

Social work confidentiality and informed consent social work essay



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Everyone has a right to privacy it is an individual's right. Individuals confide in family, friends, doctors, and lawyers. Divulging private information about one's personal life can be a sticking situation. Trusting someone to uphold confidential information on a personal level or professional level can make or break the relationship. Confidential information and the sharing of it, must be given consent by the client, in a professional and client relationship the professional must inform the client and get consent in order to share any information, however if in need to provide services, research or evaluation that is conducted by a social worker it would not apply. According to the National Association of Social Workers NASW (2008) Code of Ethics social workers have standards in which they must abide by when it comes to confidentiality. Social workers should respect clients' right to privacy. Social workers should not solicit private information from clients unless it is essential to providing services or conducting social work evaluation or research. Once private information is shared, standards of confidentiality apply (1.07a). Confidentiality means that any professional or social worker is not to divulge any information to anyone that has been shared by a client, without the client's informed consent. As a professional social worker you will need to communicate and inform clients of their privacy rights, and apply our professional judgments in communicating this information, yet must also inform of the nature and limitations of their rights to confidentiality for all parties involved. Therefore if a family were in need of services from a social worker each individual would be informed of their rights to confidentiality and informed consent would be needed are would it?

Case Scenario:

Ms Blue is a social worker working at a family shelter in the community in a downtown area. She specializes in working with families with school- age children whom have become homeless. Ms. Blue received a referral in the late fall from a counselors-student aid from a local inner-city school for a 7-year-old student by the name of Keisha. Keisha was new to the school in the fall of 2012. Keisha was very motivated to learn and made friends easily, got along well with other students, turned in assignments on time and always arrived at school cleaned and groomed. However, by the first part of November according to the counselor aid, Keisha teacher reported she had become concerned with Keisha overall behavior and appearance; she began to have squabbles with students and missing assignments that normally she would not, lacked motivation, her clothing was unclean, wrinkle and hair was uncombed something had changed. After Keisha went to speak with the counselor school aid, she revealed that she and her family was homeless and living in her mother car. Ms. Blue talked with Keisha mother Dianne, completed a biopsychosocial assessment, and consulted with teacher and the counselor aid. Ms. Blue set up immediate emergency shelter for the family, spoke with Keisha teacher about classroom-based intervention, and began family and individual counseling. During an individual counseling session with Ms. Dianne, Ms. Blue stated, " After one month of living at the shelter temporary housing is offered to the family that could last 6 months to a year". Ms Dianne declined, and Ms. Blue was surprised by Ms. Dianne answer, she questioned why she declined the offer, Ms. Dianne stated, " Can I tell you something?" Ms. Blue replied " Sure". Ms. Dianne replied, " Am in the middle of a divorced with Keisha estranged father. He was abusive and <https://assignbuster.com/social-work-confidentiality-and-informed-consent-social-work-essay/>

he is attempting to get full custody of Keisha, so I left the state and moved here with a friend I thought, up to a month and a half ago when she told me we could no longer live with her. I have been living under my maiden name and violating a court order that prohibits me from moving out of state without permission while my divorce and custody are pending, I know am in big trouble, please you cannot disclose this information to know one. This is why I cannot take the housing nor can I even apply for assistance from Job and Family services." According to the National Association of Social Workers NASW (2008) Code of Ethics social workers have standards in which they must abide by when it comes to Informed consent. Social workers should provide services to clients only in the context of a professional relationship based, when appropriate, on valid informed consent. Social workers should use clear and understandable language to inform clients of the purpose of the services, risks related to the services, limits to services because of the requirements of a thirdparty payer, relevant costs, reasonable alternatives, clients' right to refuse or withdraw consent, and the time frame covered by the consent. Social workers should provide clients with an opportunity to ask questions. (1. 03a). Informed consent means that any professional or social worker will not release confidentially information or intervene if not freely given consent by the client. A client can be informed to give consent only if the client is fully informed of the information to be shared and the consequences if the client does not consent. ConclusionSocial workers should always protect the client's confidentiality. Are there exceptions? In the case scenario, the client did not give informed consent to share information shared in the counseling session, and asked Ms. Blue not to disclose any information shared to anyone. This puts Ms. Blue in an ethical

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dilemma. For there are legal issues, and possible charges of a crime by Ms Dianne and the need to protect the child from harm, however Ms. Dianne shared this info in a clinical setting during a counseling session, what impact does this have on how Ms Blue can proceed with sharing the information if she decides to do so? Yet the one big question would be what Ms. Blue ethical obligations are? These are just some of the questions that would need to be answered to make an ethical decision in this case when it comes to confidentiality and informed consent.