

2017 ANNUAL CHILD SUPPORT TRAINING CONFERENCE & EXPO



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MAY 1-4, 2017 • GARDEN GROVE, CALIFORNIA

CHILD SUPPORT DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA

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Ethics for Child Support Professionals



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**“Genuine tragedies in the world
are not conflicts between right
and wrong.**

**They are conflicts between
two rights.”**

— Georg Hegel, German philosopher (1770-1831)

Ethics - Sources

Ethics are the principles that society agrees are the right and proper guideposts for behavior in a given situation.

Religious Origins

Cultural Origins

Family tradition and teaching

Knowing What Is Right

“When ethical lapses occur, they rarely happen in situations when what is right versus what is wrong is clear. They more typically occur when what is morally right is less clear”

- Max H. Bazerman, Straus Professor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School

Public Service Hero!

As a public servant, ethical standards are to be:

- Highly focused on values – emphasize what we *should* and *ought* to do
- Driven by a sense of calling and purpose to improve the lives of children and families
- Firmly and deeply rooted in established standards of conduct
- Influenced by an emphasis on customer service and overarching mission, vision, and values

Are Ethics Relative to The Individual?

“Relativism”

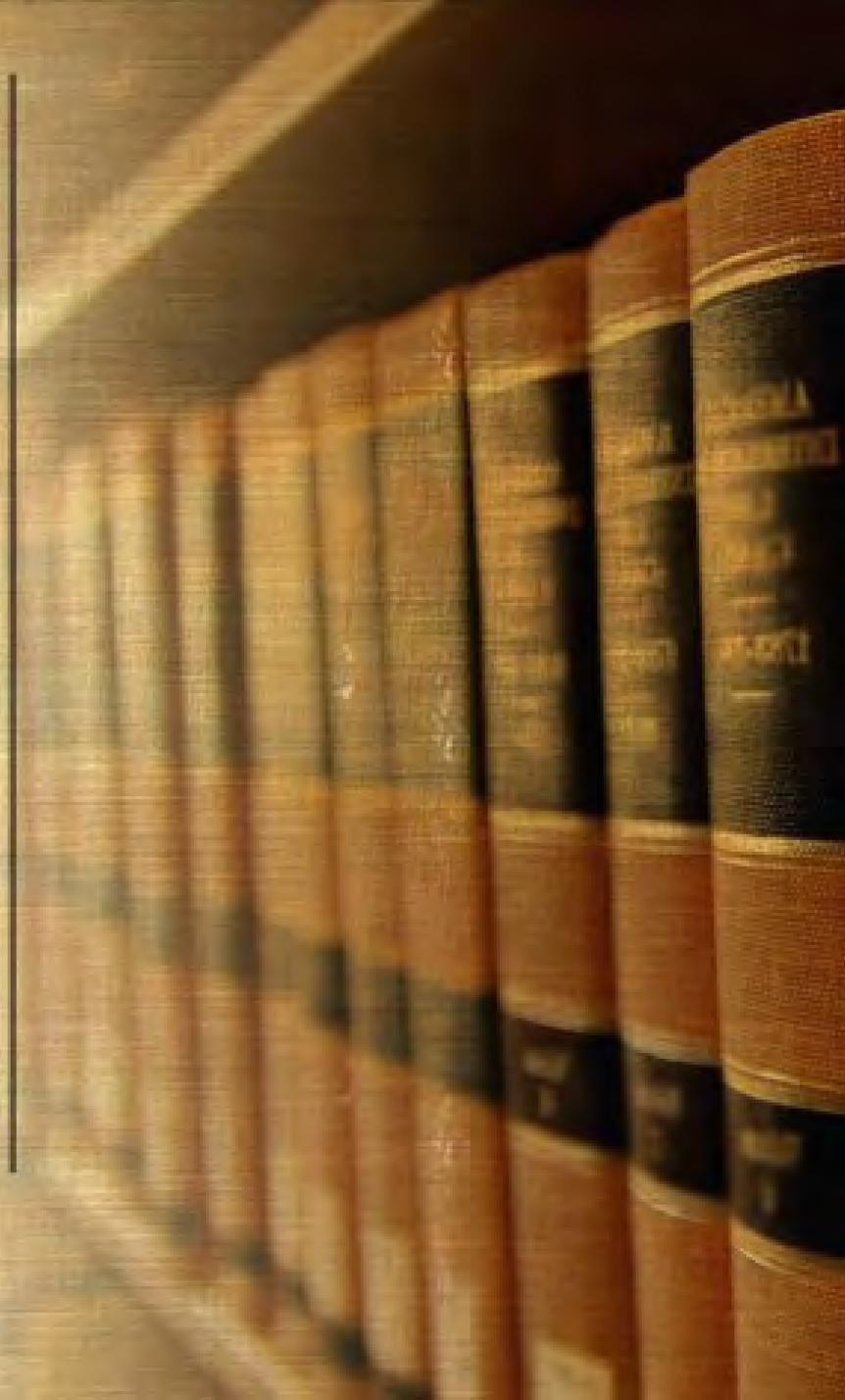
Any theory holding that truth or moral aesthetic value, etc., is not universal or absolute but may differ between individuals or cultures





