DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

Ethical Issues in Social Work
SWRK 433-701/433G-700 **(3 credit hours)**
Spring 2023 (1/17/2023 – 5/04/2023)

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Office Hours: Tuesday 8:00am – 12:00pm CST, Wednesday 9:00am – 1:00pm CST, Thursday 9:00am – 1:00pm CST (other times by appointment)

Class Meeting Times/Dates: ONLINE (Asynchronous)

Course Description:
The practice of social work is filled with situations that contain value conflicts and ethical dilemmas. These include questions such as "Who is my client?" and are a huge part of the decisions of policy makers as they try to achieve the greatest good for the greatest number of people. This course is designed to provide students with a basic level of knowledge and understanding of the concepts and theories of professional social work ethics. This course is further designed to equip students with the ability to recognize and analyze ethical dilemmas common to social work. Models of ethical decision making are examined and applied to hypothetical dilemmas.

Required Text:
Dolgoff, R., Loewenberg, F.M., & Harrington, D. (2012). *Ethical decisions for social work*
     practice, 9th ed. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning. ISBN-13: 0-8400-3410-
     5

MOVIE:
Sargent, J. (Producer). (1997). *Miss Evers' Boys.* [Motion Picture]. USA: Anasazi Productions.
Dean, K. (Producer). (2017). The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks. USA: Harpo Films, Cine
     Mosaic.

Regular and Substantive Interaction (Online Courses Only)
The U.S. Department of Education requires that distance education courses must include regular and substantive interaction between students and faculty. For more information about Regular and

Substantive Interaction at WKU, please visit the [Regular and Substantive Interaction in Online and Distance Learning webpage](#).

In this course, regular and substantive interaction will take place in the following ways:

- Availability for synchronous sessions with faculty and students during office hours,
- Faculty participation in discussion boards,
- Weekly announcements,
- Setting assignment due dates that are spread throughout the term of the class, and

Timely and detailed feedback on assignments provided within one week of submission.

MSW Mission Statement

The mission of the MSW program at WKU is to prepare students for advanced professional social work practice to meet the needs of increasingly diverse rural population in the community, in Kentucky, and in a global society.

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Definition of Specialized Practice and Required Core Competencies for MSW Education

The Council on Social Work Education defines Specialized Practice as the following:

Specialized practice builds upon generalist practice as described in EP 2.0, adapting and extending the Social Work Competencies for practice with a specific population, problem area, method of intervention, perspective or approach to practice. Specialized practice augments and extends social work knowledge, values, and skills to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate within an area of specialization. Specialized practitioners advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies in their area of specialized practice. Specialized practitioners synthesize and employ a broad range of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary knowledge and skills based on scientific inquiry and best practices, and consistent with social work values. Specialized practitioners engage in and conduct research to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

The master's program in social work prepares students for specialized practice. Programs identify the specialized knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes, and behaviors that extend and enhance the nine Social Work Competencies and prepare students for practice in the area of specialization (EPAS, 2015, p. 12).

Learning Outcomes

Upon Successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

Knowledge
1. Identify an ethical dilemma in case scenarios and real-life practice examples

Values

2. Apply the Social Work Code of Ethics to ethical dilemma examples

Skills

3. Analyze social work ethical dilemmas
4. Apply major theoretical models to case scenarios of ethical dilemmas
5. Differentiate possible choices in solving ethical dilemmas.
6. Demonstrate critical decision making solving a specific ethical dilemma.
7. (Graduate Students) Integrate and demonstrate two or more theoretical models to decide best plan of action for solving an ethical dilemma

Academic Support:

Most of us find that we need some academic support and direction during our time at the university. WKU offers many resources that can help you be successful in this course. These are listed below.

Student Accessibility Resource Center:

In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in DSU Room 1074 in the Downing Student Union. The phone number is 270-745-5004. Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Student Accessibility Resource Center.

