

**VIRGINIA STATE  
UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL  
WORK**  
**MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK  
PROGRAM**



**FIELD  
INSTRUCTOR  
ORIENTATION  
TRAINING**

Online Module 7  
Training 2022+



# **MODULE 7**

## Ethics in the Field Practicum

# MODULE OBJECTIVES



To understand the ethical and legal issues in field supervision.



To understand the areas of potential liability in field education



To Identify strategies for incorporating ethical and legal responsibilities into practices

# WORKING WITH STUDENTS IS BASED ON THE PROFESSIONS' ETHICAL CODES

Ethical Codes - Establishes a set of principles to be used as guidelines for our professional decision-making and conduct towards our supervisees, their clients, colleagues, and the public.

Provides the opportunity to model ethical behavior and standards to students just starting out on their identification of good ethical practice.

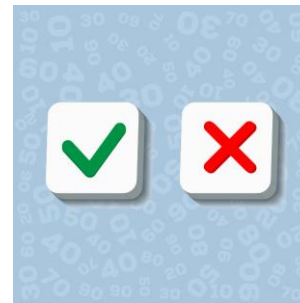
Ultimately protects the public and our students from harm.

# NASW CODE OF ETHICS

- Serves as a guideline



- Recognizes that ethical decision-making is a process



Cannot guarantee ethical behavior



Creates Standards for adjudication proceedings and disciplinary hearings

# FIELD INSTRUCTORS' ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN PRACTICE SETTINGS

## • 3.02 Education and Training

- A) Social workers who function as educators, field instructors for students, or trainers should provide instruction only within their areas of knowledge and competence and should provide instruction based on the most current information and knowledge available in the profession.
- B) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should evaluate students' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.

## • 3.02 Education and Training

- C) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients are routinely informed when services are being provided by students.
- D) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with students in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the student. Social work educators and field instructors are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries

# LEGAL & ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN SUPERVISION

- A social worker who assumes the role of field instructor or task supervisor has special ethical obligations:
  - Responsible for the quality of work done by those they supervise
  - Must have knowledge and skills in the areas they provide supervision
  - Evaluate the performance by using helpful and fair methods
  - Assist supervisee's gain knowledge and skills
  - Maintain professional boundaries (GARTHWAIT, 2012)

# COMPETENCE IN SUPERVISION

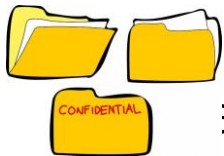
- There are different ways to maintain your competence as a field instructor beyond attending the initial required field instructor training course:



Provide clinical supervision weekly for at least an hour.



Build your supervisee's caseload at a slow, deliberate pace. Keep the supervisee's caseload at a manageable level.



Remain up-to-date on documentation that informed you about the quality of supervisee's work such as progress notes, process recordings, etc.



# SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP – 3 AREAS FOR POTENTIAL ETHICAL COMPLICATIONS

- **Power differential versus boundary issues:**
  - The Field instructor and practicum student relationship is a professional one, **NOT** a personal one.
- **The personal nature of the information shared in supervision**
  - At times, the nature of clinical supervision makes it difficult to delineate boundaries and to set limits with supervisees. Personal issues, especially with inexperienced social workers and students, often arise in the supervisory relationship.
- **The conflicting roles of Field instructor and Student - particularly around the comprehensive skills evaluation**
  - Field instructors must be comfortable embracing that their role includes evaluation, giving direction, and supportive feedback to their supervisees.

# POWER DIFFERENTIAL VS. BOUNDARY ISSUES

- NASW Code #4: Supervision and Consultation
  - d) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with students in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the student. Social work educators and field instructors are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.
- Dual Relationships
  - A separate, distinct relationship held simultaneously ... (borrowing money, business ventures, close personal relationship- socializing with a supervisee's spouse, partner, or family member...this includes sexual relationships with your supervisee, his/her spouse, partner, or family member)- **THESE ARE No No**
- Avoid situations that are reasonably likely to impair your professional judgment or lead to exploitation of the supervisee or yourself.

# THE NATURE OF THE SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP

- ❖ Supervisors must balance how to explore personal issues that may impact client care without turning supervision into a therapy session.
- ❖ Field Instructors have an ethical responsibility to address personal issues with supervisees when it is recognized that personal issues are interfering with client care.
- ❖ Consider direct observation by sitting in on a session between the intern and client (with signed consent). If direct observation is difficult or not an option, if obtain audio or videotape is an option, then choose the option of the intern's session (with signed consent). Have the intern complete a process recording of the session and review it in supervision.
- ❖ Consult with the University Faculty Liaison. This is an important step. The university faculty field liaison is in a position to offer you supportive feedback, and suggestions or to simply listen. It is important for the liaison to at least be aware of student performance issues.

# THE CONFLICTING ROLE OF THE PRACTICUM STUDENT AND FIELD INSTRUCTOR

- **Ways to minimize role conflict:**

- Supervisor and supervisee must have a clear understanding of the goals of supervision, how goals will be achieved, and how any problems or issues will be addressed when they arise.
- Developing the learning plan goals will assist you in this process. This should be a mutually agreed-upon collaboration between you and your supervisee.

# ADDITIONAL THINGS TO CONSIDER

- **Potential Areas for Ethical Concerns:**

- Taking supervisee to dinner, lunch, happy hour, or other social engagements that are not agency-based and for which the purpose is not professionally related.
- Contacting the supervisee on their personal phones for personal reasons, on social media sites, email, etc., and engaging in conversation not professionally related.
- Borrowing money or personal items from supervisee or vice versa..
- Over-sharing details about your personal or social life with the supervisee where the disclosure is not rooted in supervisory instruction or professional development of the supervisee.



# **SPECIAL THANK YOU**

- California State Field Instructor Training Program
- NASW Code of Ethics
- NECON Field Directors
- University of Maine School of Social Work



**THANK YOU FOR KEEPING OUR  
STUDENTS SAFE**

**THIS ENDS MODULE 7**  
YOU CAN PRINT THIS INFORMATION  
TO REFER TO, AS NEEDED