

Ethical Decision Making Among Social Work Students

Micah John Kurtz

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Committee:

Eric Brown

Karen Bancroft

Jon Conte

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ABSTRACT: While much literature exists on processes of social workers' ethical decision making, the literature lacks consideration of whether social workers or social work students are consistent with their ethical decisions regardless of the context in which the dilemmas present themselves. The following study examined the question of whether social work students would respond to the same ethical dilemmas in different contexts. The three-condition experimental design presented each participant with six ethical dilemmas, and the conditions differed based on proximity to a traditional social work setting. Results yielded significant differences in responses between conditions for all six ethical dilemmas, meaning social work students differ in likelihood to respond to ethical dilemmas in different contexts. Implications for ethical instruction in social work education include consideration of competing values or loyalties that students bring to their field if students respond to ethical dilemmas differently based on the context.

Introduction

The social work literature abounds with consideration of ethical practice, in micro, mezzo, and macro settings. What has not been tested is the consistency of ethical decision making by social workers across situations that vary in proximity to professional practice. Social work students, who carry various levels of in-the-field experience and are in the process of being educated on the values and Code of Ethics of the NASW, are a valuable population for examining ethical decision making because they bridge the education gap between those with pre-existing social work values and those in professional social work practice.

The chief question this study asks is this: Do social work students respond to the same ethical dilemmas in the same way in different contexts? To put it another way, given a series of scenarios containing ethical dilemmas, will social work students' responses to the dilemmas vary as a function of how close to a traditional social work setting they are asked to view the ethical dilemma? This is an important question because ethical practice is vital when working with vulnerable people, as social workers often do. If social work students respond differently to the same ethical dilemma in different contexts, the normativity of ethical practice and the expectation of clients for social workers' practice are called into question.

On the other hand, this study begs the question of what constitutes social work. Is social work limited to a clinical or administrative setting for public or non-profit entities? Or does social work extend to the relationships social workers have with family, friends, and even strangers? More to the point, when is a social worker a social worker, and when is she or he no longer a social worker? While the following does not answer these questions, it does provide an empirical context for raising these important questions about ethical practice.

The present study hypothesized that social work students would respond differently to the same ethical dilemma when the dilemma is presented in different contexts, particularly if some of the contexts are not traditional social work settings. The following study found significant differences in the ways social work students predict their likelihood to respond to ethical dilemmas depending on how close the dilemma is to a traditional social work setting. Implications for these findings concern examination of social work education on ethics and competing loyalties in ethical practice.

1. Literature Review

Social work ethics has been studied primarily in the context of professional social work practice. The evolution of ethics typically begins with values held as central or uniting among a group and builds to larger constructs of proper or improper contextual behaviors stemming from those initial values. For social work, Reamer (1998) describes periods of evolution of social work consideration of professional ethics, beginning with a focus on clients' moral practice in the late 1800s and early 1900s. This was followed by shifts in most of the 20th century to reflection on the values social workers recognized as undergirding their profession (e.g., the relationships between social workers' personal values and client self-determination) (Reamer 1998). Pronouncements of the profession's values (often in list form) gave way in the early 1980s to engagement with ethical theory and decision making (Reamer 1998). Application of ethical theories (such as deontology, teleology, utilitarianism, consequentialism, and virtue theory) permitted not only concern with abstract philosophical principles but also study of decision making in concrete settings (Reamer 1998). Reamer identifies a final shift in the history of social work ethics to the codification of the profession's ethical stance in the Code of Ethics (NASW 2000), which has multiple revisions based on increase in knowledge and study. Reamer (1998, 495) identifies three key purposes of a professional code of ethics: to "guide social workers conduct," to "reduce liability and malpractice risks," and to "provide a basis for adjudicating professional complaints."

Social workers draw from many sources when going about making ethical decisions. Every social worker is influenced by a multitude of factors which instill values. The intersection of nature and nurture, genetic and cultural factors outside one's control, and how a person responds to these factors form a person's values and personal-cultural ethics before that person

enters the professional field of social work. Constructs such as race, gender, sexual orientation, and religion, among others, influence the ways in which people view themselves in the world. Values and ethics formation take place in the context of the person-in-environment: relationships shape the ways in which people view their world, whether the relationships were positive or negative. Parents or other family members, teachers, mentors, coaches: all of these instilled values that led those who would become align with broader social work values. More than any other tool, the professional Code of Ethics holds a position of authority to guide social workers in best practice. The Code has its critics, who view it as representing dominant culture at the expense of oppressed populations; pandering to professional interests over client rights; or being individualistically oriented (Fine & Teram, 2009). Yet the Code remains a point of connection for all American social workers, even as a point of conflict.