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Hypotheticals



Soap Box Derby

You believe that a policy recently adopted by your office is contrary to law but your arguments have been dismissed by your supervisors. You consider 'going public' and telling your story to the editor of the local newspaper. Just before you type the letter, you pause to think.....

What values are in conflict?

Soap Box Derby

OK, maybe writing to the newspaper was a bad idea – sounds like something your grandfather would have done.

But posting your thoughts on your Facebook page – that's so totally different! Between the baby pictures, the comments about your sister's new hairdo (*WHAT was she thinking?*) and your weekend plans, you can blog about this stupid, probably illegal, definitely immoral new office policy. Right?

Friend or Unfriend?

You have been working on your team for the last five years and have developed strong friendships with your teammates.

Jennifer is particularly a close friend. She attended your wedding and planned your recent baby shower.

Your regular lunch routine includes Jennifer and another teammate, Doris. The three of you walk to the local café everyday for lunch as part of your exercise routine.

You, Jennifer and Doris all recently applied for a Supervisor position.

CONGRATS! You got the job and will be supervising your very own team!

What changes now that you are “the boss”?

Taking Credit for Work

Janice: Boss

John: Assistant

Janice is asked to develop a new program. She assigns John, who designs the project, coordinates the resources, assures the timely completion – does all the work.

At the presentation, Janice tell the Boss that she did the work – and that John's contribution was to make some copies.

What should John do?

Mutiny in Manufacturing

Alice, the Boss

Bob, the new Supervisor

Charlie, the production foreperson

Bob's first supervisor assignment is a high-profile rush job. He tells Charlie, the veteran, how he wants it done. Charlie knows that if they follow Bob's guidance, the project will fail. Despite his protest, Bob directs Charlie to 'do as he is told'. As soon as Bob is off the floor, Charlie directs the team to do the job the old way – and it is successful.

Alice hears about the mutiny at the grocery later that day...

Awkward!

You are recently promoted to Supervise a team and are so excited. You quickly start to delve into productivity for your team members. After a few weeks of observation, you realize two team members who are less productive and are spending lots of time away from their desk, chatting among other teams on the floor and spend quite a bit of time on their cell phones.

You confer on how best to approach the situation with a peer Supervisor assigned to mentor you. Your peer Supervisor shares that one of the individuals has always had this problem and happens to be related to someone higher up in the organization.

What do you do?

Team Player

Silas, Unit Manager, Team 3

Kristin, New Division Boss

Kristin has a 'New Boss Welcome' mixer, and tells the Managers and staff that she wants efficiency, merit and discipline in her unit. She actively solicits input from everyone on the best way to improve the unit.

Silas tells her that some of the people in the other units are not working as hard as they should, and a quality improvement program would be effective.

Kristin calls Silas in the next morning and says "I want the names of the slackers and their bosses, and if you want to be considered a good team player, you'll keep me informed of problems like this in the future"

Don't Yell at The Messenger!

Jo: Big Boss

Mary: Division manager

John: Application Developer

Mary has been in charge of the new automation project that is Jo's pet project. The project is not going well, but Mary has been telling Jo that it is on schedule and performing as designed.

Jo gets an anonymous letter saying that the project is failing – she asks Mary to respond. Mary directs John to draft a letter defending the stellar performance of the project, delaying further inquiry until Mary can get it back on track.

