



5 steps to solving your ethical problems

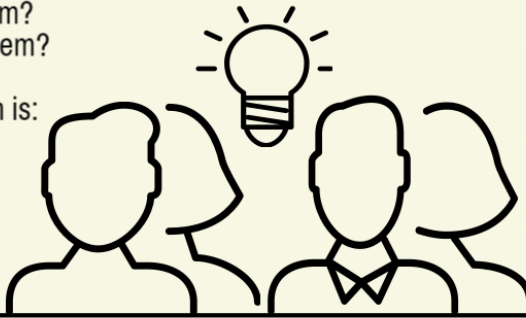
kNOw your problem, SWEAT no more

## 1. SUMMARISE

- What is the problem?
- What tells you it is a problem?
- Why is it a problem?
- When is it a problem?

My ethical question is:

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## 2. WHOSE DILEMMA?

### A. Decide whose responsibility the issue belongs to.

- Does the responsibility belong to the social worker, the client or both?
- What actions are needed and who is responsible?
- Should the client refuse to take action, is the worker then responsible?

### B. Consult your supervisor



## 3. ETHICAL & LEGAL GUIDELINES

### A. Consider legal implications

- What are the legal implications?
- What action is required to be performed by law?
- Is there mandatory reporting of offences?



### B. Examine the Code of Ethics

These rules take precedence over the worker's personal value system.

- Also consider SASW code of ethics
- Classify which ethical principle it conflicts with

If one or more rules apply → Follow the Code

If code does not address problem or is conflicting → Use Ethical Principles Screen

## 4. ACTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. If more than one ethical principle conflicts, we use the EPS to guide.
2. If the code of ethics is not sufficient to guide, proceed with EPS.

Ethical Principles Screen (EPS)  
Taken from Dolgoff, Loewenberg & Harrington

Protection of life

Equality and Inequality

Autonomy and Freedom

Least harm

Quality of Life

Privacy and Confidentiality

Truthfulness and Full Disclosure

## 5. TAKE ACTION & REVIEW

### UNIVERSALITY

- Would you recommend such decisions to others?
- If others recommend these decisions to you, would you accept it?

After making a decision, to ensure it is sound, consider the following:

### PUBLICITY

- Why do you choose that course of action?
- Would you be willing to have your actions and rationale exposed to public scrutiny?

### JUSTICE

- Would you do the same for similar situations?
- Would you do the same if client was well-known or influential?

### Review and evaluate

- Was the outcome as you hoped?
- Have you considered all factors with the result that no new factors emerged after your actions were implemented?
- Would you do the same again in similar circumstances?

Document the decision & outcome.