Writing Center Assistance:

The Writing Center is located in Cherry Hall 123 on the Bowling Green campus and also offers online consultations for students who live at a distance or who cannot visit during our operating hours. WKU's writing tutors have been trained to provide helpful feedback to students at all phases of a writing project. They can help you brainstorm ideas, structure your essay, clarify your purpose, strengthen your support, and edit for clarity and correctness. But they will not revise or edit the paper for you. See instructions on the Writing Center website for making online or face-to-face appointments. Or call (270) 745-5719 during the Writing Center's operating hours (also listed on the website) for help scheduling an appointment.

Off Campus Library Support:

The Extended Campus Library Services Office will copy citations and pull library books for students at extended campuses and send them through the mail. There is no cost to students (although you do have to pay to return the library books). WKU also has a courier service to extended campuses. For further information, go to the Extended Campus Library Support website. Turn-around time can be anywhere from a few days to two weeks, so plan ahead!

Policy:

Students are expected to adhere to all policies contained with the MSW Handbook and the Code of Student Conduct at Western Kentucky University.

Professionalism:
The NASW Code of Ethics is a guiding framework and source for identifying professional performance. Students are expected to practice in an ethical manner while in the classroom or completing assignments pertaining to this course in accordance with the MSW *Student Handbook*, WKU *Student Code of Conduct* and the NASW *Code of Ethics.* Behaviors especially under consideration are those related to professional practice, mental illness and/or substance use, illegal activity and classroom behavior.

Concerns in any of these four circumstances will be documented in a Professional Concerns Form and referred for a Student Professional Concerns Review. Students are expected to understand the policy, in its entirety, found in the MSW Student Handbook.

Social Media:
Privacy, confidentially, and professional boundaries must be examined as professional social workers, especially in the age of technology. Professional standards found in the NASW *Code of Ethics* must be strictly followed concerning social media. Students using social media sites are expected to use the highest privacy settings on their social media profiles, so field agency personnel and/or clients cannot access photographs and private information. Students are not permitted to link to or view the social media profiles of clients or employees of the field placement agency. In the event that a student's social media profile or linkage is considered a poor professional practice or an ethical violation, the issue will be documented in a Professional Concerns Form and referred for a Student Professional Concerns Review.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:
Plagiarism and cheating are prohibited. Academic dishonesty is prohibited by the MSW *Student Handbook*, the University *Code of Student Conduct* and is also counter to social work values and ethics included in the NASW *Code of Ethics*. Students are expected to be familiar with these policies and ethical guidelines and to follow them at all times. Any instances of academic dishonesty will mean a grade of "zero" for the assignment and/or course failure. Students should review the "Academic Offences" section of the WKU Student Handbook and "Acknowledging Credit" sections of the 1999 Code of Ethics, National Association of Social Workers.

APA:
Students are expected to use APA style (current ed.) for writing, citing, and listing references. This is for all course work including papers, pamphlets, and online assignments. Online assignments must include in text references and full text references at the end of the assignment just as all other written documents in this course.

Assignment Completion:
Students are expected to turn all assignments in on time. Assignments, which are late, will be reduced at a rate of 10% per day. Therefore, if you would have received 50 points on an assignment, which is three days late, the score will be reduced by a total of 15 points. Your top score possibility would be 35 of 50

with a perfect assignment. After one-week, late assignments will no longer be accepted for credit but must be turned in to complete the course.

Exam:
Students will experience a final exam in this class. The exam will consist of 50 multiple choice and true/false questions. This exam will be taken via blackboard. The exam must be taken within the time listed in the syllabus or he/she will receive a zero for the exam.

Other:
The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as needed with reasonable notice and accommodations for the students.

Description of Course Assignments:

Professionalism Rubric (60 points)
Social workers traditionally serve the marginalized populations. Thus, social work professors have an obligation to teach students appropriate professional behavior. Within the classroom setting, online for this course, professionalism is defined as attendance, preparation, and appropriate behavior with the professor and peers in **all** communications relative to this course. In the classroom, the use of cell phones and other electronic devices is prohibited without prior permission of the professor.
Further, it is expected that each student completes all assignments and assigned readings in accordance with the course schedule. The instructional methods utilized in this course include lecture/discussion, role play, experiential exercises, and student presentations. Therefore, students are expected to participate **actively** in each class session, to come to class prepared to demonstrate and to discuss content of required course assignments, and to submit assignments on time. Each student should complete readings ***prior*** to the classroom experience and be prepared to *discuss, analyze, and critique* each reading. Please understand that in class you will be developing and applying practice skills that are discussed in your texts and readings. This is an opportunity for you to practice before applying skills you learn in this class in the field. Thus, professionalism grades are also assessed on students' *active* participation in.

