

## **Ethical Action: The Lessons of Penn State and Second Mile**

### **Program Description**

In 2011, a grand jury indictment in Pennsylvania sparked outrage over 20 years of individual and institutional failure to detect and act on the systemic abuse of minors. Why didn't people who heard about or observed heinous acts speak up? When they did speak up, why didn't anyone take action? Why did investigations fail to lead to meaningful results? The public outcry about these questions is lined to another significant, more personal question, "What if I was one of the observers? Would I have behaved differently?"

This program uses the Penn State/Second Mile scandal to examine the concept of moral courage. What opportunities existed for ethical action? What led to failures to act? How can those lessons be applied to our own lives to strengthen our own families, institutions, and communities?

### **Learning Objectives**

Upon completion of this program, participants will be able to:

1. Explain moral courage, moral cowardice, and the barriers to acting ethically:
2. List the facts related to Penn State and The Second Mile and identify lapses in ethical action:
3. Name the three tools that can assist change agents in standing up for ethical principles:
4. By using the Penn State/Second Mile case, identify strategies for carrying out ethical decisions;
5. List resources for further information on ethics.

### **Target Audience**

General public, nonprofit administrators, clinicians, case managers, social workers, counselors, psychiatrists, psychologists, educators, advocates, health and human service practitioners

### **Contact Hours**

1.0 to 4.0hours. Longer sessions allow for greater depth and discussion.

### **SAMPLE Program Agenda**

15 minutes – Introductions and overview

30 minutes – Understanding moral courage

45 minutes – Penn State and Second Mile: characters and timeline

15 minutes – break

45 minutes – Small and whole group discussion – hypotheses about ethical failures in the case? Are we them?

30 minutes – Review of impediments to moral courage

30 minutes – Five strategies for ethical action

45 minutes – Recreating the case: Employing the strategies

15 minutes – Wrap-up and evaluation

## **Faculty**

Dr. Kim Strom-Gottfried is the Smith P. Theimann, Jr. Distinguished Professor of Ethics and Professional Practice at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work. Dr. Strom-Gottfried teaches in the areas of direct practice, education, and human resource management. Her scholarly interests involve ethics, moral courage, and social work education. She is the former chair of the National Association of Social Workers' National Committee on Inquiry and is active in training, consultation and research on ethics and social work practice. She has written over 60 articles, monographs and chapters on ethics and practice. She is the author of *Straight Talk about Professional Ethics* and *The Ethics of Practice with Minors: High Stakes and Hard Choices* and the forthcoming text *Cultivating Courage*. Dr. Strom-Gottfried is also the co-author of the texts *Best of Boards*, *Direct Social Work Practice* and *Teaching Social Work Values and Ethics: A Curriculum Resource*. Dr. Strom-Gottfried also held an appointment as the UNC Institute for the Arts and Humanities Associate Director for the Academic Leadership Program, which helps prepare and support the next generation of academic leaders. Currently, she serves as Principal Investigator of the UNC School of Social Work behavioral healthcare contract, and has been recently appointed by the chancellor to serve as Director of the UNC - Chapel Hill Office of Ethics Education and Policy Management.