

National Association of Social Work Code of Ethics

Daniel J. Varela

Southern Adventist University

## **NASW core values**

### **Service**

Ever since I could remember, even as a child, feeling a sense to be there for others in service. Whether it was helping my fellow spanish-speaking classmate complete their assignment, stopping a bully from picking on someone, or even trying to talk to and understand the student who would be treated as the “outcast.” I have always tried my best to serve others before myself, but often times I would neglect my own needs causing me to lose who I was, while unnecessarily putting someone else’s burden on my shoulders. Through certain experiences I have come to accept that it is OK to attend my own needs, without feeling selfish. If I cannot take care of myself how am I supposed to help others? Social workers first code of ethics is to be of service; that means to apply their knowledge, values, and skills to help those in need while even addressing social problems.

### **Dignity and worth of a person**

The NASW core value of dignity and worth of a person is also one of my personal values that I uphold. I strive to always have respect for everyone. It doesn’t matter if we look different, disagree on an issue, or if the person in any way, shape, or form is disrespectful towards me. I will always have respect for others never making them feel any less because of the way they think, act, or treat others. What I believe it means to keep this ethical principle as a social worker is to treat each person with care while helping them find the determination to overcome and change the situation they are in regardless of cultural, ethnic, or racial differences.

### **Importance of human relationships**

In life we will always be around other humans. Understanding how other people function, making connections efficiently, and comfortably will come as a virtue particularly when it deals

with change. The NASW core value of importance of human relationships is significant because it allows social workers to use their ability to strengthen relationships on a micro, mezzo, and macro level giving an enhanced change for that particular person, group, or community. My personality is very out-going, lively, and radiant. I love talking to people, observing different types of personalities, and try my best to keep my networking of friends. Connecting myself to different types of people allows me to see things in a different light. I have experienced healthy change when it came to a moving to a new area, and meeting new people.

### **NASW ethical standards**

Allowing your client to choose their own decisions and choices, being private about what is talked about, and having a respectful attitude towards not only clients but fellow colleagues are all significant when referring to some of the NASW ethical standards. I believe that the ethical standard of self-determination allows the client to decide what it is that will help them reach their goal. If the client is unsure where to start, the social worker may help the client find what their goal could be according to the situation the client is faced with. The social worker is empowering their client by allowing the client to recognize what their goal is and how to take action in becoming successful in reaching that goal. Confidentiality is a significant NASW ethical standard, especially when it deals with more one on one cognitive therapy with the client. Keeping what is said in sessions private, is a legal right of the client. Sharing confidential information is only allowed if preventing client from self-harm or when preventing client from hurting others. Being confidential could mean securing individual files with a lock preventing anyone to look through those files, or another example could be withholding information about clients from people who do not need to know. Treating clients and colleagues with respect not only shows how to be professional but how one treats others outside of the work place. Treating

colleagues and clients with respect means valuing their opinions, being sensitive to their feelings, even simply listening intently while they speak could be a sign of respect.

### **Diversity in human relationships**

Having the opportunity of involving oneself in diverse cultures and ethnic backgrounds really gives room for open-mindedness and acceptance. If we want to understand how a person receives advice or what way will be best for them to comprehend the point we are trying to give, interacting with their culture and involving oneself in a group of people that have similarities according to the person we are trying to understand will help us reach that knowledge. Talking with, and observing different types of people also opens our perspective on what relationships with people could and should look like. Submerging into a clients' culture offers the benefit of obtaining an understanding of how, as a social worker, to provide services that are sensitive to the clients' circumstances with respect to race, national origin, color, gender, sexual orientation etc.

### **Biblical reference of NASW core values**

#### **Service**

In Luke 3:30-37, Jesus gives a parable of The Good Samaritan, this parable gives us insight on how God sees the value of service, which is also the first core value in the NASW code of ethics. Jesus recounts the story by explaining how a Jewish man was headed to Jericho, but was attacked by some bandits. By chance a priest, next a temple assistant, were walking by, they simply looked at the wounded man and continued on their journey. Then a despised Samaritan, while on his journey, saw this battered Jewish man and felt compassion for him. The Samaritan cleansed and bandaged the Jewish man's wounds, payed for the Jewish man's stay, and told the innkeeper that whatever was charged, in addition to the initial cost, the Samaritan

would pay in full through his own funds. Jesus asks us to go and do as the Samaritan man did for the Jewish man. Despite of our major differences, we are called to be of service for others.

### **Social Justice**

In Jeremiah 22:1-3, Jesus tells Jeremiah to go unto the King of Juda to ask for social justice for those who have been treated wrong. Jeremiah also must tell the King not to be unjust towards the foreigner, orphans, widows, or commit murder of the innocent. The Lord is clearly firm in giving social justice towards those who do not have much significance for the King of Juda. We too should follow this NASW core value, as Christians, and in the social work profession.

### **Dignity and worth of a person**

Isaiah 49:8-26 talks about Israel's Restoration. The Israelites are feeling like the Lord has forgotten them, they say things like in verse 14, "The Lord has deserted us; the Lord has forgotten us." But the loving, gracious, heavenly Father uses a metaphor of a mother feeling no love towards her child. Can a mother not love the very child that she carried for nine months? Jesus continues by saying even if it was possible for a mother to forget the very child she gave birth to, He will never forget His people. This passage is a perfect example for the NASW, dignity and worth of a person, core value. The Lord shows us how much He really does care for His children.

### **Importance of human relationships**

Mark 12:28-34 also known as The Most Important Commandment, is a prime example of the NASW code of ethics; importance of human relationships. In verse 28, one of the teachers of the law asks Jesus which commandment of the ten was the most important. Jesus answers by saying primarily you must love the Lord with all your heart, mind, and soul. Jesus doesn't stop

there, He says there is an equally important commandment, which is to “Love your neighbor as yourself.” That is very significant because it just shows just how much the Lord wanted a united humanity in love, and friendship.

### **Integrity**

In the David’s Prayer of Praise, found in 1 Chronicles 29:10-20, King David is giving praise to the Lord for everything He has done for him and Gods people. David mentions in verse 17, that that God observes our hearts and celebrates when He finds integrity there. Integrity is part of the code of ethics of Social Work. Just as God wants us to be honest with Him, the NASW wants social workers who are affiliated with the profession to be honest and responsible by being truthful and following through with all of the codes of ethics.

### **Competency**

The Effective Prayer, found in Matthew 7:7-11, shows us how capable, knowledgeable, and competent we become if all we do is come onto the Lord and simply ask. In verse 7 and 8 the Lord tells us to solely request and we will obtain what we are requesting. We are called not to cease in searching but to continue that search and we will find what it is we are looking for. In the code of ethics regarding competency, social workers must be able to continue learning skills, and professional understanding for the profession, never fully reaching a state of perfection, but learning along the journey. It’s wonderful to have God on our side because He will give us the intelligence we need academically, spiritually, mentally, and beyond that, all we must do is ask.