You must print them document, fill it out and scan back to me. Please post the scanned document in the appropriate folder on the assignment Drop box. Be fair with your evaluation. Not too harsh or too lenient. I will change as appropriate for the effort toward professionalism throughout the semester.

Blackboard Assignments (10 Assignments x 10 = 100 Points)

There will be 11 Blackboard Assignments. You must complete 10 of the 11 blackboard assignments. The week you choose to skip, you must post on the discussion board or assignment drop box that "this is my skip week". Everyone must complete the position paper (week 8) and the movie analysis (week 11). Other than this, you may choose any of the topics as your "skip" week.

Students should respond to the question or topic posed with a short essay of 300-500 words. These

assignments are to be electronically attached on the Assignment DropBox by the due date listed in the course outline. The Assignment Drop box can be found under the tab entitled "Weekly Information" and then on that particular week's folder. Only the instructor will comment and return these electronically. Discussion board should be added as a thread and your response posted directly instead of having an attachment. On all blackboard assignments, make sure to use BOTH in text APA citations and a full-text APA reference at the end of your written work for full credit consideration.

Each question will be assessed by the instructor according to the following criteria: (1) evidence of reading and comprehension of reading assignments, (2) originality of the postings that demonstrates critical thinking, (3) ability to critique and assess others' posts, and (5) on time submission and (6) proper use of APA citations. Postings are due by 11:00 p.m. CST. **Failure to meet the deadline will result in a 10% deduction for each day that assignment is late.**

Ethics Notebook (150 Points)

Students are invited to become aware of the ethical issues, as well as the legal aspects, surrounding us in the world we live in every day. The portfolio is a compilation of ethics related material form a variety of sources (**Parts A, B, and C**).

You will post the separate sections under the appropriate tab (A, B, C) listed on BB. It will be easier to do in this format rather than having to learn how to use the actual portfolio section of BB. That means you may have to scan, attach, or type in information and documents as needed (especially Part B). It will be helpful for you to have this printed out and scanned anyway for a quick reference guide for future use. If you provide links and it does not go to the information, then you will not get credit for that.

A) **Document A: Article Summaries (20 points x 3 = 60 points)** The following sources are suggested for Part A:
   - Recent articles from professional newsletters/newspapers such as NASW news
   - A collection of current articles from professional journals such as *Social Work, Journal of Global Social Work Practice,* and *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*
   - Media such as state and national newspapers, newsmagazines, and news reports from radio and television. Print articles may be retrieved from the stations' web sites.

   Three entries regarding these sources are suggested, and the sources should be recent (within the past six months). Each entry should summarize the article, describe the main position taken, and include the student's reaction and position on the ethical issue at hand. A full APA reference to the article needs to be included, and it is important to cite information appropriately within the entry as well.

B) **Document B**: Additionally, the portfolio must include the following **(40 points)** with appropriate information included:
   - NASW Code of Ethics
   - Social Work License Statutes (KAR and KRS)

- Summary of HIPAA Privacy Rule
- Statutes related to involuntary hospitalization
- Advanced Directives Procedures including copy of forms
- Sample Informed Consent Document
- Sample Patient's Rights Document
- Abuse and Neglect State Regulations as applied to Social Workers and other Professionals (both Children and Adults)

This information should be gathered from the state where the student plans to practice following graduation. For most, this will be Kentucky. You will only be gathering these resources (direct links can be provided or saved copies in pdf format will be accepted).

C) Also required is a **personal statement (50 points)** of ethics. This personal statement should present your own understanding of and reflection on selected values and principles from the NASW Code of Ethics. This should be 1-2 pages in length.

