

Moral Courage

Program Description

Frequently, ethical challenges in the helping professions don't involve knowing the right thing to do. Rather, the dilemma is in having the courage to act ethically under adverse circumstances—a corrupt organizational climate or amid a risk to one's livelihood. Yet without the courage to stand for those standards we value, what meaning do the standards have? This session explores the current thinking about moral courage, examines situations where it is called for, and offers exemplars and strategies for gaining and demonstrating moral courage.

Alternative Description

From baseball fields to boardrooms, the news is filled with examples of lapses in ethical conduct. Many of today's scandals were years in the making. How did they get this far without anyone standing up to say, "This is wrong."? Could well-intentioned people, acting with moral courage, have affected the course of events before they got out of hand?

In the helping professions, too, ethical challenges often arise not in *knowing* the right thing to do, but in *doing* the right thing under adverse circumstances—in a corrupt organizational climate or amid a risk to one's livelihood. Yet without the courage to stand for those standards we value, what meaning do the standards have?

In this session, we'll discuss the pressures not "to do the right thing", and the skills and resources we all can draw on to act with moral courage.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session participants will:

1. Be able to identify situations in that call for moral courage;
2. Be able to identify at least three exemplars of moral courage in the helping and health professions;
3. Understand what moral courage is and is not;
4. Understand the barriers to acting on ethics;
5. Apply these concepts to case examples;
6. Be familiar with 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

3.0 -5.5 hours

Program Agenda

Available upon request.

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.