

# Ethics in the human service field



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Harris Kamran Human Services Discussion Paper 26 January Ethical implications of human services research The nature of the human services profession is such that it demands a great variety of ethical and legal codes for smooth conduction and professional handling of the job. Since the actual and specific job descriptions within this profession may vary greatly, there is no one fixed code of conduct to be followed by all human services professionals. However, there are some general guidelines which are expected of each professional to be incorporated in his daily activities as a human services personnel (NOHS, 2009). This paper purports to discuss some of the more important legal and ethical implications.

The first ethical requirement of the job is a high motivation on the part of the professional (NOHS, 2009). Since this profession demands a great degree of involvement and self motivation by the service provider, it is expected that the professional be fully committed to his job, and appropriately trained (NOHS, 2009). This means an effort in an ongoing training and educating lifestyle, so that the newer and better schemes and models of service provision can be adopted (NOHS, 2009). The professional needs to be well aware of the cultural diversity and differences in the society and community in which he is operating, so that he can keep his professional dealings in accordance with the societal norms (NOHS, 2009). He should impart equal respect and acceptance of all the various belief systems that his clients might present with. This is especially true of those professionals who are involved in direct relation with the clients, such as counselors and psychologists (NOHS, 2009).

Whereas it is true that the professional is not expected to discriminate on the basis of demographic details, he is, nevertheless, expected to advocate for

those classes of the society which are targeted, maligned, or otherwise marginalized (NOHS, 2009). It should be noted that every client is supposed to be treated equally by the service provider, who should abstain from bias or favoritism. Therefore, all personal interests should be kept at bay (NOHS, 2009). However, when it comes to protecting a client's well being and dignity, the provider is bound to take a stand for the minorities or the targeted groups of population.

The service provider is bound by the professional-client confidentiality, as long as this does not hamper the implementation of justice, or endanger the well being and safety of the client or other members of the society (NOHS, 2009). The code of conduct of the organization in which the professional is working should also be kept in focus, as the provider is legally and ethically bound to his employer and his organization (NOHS, 2009). As long as these boundaries are not crossed, it is binding on the professional to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the clients (NOHS, 2009).

The professional should be well aware of his job requirements and of his personal strengths and limitations, so that he does not commit to the client more than can be delivered. (NOHS, 2009) To mislead the client is an ethical breach. Moreover, the professional should be well informed of all the legal and ethical implications of his profession.

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