Having the Code of Ethics is one thing; interpreting it is another. Given the wide array of sources involved in values formation, it is not surprising that a uniform professional code does not entail uniform practice. If social workers are the sum of their prior experiences (including education), the ways social workers view their professional milieu will be expressed in potentially as many ways as there are social workers. Theories abound on the means by which any ethical code, including the NASW Code of Ethics, is put into practice, and differences of opinion are bound to arise. One scholarly discussion has spanned several volumes of the *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*: Spano and Koenig (2007) proposed a six-stage ethical decision making construct to address issues of value conflicts between personal (e.g. religious) and professional values. Adams (2008) responded that there is broader interpretation within the Code of Ethics than Spano and Koenig permit in their examples. Ongoing discussions (Adams 2008; Spano & Koenig 2008, 2009) showed these scholars at times missing each other's primary

points and arguing their perspectives from multiple vantage points. One area of agreement found by the present principal investigator, however, is the Code of Ethics does not necessarily delineate a method for ethical decision making in and of itself. Different values (even within the Code) may conflict. These scholars do present an effective model for dialogue of differences in interpretation of ethical dilemmas among social workers, but the key point is that there is no one proper way to interpret the Code.

The literature on the ethical reasoning of social workers shows patterns in social workers' ethical decision making. Broadly, there are two types of ethical theories—*deontological*, in which an act is considered good or right in and of itself; and *teleological*, in which a good or right result determines that an act is good or right (Osimo & Landau 2006). *Utilitarianism* is a sub-type of the teleological perspective and is common among social workers, while the *rights theory* refers to acts that are good or right when they better the rights of others and *values theory* regards acting from a virtuous perspective (i.e., being respectful and fair; Osimo & Landau 2006). While others (Healy 2007) have perceived a continuum of *universalism* (closer to deontological) versus *relativism* (closer to teleological), the prior terms are more precise and fit better with the wider discussion on ethics. In the Osimo and Landau study (2006), the authors found that social workers ideally preferred deontological arguments, but in practice were about as likely to respond with a utilitarian (teleological) as a deontological response when presented with practice-based ethical dilemmas.

A number of recent published studies of ethical practice shed light on the current study. One important study measures the distress (disjuncture) social workers feel when there is a difference between what social workers believe about the NASW Code of Ethics and how they behave when confronted with ethical dilemmas in social workers' various settings (Nelson

DiFranks 2008). Social workers did not respond in a statistically significantly different way based on employment in various types of social work settings, though both groups did experience disjuncture (Nelson DiFranks 2008). Significant to the current study is the variation in social workers' settings, though the settings were not assigned randomly and limited to the social workers' current settings.

Doyle, Miller and Mirza (2009) demonstrated that the NASW Code of Ethics is less important to ethical decision making than experience (practical wisdom), supervision, or personal values. That study provided six vignettes in which social workers were asked how they would respond as well as how they thought they should respond in each ethical decision making situation. That study indicated the need for social workers to identify the basis of their ethical decision making as a means to enhance ethical practice. The results indicated that both personal and professional values (i.e., education, race, gender, religion/spirituality, experience) showed patterns of differential response to vignettes, though this varied based on the vignette. That study's most important finding was the possibility that ethical instruction while earning a degree in social work (at any education level) correlated with more consistent responses to the questions of how a respondent would and should respond to the same scenario. In addition, that study was not a randomized control experiment and only could suggest non-causal associations among the data.