Final Exam (100 points)

Students will experience a final exam in this class. The exams will consist of 50 multiple choice questions. This exam will be taken via blackboard. The exam must be taken within the time listed in the syllabus or he/she will receive a zero for the exam. You may have two chances to take the exam. Remember though your score may go down. It will be the last score that will count in the grade book. In addition, you may use all of your class materials (books, readings, notes) to take the exam. With this being said, you only have 1 ½ hours to complete the exam so make sure to be familiar with the material before starting your exam. **You must take this exam between Monday, May 1st at 8am CST to Thursday, May 4th @ 11:59pm CST.** You must take each setting all at the same time. You will see one question at a time only rather than the whole test. This exam will deploy during that time period under the tab named "Exam" on blackboard.

Case Presentations (100 Points) GRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY

Following a discussion of models of ethical decision-making, students may choose a case for presentation from the Dolgoff text or a peer reviewed site such as NASW. You will prepare a class presentation with a power point presentation. You will tape your presentation using either Mediasite, Zoom, or YouTube (with a private link) and post on Blackboard.

The presentation should include the following:

- Case outline
- Summary of research and related literature
- Sharing the author's reflections, reasoning processes, and resolution
- Suggestions for an improved resolution
- Engaging fellow students in this presentation.

The individual is invited to utilize creative and innovative techniques to present their ethical dilemmas and approaches.

The power point presentation may be no more than 15 slides in length. You will need in text citations (as appropriate) throughout the power point presentation. In addition, the last slide of your power point will need to have a full reference list. The video lecture may be no more than 15 minutes long. You will need to include a copy of your power point on the drop box.

Evaluation and Grading
Course grading is based on the following criteria:

Professionalism	60 Points
Blackboards (10 points x 10)	100 Points
Ethics Notebook	150 Points
Final Exam	100 Points
Total Undergraduate Student Points	**410 Points**
Additional Graduate Student Work	
Case Presentation	100 Points
Total Graduate Student Points	**510 Points**

Grades will be assigned based on the points the student receives versus (to include adjustment for attendance) the total points allotted for class. The following scale will be used to determine the accompanying letter grade:

90 – 100%	A
80 – 89%	B
70 – 79%	C
60 – 69%	D
59% and below	F

Additional Resources:

Adams, R.E., Boscarino, J.A., & Figley, C.R. (2006). Compassion fatigue and psychological distress among social workers: A validations study. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 76*(1), 103-108.

Agbayani-Siewert, P. (1994). Filipino American culture and family: Guidelines for practitioners. *Families in Society, 75,* 429-438.

Albert, R. (1986). *Law and social work practice.* New York: Springer Publishing.

Almason, L.K. (1997). Personal liability implications of the duty to warn are hard pills to swallow: From *Tarasoff* to *Hutchison v. Patel* and beyond. *Journal of Contemporary Health, Law and Policy, 13,* 471-496.

Andrews, A.B., & Patterson, E.G. (1995). Searching for solutions to alcohol and other drug abuse during pregnancy: Ethics, values, and constitutional principles. *Social Work, 40,* 55-64.

Antl, B.J., & Regehr, C. (2003). Beyond individual rights and freedoms: Metaethics in social work research. *Social Work, 40,* 135-144.

Ashton, V. (1999). Worker judgements of seriousness about and reporting of suspected child maltreatment. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 23*(6), 539-548.

Barksdale, C. (1989). Child abuse reporting: A clinical dilemma. *Smith College Studies in Social Work, 59,* 170-182.

Bergeron, L.R., & Gray, B. (2003). Ethical dilemmas of reporting suspected elder abuse. *Social Work, 48,* 96-105.

Berlin, S. (2005). The value of acceptance in social work direct practice: A historical and contemporary view. *Social Service Review, 79*(3), 482-510.

Beauchamp, T., & Childress, J. (2009). *Principles of biomedical ethics.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Bergeron, L.R. (1999). Decision-making and adult protective services workers: Identifying critical factors. *Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect, 10*(3), 8/7-113.

