

Ethicing and Social Work Practice: A Study in Conceptual Charity

This workshop takes a unique view that is a significant departure from how the concept 'ethic' is used and, from the all too familiar reaction to the misbehaviour of individuals. The predominant solution is to create more, rules/laws and to impute importance to the rules by describing them as ethical. This is exemplified in professions revising and republishing their respective Standards of Practice and Codes of Conduct and adding the concept ethic either as an adjective or as an adverb. Sometimes ethic is used also as a noun and occasionally as an object in a sentence that really deals with rules.

Rules and laws are necessary. It is better if they are not guidelines but actual imperatives. Most rules are thou shalt not, but some actually are thou shalt. For the practitioner knowing the rules, regardless of what they are called, and knowing the rationale for the rules is a very good thing.

The premise of this workshop, in part, is based on the empirically established fact that deterrence, general and specifics, simply does not work. As such, Standards of Practice or a Code of Conduct also do not deter misbehaviour in the way they are believed to do so by their authors.

The premise of the workshop is that ethic is a verb. Misusing the concept ethic, as a description, obstructs the profound personal and professional benefit to which it can be put as an activity. The activity, however, requires both specific knowledge and skills.

The goal of this workshop is to teach the required knowledge and skills to engage in the activity of ethicing. To achieve this goal the following objectives will be accomplished.

- A) Participants will be able to identify concepts and how to operationally define them.
- B) Participants will be able to operationally define the concept VALUE, why values can and do change, and why certain values are held to be professionally specific.
- C) Participants will be able to describe why it is correct to speak of a CODE OF CONDUCT

and STANDARDS OF PRACTICE as opposed to “code of ethics” and “standards of ethical practice”.

- D) Participants will be able to effectively engage in the activity of ETHICING by applying a methodology to determine what moral developmental perspective is revealed by a: behaviour, policy, procedure, code of conduct, prescribed standard of practice, and rationale for a prescribed behaviour.

- E) Participants will be able to categorize their own cognitive developmental moral perspective and describe how this influences what they do, especially in situations when they are under duress and situations that involve a moral dilemma (competing claims).