From these studies, two important questions appear unanswered: Do social workers, or in this case social work students, respond differently to an ethical dilemma in a professional social work setting compared to a non-social work setting? This is important because if social workers cannot be expected to act consistently given confrontation with the same ethical dilemma, the profession is in danger of causing harm to clients. Second, if it is important for

social workers to identify the basis of their ethical decision making, how can this be measured? Identifying the basis of ethical decision making is a complex process, and for the purpose of the present study the focus is limited to social work students' self-ascribed sources of their ethical reasoning. The following study proposes to address both these questions. The value to social work practice included enhanced self-reflection on ethical decision making and determination if social workers were consistent in their ethical decision making whether they were in a clear social work setting, in a setting related to social work practice, or in a setting that has no clear connection to social work practice. The principal investigator hypothesized that those in the social-work setting group would respond professional and less likely not to intervene when presented with the same ethical dilemmas as those in the other two groups.

2. Methods

2.1 Study Design and Data Collection. The current study was a randomized experiment with three experimental arms: comparison, tangential and distal. The comparison arm follows a combination of the ethical dilemmas found in extant literature: Doyle, Miller, Mirza (2009) and Strom-Gottfried (2000). The six ethical dilemmas presented to participants concerned dual relationships, referral to a professional deemed incompetent, sexual misconduct, funding cuts, duty to warn, and confidentiality. In the tangential arm participants responded to the same ethical dilemmas found in the comparison condition but in different contexts (e.g., a food bank board meeting instead of a clinical supervisor's meeting; being a patient in a hospital instead of being a hospital social worker). The distal arm presented the same ethical dilemmas as the other conditions but was further from a traditional social work context than either of the other two conditions, often placing the participants in setting outside of their home state or dealing with friends instead of a client (e.g., a national award ceremony instead of a clinical supervisor's

meeting or a food bank board meeting). The full survey can be found in Appendix B, and the reader is directed there due to the length of the questions and responses. Brief summaries of the scenarios and response choices are presented in the body of this study as cues of the survey.

Participants were asked to respond on 7-point Likert-type scales to how likely they are to respond in each of a series of possible responses to a particular scenario (Mcauliffe & Sudbery, 2005). Most of the ethical dilemmas included a response that explicitly or implicitly would have them do nothing (no intervention), address the ethical concern about someone else's behavior with that person or their supervisor, and reporting the alleged infraction to a professional accreditation body. Participants also were asked to rate on a 7-point Likert-type scale how important each scenario was. The respondents were then asked to rate their top five sources for having made their decisions in the prior ethical dilemmas, out of a list of fourteen personal and professional sources as identified in the literature. These included childhood upbringing in family of origin; intuition; consistency with social work values; legal requirements; fear of risk of loss of employment; impact of teachers, mentors or coaches; social work practice; childhood religious upbringing; religious/spiritual values of adulthood; professional code of ethics, ethical instruction at a school of social work; and ethical decision-making models learned in social work profession.

An exempt status determination was sought and approved for this study by the University of Washington Institutional Review Board, Human Subjects Division. The study was determined to be low-risk, recruiting only adult students at accredited higher education institutions to respond to hypothetical scenarios. The hypothetical scenarios were not based on anyone's specific experiences; however participants' past experiences may have influenced responses. As all responses were anonymous, as per the settings on the University of

Washington's Catalyst Web Tools, there was no real risk of any responses indicating a particular participant.

Participants were recruited from schools of social work accredited by the CSWE from across the United States. The principal investigator researched and contacted by phone all colleges and universities that have both bachelor's and master's degree programs in social work. About two-dozen schools returned contact to the primary investigator and the principal investigator provided the schools with a copy of the surveys and a copy of the University of Washington Institutional Review Board Human Subjects Division waiver approval. Administrators or professors from each school agreeing to participate sent an invitation email from the principal investigator to students via school listservs, or a single professor at a school provided the invitation email to students. Students received contact info from the principal investigator in the invitation email and could opt-in to the study by contacting the principal investigator. Students who contacted the principal investigator were the only participants in the survey, and they were assigned to one of the three conditions based upon the order in which they responded; for example, the first person to respond was assigned to Condition 1 (i.e., the comparison condition), the second to Condition 2 (tangential condition), the third to Condition 3 (distal condition), the fourth to scenario 1, etc. No monetary compensation or other incentives were provided to participants.

One of the schools contacted subsequently decided not to approve the project for their students through their Institutional Review Board, though representatives of the school had already forwarded the survey invitation to students prior to making the decision not to participate. Because responses were anonymous, it was not possible to excise responses from student participants from the school in question. Administrators at that school agreed that the

principal investigator had followed all proper procedures and permitted the principal administrator to keep data from participants from that school so long as, 1) no additional students identified as being students from that school would participate; and 2) that the results would not state that school gave institutional review board approval.