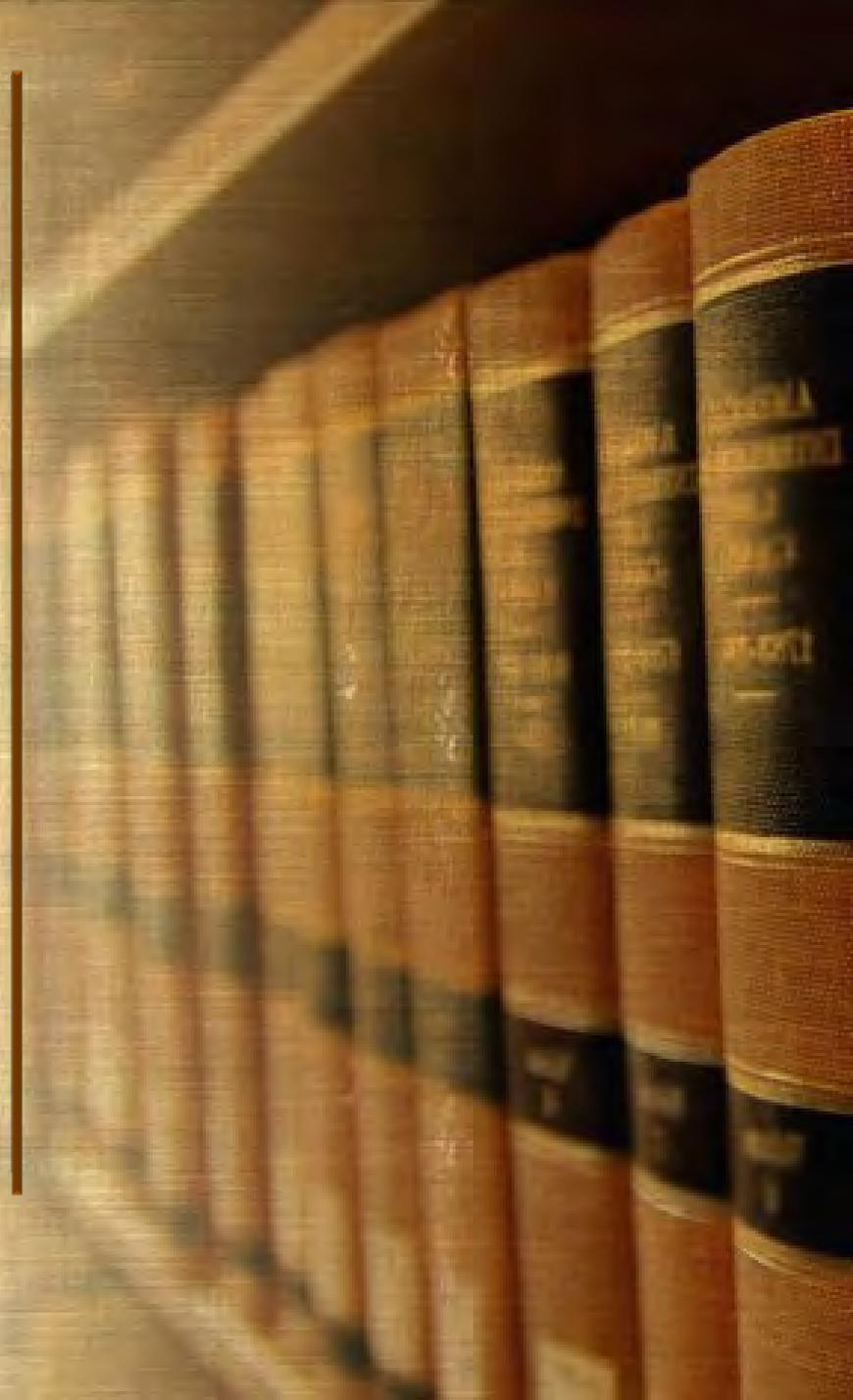
Kiss and Tell

I have worked at the local human services agency for thirty years. I don't know if I've 'seen it all', but I do say I've seen more than Maury Povich and Jerry Springer, and done it for a lot less money!

Now that I've retired, I can spend time on that project I always talked about: writing a book about my experiences. I can tell how we got around the rules to get the result we wanted on a case. I can talk about the 'folklore' of bending the rules to game the performance stats. I can dish the details of the celebrity cases. I wouldn't give names, of course, but between my book and a Google search, a savvy person could figure it out!

Where's my wine glass and laptop? I can't wait to get started!

Summary:



Hennepin County Example

‘Creative’ case closure policy:

- “No payments for 5 years”
- What Values were in conflict?

CP contacted TV Station

- Two TV spots with State and local CSS leads

State Audit and resulting fallout

- Hundreds of cases re-opened
- Black eye for CSS and leadership

Take-Aways

Ethics is Hard.

If it was easy, you wouldn't have a problem.

Do your Homework

Is there any written guidance available?

Act in good faith, and document your reasons.

Seek assistance.

But don't look for the easy out or the answer you want to hear!

Putting It Into Practice – Be an Ethical Hero!

- **Be clear about your organizations values and ethical standards**
- **Make it important and talked about at every level**
- **Evaluate your hiring practices**
- **Onboarding of newly hired staff**
- **Make it your responsibility**
- **Focus on both what is right and what is required**

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