

SWK278 THE REVOLUTIONARY SOCIAL WORKER LOVE ETHIC COMPANION

Love Ethic Informed Resources

- All theories and legislation have at least implicit ethical dimensions.
- Personal and professional values are the building blocks of ethical practice. Theories are sophisticated statements about values and principles. The revolutionary social worker fosters professional integrity in all their actions. To achieve this they need to be skilled in aligning their values with relevant theories to guide their practice. It is really important that you reflect upon your actions to understand what is influencing you to act as you do. The point of being reflective is to then be willing to change or adjust your actions to be congruent with your values. If your values have been compromised, the first step to understand why to ensure you are working non-reactively with harmful power dynamics involved. Realising the rights and wellbeing of a person, animal or ecosystem could depend on your reflective and self-adjusting capacities. Self-reflective work needs to be paralleled with a critical and loving understanding of the contextual and political influences on your practice. The outcome of this parallel contextualised reflective thinking can be a more nuanced, strategic, and if necessary, resistive response. - Accountability is a key dimension of professional integrity and refers to the use of professional authority to uphold ethical responsibilities. This can be experienced as divided loyalties that the practitioner needs to navigate, where workplaces will have strong norms that typically reinforce the status quo of power relations. These norms may be in tension with the agency's professed mission of service to people who access the agency. Further, loyalty to service users can be in tension with loyalty to work colleagues, managers and the profession. An implication of the love ethic is that practitioners are to be accountable to the least powerful individual or group in any particular situation. - An aspect of ethical practice involves recognising other peoples' values and ethics may be different and even incompatible or in conflict with your own. The idea of ethical pluralism tries to grapple with this complexity by acknowledging that "there may be plausible cultural differences in values" (Hugman, 2013, p. 76), including how values are interpreted and enacted.
- The love ethic model is premised on a willingness to recognise and respect all parties' ethics in a contested situation. This is provided the consequence of those ethics do not harm or compromise the rights and interest of others (including nonhuman others). As a result, ethical pluralism and the related idea of ethical relativism need to be subjected to context-sensitive and power-sensitive analysis of the specific ethics involved. In turn, ethical absolutism is the other end of the continuum where there are certain ethical