Bisman, C. (2004). Social work values: The moral core of the profession. *British Journal of Social Work, 34,* 109-123.

Borys, D.S., & Pope, K.S. (1989). Dual relationships between therapist and client: A national study of psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 20,* 283-293.

Callahan, J. (1994). The ethics of assisted suicide. *Health and Social Work, 19,* 237-244.

Canda, E.R., Nakashima, M., & Furman, L.D. (2004). Ethical considerations about spirituality in social work: Insights from a national qualitative survey. *Families in Society, 85*(1), 27-35.
Congress, E. (1999). *Social Work Values and Ethics: Identifying and resolving professional dilemmas*. Chicago: Nelson Hall.

Congress, E., & McAuliffe, D. (2006). Social work ethics: Professional codes in Australia and the United States. *International Social Work, 49*, 151-164.

Corey, G., Corey, M.S., & Callahan, P. (2003). *Issues and ethics in the helping professions (6th ed.).* Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Thomson Learning Publishing Co.

Cottone, R.R., & Tarvydas, V.M. (2007). *Counseling ethics and decision making (3rd ed.).* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall.

Daley, M.R., & Doughty, M.O. (2006). Ethics complaints in social practice: A rural-urban comparison. *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics, 3*(1).

Danis, F., & Lockhart, L. (2003). Domestic violence and social work education: What do we know, what do we need to know? *Journal of Social Work Education* , 39(2), 215-224.

Depoy, E., Hartman, A. &Haslett, D. (1999). Critical action research: A model for social work knowing. *Social Work, 44*(6): 560-569.

Desai, K. (2003). Ethical decision making within the bureaucratic context: A case study. *Child Management Journal, 4*(3), 122-128.

DiMarco, M., & Zoline, S.S. (2004). Duty to warn in the context of HIV/AIDS- related psychotherapy: Decision making among psychologists. *Counseling and Clinical Psychology, 1*(2), 68-85.

Dolgoff, R., & Skolnik, L. (1996). Ethical decision making in social work with groups: An empirical study. *Social Work with Groups, 19*(2), 49-65.

Durana, C. (1998). The use of touch in psychotherapy: Ethical and clinical guidelines. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training, 35*(2), 269-280.

Eisenstat, S.A., & Bancroft, L. (1999). Domestic Violence. *The New England Journal of Medicine, 341(12)* , 886-892.

Foley, R., Berns, D., Test, G., Bragg, H. L., & Schechter, S. (2000). *Guidelines for Public Child Welfare Agencies Serving Children and Families Experiencing Domestic Violence.* Washington , DC : American Public Human Services Association.

Fraser, M. (Ed.) (1997). *Risk And Resilience In Childhood: An Ecological Perspective* .Washington , DC : National Association of Social Workers.

Flynn, L. (1997). Social work students confront social justice issues through experiential learning. *Australian Social Work, 50*(4), 21-27.

Galambos, C. (1999). Resolving ethical conflicts in a managed health care environment. *Health & Social Work, 24*(3), 191-197.

Gambrill, E., & Pruger, R. (Eds.) (1997). *Controversial issues in social work ethics, values, and obligations.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Geller, J.L. (1996). Mental health services of the future: Managed care, unmanaged care, mismanaged care. *Smith College Studies in Social Work, 66*, 223-239.

Goldstein, H. (1998). Education for ethical dilemmas in social work practice, *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services,* 79(3), 241-244.

Green, R. (2003). Social work in rural areas: A personal and professional challenge. *Australian Social Work, 56*, 209-219.

Green, A.D., & Kantambu, J.L. (2004). Whistle-blowing as a form of advocacy: Guidelines for the practitioner and organization. *Social Work, 49*(2), 219-230.

Hardina, D. (2004). Guidelines for ethical practice in community organization. *Social Work, 49*(4), 595-604.

Husband, C. (1995). The morally active practitioner and the ethics of anti-racist social work. In R. Hugman & D. Smith (Eds.), *Ethical issues in social work* (pp. 84-103). London: Routledge.

