly and reliably, and competence refers to acting within one's area of education, experience, and capability. Accordingly, these values are not directly relevant to critiquing social work theories.

[6] Some ethics literature refers to beneficence, nonmaleficence, and equality (or fairness) as principles rather than values. Some social work literature refers to strengths as a perspective rather than a value. Given the definitions used in this textbook, these terms may be considered as values.

of the person. For the purpose of critiquing theories, we will refer to both the NASW values and these additional principles.

For detailed explanations of social justice, dignity and worth of the person, and the importance of human relationships, refer to the definitions of these values in Chapter 1. Now, let us consider the definitions of the additional social work values: empowerment, strengths, beneficence, nonmaleficence, equality, and harmony.

Empowerment refers to enabling people to have greater control over their lives. Rather than telling clients what to do or doing things for clients, social workers prefer to facilitate conditions so clients can make their own choices and do things for themselves (Turner & Maschi, 2015). Consider Wilma, a woman who says her husband is abusive. She says he loves her and takes care of her, so she does not want to leave him. Telling Wilma to leave her husband or physically removing her from the home would be disempowering. A social worker could empower Wilma through a variety of techniques: using counseling to build her self-esteem and confidence, so she sees herself as someone who is capable of living on her own; exploring choices with Wilma that she may not have previously considered; helping her access resources so that she could live on her own; and educating her about legal processes that may be used to protect her from her husband. The social worker offers Wilma a range of helping possibilities but allows Wilma to make her own choices.

Valuing strengths refers to emphasizing the positive characteristics and capacities of the people and social systems we serve. Whereas some helping professions focus on problems, disease, mental illness, dysfunctions, and criminal wrongdoing, social workers focus on opportunities, health, mental health, positive social functioning, and the moral behaviors of clients.[7] Examples of an individual's strengths include creativity, flexibility, motivation, intelligence, spirituality, physical resources, and access to support systems, such as family and cultural community. Examples of a social system's strengths include its financial resources, sound structure, adaptability, leadership, clear avenues of communication, and positive relationships with other systems. Social workers help clients build on such strengths to overcome challenges and maximize their potentials (Kim 2013; Saleebey, 2013).

Beneficence refers to advancing good for others (Sandman & Liliemark, 2017). Beneficence includes preventing evil or harm and removing evil or harm (Beauchamp & Childress, 2012). For social workers, advancing good may be formulated as promoting biological and mental health, social functioning, social justice, and spiritual well-being. Social workers advance good by offering clients moral support, advocacy, education, access to resources, and a range of other services. Given that social work defines itself as an altruistic helping profession, the fact that social work values doing good seems obvious. The challenge of beneficence is how to define *good*. When determining good outcomes for clients, social workers must take the clients' personal and cultural perspectives into account (Robitschek & Hardin, 2017). Assume Charmaine's parents are planning an arranged marriage for her. In your personal view, you may object to arranged marriages because you believe a person has a right to choose her own spouse. If you were Charmaine's social worker, would you encourage the family to allow Charmaine to choose whom she wants to marry? This may or may not be promoting good, depending on whose perspective one is taking. Charmaine may want her parents to arrange her marriage.

Nonmaleficence refers to the preference for doing no harm (Beauchamp & Childress, 2012). Nonmaleficence is related to beneficence but speaks more specifically to avoiding behaviors that are known to cause harm. A key challenge with nonmaleficence is that virtually any action carries some risk of doing harm. Consider a social worker who helps an elderly client obtain hot meals from Meals on Wheels (n.d.).

[7] A social worker should not impose values, religious beliefs, or morals on clients. However, a social worker may help clients build on the strengths of their own morals (e.g., if a client discloses strong convictions about work or family, the worker may validate this as a strength).