2.2 Statistical Analyses. ANOVAs were run to examine overall differences between the conditions for each response choice. This is important because each response choice represents a different possible resolution of the ethical dilemma, and participants in the different settings could have found responses to be better choices in one condition compared with another. Post-Hoc between group tests (i.e., Tukey HSD) were then used on statistically significant overall differences found in the ANOVA to determine which conditions were statistically different from each other. After this, a regression analysis was run for each statistically significant difference to determine if co-variates (participants' years of experience, level of education, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, religion/spiritual affiliation) were responsible for the observed differences between conditions. Significance for all tests was set at a p-value below 0.05.

3. Results

3.1 Demographics. In total, 233 social work students from across the United States participated in the study. Most ($n = 200$, 86%) identified as female, 31 (14%) as male, and two participants did not respond to the open text question. Fifty-nine (25.3%) of the participants were between ages 18-24, 102 (43.8%) were 25-34, 43 (18.5%) were 35-44, 25 (10.7%) were 45-54, 4 (1.7%) were 55-64, and no participants were 65 years of age or older.

[Insert Figure 1]

The vast majority of participants ($n = 205$, 88%) were at work on a master's degree, while 20 (8.6%) were completing their bachelor's degree and 6 (2.6%) their doctoral degree. Seventeen (7.3%) had completed less than a bachelor's degree, 178 (76.4%) at least a bachelor's degree, 31 (13.3%) already held a master's degree, and two (0.9%) already possessed a doctorate.

A large majority of participants (171, 73.4%) self-identified as white or Caucasian (non-Hispanic). Twelve (3.4%) identified as Black or African American, 14 (6%) as Hispanic/Latino/a (including Caucasian), 8 (3.4%) as Asian, 6 (2.6%) as Native American Indian, 5 (2.1%) as multi-racial White and Asian, 2 (0.9%) as multi-racial White and African American, and 2 (0.9%) as Caribbean of African descent. Seven participants did not self-identify a race in the open-text response box.

A large number of participants ($n = 120$, 51.5%) identified with a Western religious affiliation (Christian, Roman Catholic, Jewish, Latter Day Saint, Jehovah's Witness, etc.; no participant identified as Muslim). Several more ($n = 66$, 28.3%) identified as having no religion or being atheist, agnostic, or humanist. Others who responded (19, 8.2%) were grouped into an "other" category (including people identifying as spiritual but not religious, affiliated with an Eastern religion such as Zen Buddhism, etc.). Twenty-eight (12%) of participants did not provide a response to the question "*What is your religion, if any?*", though this does not mean these participants intended to say they were not religious. As to childhood religious affiliation, 181 (77.7%) self-identified as part of the Western religion category, 26 (11.2%) in the not-religious category, and 7 (3%) in the other category. Nineteen (8.2%) participants provided no response to the question "*What was your childhood religion, if any?*"

3.2 Usefulness of Ethical Instruction. The first question posed to all participants regardless of experimental condition was “*Please rate how useful your social work education on ethics has been to you as you consider current and future social work practice*” on a 7-point Likert-type scale. As expected by the random process in which participants were assigned to a condition, there were no statistically significant differences between groups (comparison mean = 5.68, tangential mean = 5.57, distal mean = 5.64; $p = 0.842$). This result suggested that participants did not vary in their assessment of their ethical education between groups.

[Insert Figure 2]

3.3 Scenario 1—Dual relationships. The first scenario dealt with a professional or volunteer having both a professional and a non-professional relationship (non-romantic) with a client. The experimental difference between conditions was the setting in which the disclosure of the dual relationship took place: in a clinical supervisory meeting (comparison condition), in a community food bank board of directors meeting (tangential condition), or a national award ceremony reception (distal condition). In all three conditions potentially vulnerable clients share professional and personal relationships with a person in administrative leadership (supervisor, board member, award recipient for non-profit work).