Jaques, L.H., & Folen, R.A. (1998). Confidentiality and the military. In R.M. Anderson, Jr., T.L. Nardello, & H.V. Hall (Eds.), *Avoiding ethical misconduct in psychology specialty areas.* Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publishers.

Johner, R. (2006). Dual relationship legitimization and client self-determination. *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics, 3*(1). Retrieved June 22, 2010 from

http://www.socialworker.com/jswve/content/view/30/44/

Jones, S. & Zlotnik, J. (eds.) (1998). *Preparing Helping Professionals to Meet Community Needs; Generalizing from the Rural Experience.* Alexandria , VA : Council on Social Work Education.

Kanter, A.S. (1989). Homeless but not helpless: Legal issues in the care of homeless people with mental illness. *Journal of Social Issues, 45*(3), 91-104.

Kimmel, A. J. (1990). An overview of ethical problems in social research. In A. J. Kimmel, *Ethics and values in applied social research* (3rd Ed.)(pp. 7-25). Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications.

Lloyd, C., King, R., & Chenoweth, L. (2002). Social work, stress, and burnout: A review. *Journal of Mental Health, 11*(3), 255-265.

Lufman, V.H., Veltkamp, L.J., Clark, J.J., Lannacone, S., & Snooks, H. (2005). Practice guidelines for child custody evaluations for licensed clinical social workers. *Clinical Social Work Jounal, 33*, 327-357.

Macdonald, G. & Macdonald, K. (1995). Ethical issues in social work research. In R. Hugman & D. Smith (Eds.), *Ethical issues in social work* (pp. 46-64). London: Routledge.

McCarty, D., & Clancy, C. (2002). Telehealth: Implications for social work practice. *Social Work, 47*(2), 153-161.

McAuliffe, D. (1999). Clutching at Codes: Resources that influence social work decisions in cases of ethical conflict. *Professional Ethics: A Multidisciplinary Journal,* 17 (3/4), 9-24.

Meyers, C.J. (1997). Expanding *Tarasoff*: Protecting patients and the public by keeping subsequent caregivers informed. *The Journal of Psychiatry & Law,* Fall, 365-375.

Mishna, F., Antle, B.J., & Regehr, C. (2002). Social work with clients contemplating suicide: Complexity and ambiguity in the clinical, ethical, and legal considerations. *Clinical Social Work Journal, 30*(3), 265-280.

Murdock, V. (2005). Guided by ethics: Religion and spirituality. *Journal of Gernontological Social Work, 45*(1/2), 131-154.

National Association of Social Workers. (1995). A study cites most reported ethics breaches, *NASW News, 40*(4), 4.

National Association of Social Workers. (2008). *Code of Ethics.* Silver Springs, MD: Author.
Northen, H. (1998). Ethical dilemmas in social work with groups. *Social Work with Groups, 21*(1/2), 5-17.

Orovwuje, P.R. (2001). The business model and social work: A conundrum for social work practice. *Social Work in Health Care, 34*(1/2), 59-70.

Padilla, Y.C. (1997). Immigrant policy: Issues for social work practice. *Social Work, 42*, 595-606. Reamer,

F.G. (1998). The Evolution of Social Work Ethics, *Social Work, 4*3(6)*, 488-*500.

Reamer, F.G. (2003). Boundary issues in social work: Managing dual relationships. *Social Work, 48*(1), 121-133.

Rossiter, A., Prilleltensky, I. & Walsh-Bowers, R. (2000). A postmodern perspective on professional ethics', in B. Fawcett, et al (eds). *Practice and Research in Social Work*, pp. 83-103 Routledge, London and New York.

Rothman, J. (1989). Client self-determination: Untangling the knot. *Social Service Review, 63*(4), 598-612.

Santhiveeran, J. (2004). E-therapy: Scope, concerns, ethical standards, and feasibility. *Journal of Family Social Work, 8*(3), 37-45.

Sasson, S. (2000). Beneficence versus respect for autonomy: An ethical dilemma in social work practice. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work, 33*(1), 5-16.

Torczyner, J. (1991). Discretion, judgement, and informed consent: Ethical and practice issues in social action. *Social Work, 36*(2): 122-128.