

## ETHICAL DECISION MAKING

1. Identify the ethical issues, including the social work values and duties that conflict.
2. Identify the individuals, groups or organizations that are likely to be affected by the ethical decisions.
3. Tentatively identify all possible courses of action and the participants involved in each along with possible benefits and risks for each.
4. Thoroughly examine the reasons in favor of and opposed to each possible course of action, considering relevant:
  - a. ethical theories, principles, and guidelines;
  - b. codes of ethics and legal principles;
  - c. social work practice theory and principles;
  - d. personal values (including religious, cultural and ethnic values and political ideology)
5. Consult with colleagues and appropriate experts (such as agency staff, supervisors, agency administrators, attorneys, ethics scholars, and ethics committees).
6. Make the decision and DOCUMENT it and the decision-making process.
7. Evaluate and Monitor – and Document.

Reamer, F.G. (1991). *Social work values and ethics* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). New York: Columbia University

Congress, E.P. (1998). *Social Work Values and Ethics*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall

Joseph, M.V. (1985), A model for ethical decision making in clinical practice. In C.B. Germain (Ed.), *Advances in clinical practice* (pp. 207-217), Silver Spring, MD: National Association of Social Workers.

Loewenberg, F & Dolgoff, R. (1996). *Ethical decision for social worker practice* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) Itasca, IL: F.E. Peacock.