For all conditions participants responded on a 1-7 scale of likelihood to respond in each of the following ways: “*do nothing*” (same for all conditions), “*discuss concerns*” in private (all conditions), “*discuss concerns*” in public while in front of others (all conditions), and “*report concerns*” to the appropriate professional body (all conditions). For precise wording of scenarios and responses refer to Appendix B.

Statistical analysis demonstrated that participants in the comparison condition (clinical supervisory disclosure of dual relationship) were less likely than those in the tangential condition

(food bank board meeting) to “*do nothing*” and more likely than those in both other conditions to report concerns to professionals. No statistically significant differences were found for the responses to discuss conditions privately or publicly. This indicated a higher responsibility to act in specifically professional ways: less willing to do nothing and more willing to make a professional report.

Unconditioned statistical analysis found statistically significant differences among the experimental conditions for the response choice “*do nothing*” (Comparison mean = 1.79, Std. Dev. = 1.50; Tangential mean = 2.42, Std. Dev. = 1.58; Distal mean = 2.35, Std. Dev. = 1.63; $p < 0.05$) and the response choice to “*report*” the ethical concern (Comparison mean = 4.95, Std. Dev. = 1.51; Tangential mean = 3.79, Std. Dev. = 1.91, Distal mean = 3.66, Std. Dev. = 1.81; $p < 0.001$).

[Insert Figure 3]

[Insert Figure 4]

Response options for “*Do Nothing.*” Using a Tukey’s post-hoc one-way analysis and comparing each condition to the others, statistically significant differences between conditions for the first response choice (“do nothing”) were found only between the comparison and tangential conditions ($p = 0.038$; moderate Effect size measured by Cohen’s $D = 0.41$). In a regression analysis, controlling for variance among the response choices (dependent variable) and all demographic data (independent variables which are co-variates), statistically significant difference was found only in the comparison of the comparison and tangential conditions ($p < 0.01$). This means participants in the clinical supervisor setting were less likely not to intervene (do nothing) than those in the food bank board setting.

Response options for “*report concerns*.” The “report” response choices between conditions using the one-way Tukey analysis found statistically significant differences between the comparison and tangential conditions ($p < 0.001$; $d = 0.68$) and between the comparison and distal conditions ($p < 0.001$; $d = 0.78$). Those in the clinical supervisor setting were also more likely to report the dual relationship to administration than participants in either the food bank board of directors or national non-profit award setting. Participants in all three conditions had similar rates (non significant differences) of discussing concerns—either in public or in private—with the person whose dual relationship was questioned.

3.4 Scenario 2—Incompetent Professional. The second scenario presented participants with a dilemma about a referral to a clinician whose professional competence is not trusted. The three conditions varied as to the relationship between the participant and the person receiving the referral: a client in a clinical setting as per supervisor’s direction (comparison condition); a family member as per physician’s referral (tangential condition); and a friend’s child in another state per professional referral (distal condition). In each case, the professional to whom the referral was made was deemed incompetent by the participant.

The responses participants chose from to rate on the 7-point Likert-type scale included “*Make the referral*” (comparison) or “*Affirm the referral*” (tangential/distal); discuss concerns with the clinical supervisor (comparison), the family member (tangential) or the friend (distal); contact the worker to discuss concerns (all conditions); and discuss concerns with person receiving the referral (all conditions). One issue appearing in the tangential and distal conditions involved unclear language about the last response, in which that response looked much like the second response (discuss concerns with family/friend). For precise wording of scenarios and responses refer to Appendix B.

Participants in the comparison condition were significantly more likely to take the professional stand of following chain of command; advocate for the referred person by talking to the referrer; and discuss concerns directly with the professional deemed incompetent. Non-client relationships also greatly increased the likelihood of discussion of concerns with the person referred (a family member or a friend). Loyalties of family and friendship make it far likelier that participants would risk undercutting a professional relationship between themselves and the professional deemed incompetent by talking with the person referred about concerns of the professional deemed incompetent.

[Insert Figure 5]

[Insert Figure 6]

Response option to “*Make*” or “*Affirm*” the referral. Participants in the comparison group were likelier to make the referral (mean = 3.91, Std. Dev. = 1.64) than in the tangential (mean = 2.20, Std. Dev. = 1.42) and distal groups (mean = 2.43, Std. Dev. = 1.42) where the referral is affirmed, with significance of $p < 0.001$. Tukey’s post-hoc analysis comparing the conditions to each other indicated significant statistical difference between the comparison and tangential conditions ($p < 0.001$, $d = 1.12$); as well as a significant difference between the comparison and distal conditions ($p < 0.001$, $d = 0.97$). Regression analysis showed no significant relationships other than experimental conditions.

