

MAKING ETHICAL DECISIONS IN CHILD WELFARE

Executive Summary

Child welfare workers need to make complex, critical decisions regarding the children and families under their care on a daily basis. These decisions involve both legal and ethical considerations with a focus on the key outcomes of safety, permanence and well-being for children. This training provides an overview of liability issues in working with children and families including the sources of procedure in your work, child welfare issues and cases, and how to minimize liability. Personal issues impacting your work will also be explored including self-awareness of professional boundaries, transference and counter-transference issues, secondary traumatic stress, and self care techniques. Ethical decision making practice issues will be discussed including critical decisions workers need to make; guidelines and resources for making decisions; and working together with providers, caregivers, families, and supervisors to make the best decisions. Finally, the NASW Code of Ethics will be reviewed as a primary source of procedure with practical implications for child welfare identified. The goal of the training is to increase the awareness in child welfare workers of the legal, personal, and professional factors impacting child welfare decisions and increase worker comfort and consistency in making ethical decisions.

Paul Gibson, LCSW is a Program Consultant with more than 30 years of experience in developing and directing programs for culturally diverse youth in residential, mental health and public health services. He has been a licensed therapist for 25 years and has provide extensive training for youth and family service providers. Mr. Gibson currently teaches courses on Liability Issues working with Youth, Legal and Ethical Issues in Child Welfare, and Self Awareness and Care in Working with Youth and Families. He also provides individual and group clinical supervision with child welfare workers.