

The Ethics of Responding to Clients and Crime

Program Description

Social workers often encounter clients who are involved with the justice system, as crime victims, suspects, or offenders. These situations give rise to complex ethical dilemmas involving confidentiality, conflicts of interest, personal and public safety, and challenges in upholding the best interests of the client. The differences among the populations involved in the justice system and the wide variety of activities that may constitute “crime” further complicate the dilemmas. This workshop addresses the unique considerations when serving justice-involved clients and the ethical standards that apply to dilemmas occurring with these populations. We will use case vignettes to operationalize workshop concepts and will provide resources for continued learning.

Program Objectives

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

1. Distinguish among categories of criminal disclosures, crimes, and non-crimes;
2. Differentiate between compelled and uncompelled therapist disclosures;
3. Explain the role that standards of informed consent, conflicts of interest, confidentiality and self-determination play in uncompelled disclosures;
4. Outline the clinical, ethical and legal pros and cons of uncompelled disclosures;
5. Apply the concepts and standards on disclosure to case examples;
6. List the resources for learning more about dilemmas in this domain of practice.

Target Audience

Clinicians, case managers, social workers, counselors, psychiatrists, psychologists, educators, advocates, health and human service practitioners

Contact Hours

2.0 to 4.0 hours

SAMPLE Agenda

15 minutes – Introductions and overview

30 minutes – Understanding right vs. right dilemmas and Kidder’s paradigm

15 minutes – Review of types of crime disclosure by clients

15 minutes – Review of types of laws

15 minutes – break

30 minutes – What is a crime? What isn’t?

30 minutes – Review of relevant ethical standards

30 minutes – Review of ethical decision making and analysis of pros and cons of clinician disclosure

60 minutes – Case application and discussion, effectively evaluating and addressing the need for disclosure of crime.

15 minutes – Wrap-up and evaluation

Faculty

Dr. Kim Strom is the Smith P. Theimann, Jr. Distinguished Professor of Ethics and Professional Practice at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work. Dr. Strom 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 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.