Response option “*Discuss with referrer.*” Participants in the comparison condition were likelier (mean = 6.44, Std. Dev. = 0.90) to decide to discuss their concerns with their supervisor than with the family member (tangential; mean = 4.84; Std. Dev. = 1.97) or with friend (distal; mean = 4.66; Std. Dev. = 1.83), with significance of $p < 0.001$. One-way analysis showed that the comparison condition statistically differed greatly between all three conditions. The

comparison condition was significantly different than the tangential ($p < 0.001$, $d = 1.13$), the comparison from the distal ($p < 0.001$, $d = 1.83$), and the tangential from the distal ($p < 0.01$, $d = 0.46$). Regression analysis showed no significant relationships other than experimental conditions.

Response choice to discuss ethical concern with the therapist whose competence is not respected. Comparison group participants (mean = 3.77, Std. Dev. 1.74) were more likely to discuss concerns with the professional whose competence is not-respected than those in the other experimental arms (tangential mean = 2.66, Std. Dev. 1.86; distal mean = 2.14, Std. Dev. 1.23; significance $p < 0.001$). One-way analysis showed significant differences between both the comparison and tangential conditions ($p < 0.001$, $d = 0.62$) and between the comparison and distal conditions ($p < 0.001$, $d = 1.10$). Regression analysis showed no significant relationships other than experimental conditions.

Response choice to “*Report the concerns to the person referred*”, participants were less likely ($p < 0.001$) to choose to discuss the concerns with the person referred to the treatment in the comparison condition (mean = 2.17, Std. Dev. 1.67) than the tangential condition (mean = 3.52, Std. Dev. 2.00) and distal condition (mean = 4.66, Std. Dev. 1.87). One-way analysis demonstrated statistically significant differences amongst all conditions. In the comparison vs. tangential conditions, $p < 0.001$, Cohen’s $D =$ large 0.74. Comparing comparison and distal conditions, significance was found: $p < 0.001$, $d = 1.41$. And the tangential vs. distal conditions comparison analysis revealed a significant $p < 0.01$ and $d = 0.59$. Regression analysis showed significance between all three conditions (comparison vs. tangential $p < 0.001$; comparison vs. distal $p < 0.001$; tangential vs. distal $p < 0.001$), as well as the number of years experience ($p < 0.05$; the more years experience, the likelier to report concerns).

3.5 Scenario 3—Sexual misconduct. Scenario three presented reports by clients of sexual misconduct by their counselors. The setting of said disclosure of misconduct varied by condition: by a client in clinical office against a participant’s co-worker (comparison condition); by a stranger against her therapist in open 12-step meeting to support a family member (tangential condition); and by a stranger against her therapist in an open 12-step meeting across the country to support a friend (distal condition). One participant wrote in an open response box at the end of the survey that it appeared inappropriate to breach the confidentiality of a 12-step meeting, which impacted that participant’s response choices in this ethical dilemma.

The responses for this scenario consisted of “*Do nothing*” (all conditions); discuss the client’s feelings about it (comparison) or discuss the 12-step member’s feelings after the meeting (tangential and distal); discuss concerns with the therapist (all conditions); report allegations to the therapist’s workplace administration (all conditions); and report allegations to the therapist’s professional accreditation body or state licensing board. For precise wording of scenarios and responses refer to Appendix B.

Participants in the comparison condition (a client alleged misconduct by a co-worker) again took greater responsibility to intervene in each way than those in the other conditions. The client relationship was stronger than that with a presumed stranger in spite of the equality of allegations. Statistically significant differences were found in all response choices in the scenario around sexual misconduct.

