

Executive Summary
LAW AND ETHICS IN SOCIAL WORK AND MENTAL HEALTH PRACTICE

Course Description

This course provides an analysis of the legal grounds for malpractice litigation as related to the issue of standard of care and scope of practice. It outlines the essential components of legal proceedings such as subpoenas, depositions, issues of privileged communication pertaining to the conduct of casework, individual, couple, family and group therapy/counseling. It analyzes the relationship between ethics and the law and offers a framework in the management of ethical dilemmas related to relationships with clients, colleagues and employers. It provides understanding of the relationship between moral values, social work values and management of liability risk.

Target Audience

This class is intended for social service professionals, mental health clinicians and child welfare workers and other professionals who are interested in conducting ethical practice consistent with social work values that minimizes professional and personal liability risks.

Outcome Objectives

As a result of this training, the participants will be able to:

1. Apply the legal principles underlining **professional liability** in his/her professional practices.
2. Apply the legal principles underling **personal liability** issues related to the role of a social welfare professional in his/her role as supervisor, administrator and as direct service provider in his/her job.
3. Identify and manage the potential ethical and moral dilemmas encountered in his/her professional practice.
4. Formulate and develop appropriate policies and procedures that are in compliance with legal mandates and at the same time, minimize liability risks and insure high quality of care.
5. Identify the moral, legal and ethical dilemma in conducting individual, group, family casework.
6. Formulate treatment strategy and care plans that are consistent with social work cannon of ethics and appropriate standard of care.

Ways Supervisors Can Support the Transfer of Learning

BEFORE the training

What can the supervisor do with their staff member to support the learning process?

Supervisors can review the executive summary with staff members, identify with them some legal and ethical issues and concerns commonly encountered in their work.

AFTER the training

Supervisors can meet with the participants and help them to review the information and insights gained from the training and to identify cases in which concepts from the training can be applied, discuss further training needs in this area for their departments. They can also collaborate with participants in reviewing and revising the existing department/agency policies and procedures in light of the knowledge gained in this training program.