[Insert Figure 7]

[Insert Figure 8]

Response choice “*Do nothing.*” Participants in the comparison condition were significantly less likely ($p < 0.001$) to do nothing (mean = 1.05, Std. Dev. 0.28) than participants

in the tangential (mean = 1.52, Std. Dev. 1.29) or the distal (mean = 1.95) condition participants. When the conditions were compared one-way on this response choice, only the comparison vs. tangential conditions differed significantly ($p < 0.05$; $d = 0.61$). Comparing comparison and distal conditions, results were more significant ($p < 0.001$, $d = 0.98$) and thus less likely to do nothing in the comparison condition. Regression analysis showed no significant relationships other than experimental conditions.

Response choice “*Discuss woman’s feelings.*” When asked how likely they would be to approach the alleged victim to discuss her feelings, comparison condition participants (mean = 6.36, Std. Dev. 1.16) were significantly more likely to talk with the woman alleging misconduct to help her process her feelings than the tangential (mean = 5.51, Std. Dev. = 1.96) or distal (mean = 5.92, Std. Dev. = 1.33) conditions ($p < 0.01$). Only the comparison and tangential conditions, when compared via one-way Tukey’s analysis, showed significant differences ($p < 0.01$, $d = 0.55$). Regression analysis showed no significant relationships other than experimental conditions. These results are expected, as the woman alleging misconduct is the client in the comparison scenario, while the other two scenarios present a woman who is essentially a stranger and don’t differ significantly.

Response choice “*Discuss concerns with therapist.*” Participants in the comparison condition (mean = 4.43, Std. Dev. = 2.00) were significantly more likely to discuss concerns with the therapist ($p < 0.001$) than those in the tangential (mean = 2.92, Std. Dev. = 2.00) or distal (mean = 2.92, Std. Dev. = 1.76) conditions. Compared with each other via one-way analysis, significant differences were found between the comparison and tangential conditions ($p < 0.001$, $d = 0.76$) and comparison and distal conditions ($p < 0.001$, $d = 0.80$). Regression analysis controlling for other measured variables (demographics) found statistically significant

variance in comparisons between the comparison and tangential ($p < 0.001$) and comparison and distal ($p < 0.001$) conditions. Significance was also found based on level of education, in which the lower the level of education, the likelier the participant was to discuss the concerns of the therapist ($p < 0.05$).

Response choice “*Report concerns to therapist’s administration.*” Comparison condition participants were also significantly more likely ($p < 0.001$) to report the alleged misconduct to the therapist’s workplace administration (mean = 6.70, Std. Dev. = 0.61) than those in the tangential (mean = 4.96, Std. Dev. = 2.18) or distal (mean = 5.04, Std. Dev. = 1.78) conditions. Compared one-way, the comparison and tangential conditions showed significant differences ($p < 0.001$, $d = 1.28$), as did comparison vs. distal conditions ($p < 0.001$, $d = 1.40$). Regression analysis showed no significant relationships other than experimental conditions.

Response choice “*Report concerns to professional body.*” Last, comparison condition participants were likelier ($p < 0.001$) to report the allegations to a professional body (mean = 5.69, Std. Dev. = 1.42) than the tangential (mean = 4.55, Std. Dev. = 2.08) or distal (mean = 5.10, Std. Dev. = 1.71) conditions, though compared one-way was significant only between the comparison and tangential conditions ($p < 0.001$, $d = 0.66$). Regression analysis found statistically significant variance only between conditions: comparison vs. tangential ($p < 0.01$) and comparison vs. distal ($p < 0.05$).

3.6 Scenario 4—Funding cuts. The fourth scenario poses the dilemma of how to respond to budget cuts at an agency level. In each situation the participant is in an administrative role and tasked with responding to a loss in funding that impacts service provision. The conditions vary by the setting in which the participant is tasked with responding to the cuts: a chemical dependency treatment center executive director; a local school PTA officer; and a for-profit

executive working to protect vulnerable lands. The comparison condition places participants in the role of the executive director of a chemical dependency treatment center in which funding has been cut to the extent that the agency will no longer be able to serve some of its current clients. The tangential condition presents the participant as vice president of the PTA at her/his child's school; the school's budget has been cut and the school has chosen to drop sports, art, music, and PE programs. The PTA can to cover the expense of some of only some of those programs, and the vice president is tasked with determining which programs to fund. The distal condition places the participant as the vice president of a committee responsible for maintaining protected lands at a national for-profit agency.

Responses on a seven-point Likert-type scale of likelihood of acting a specific way were to choose which programs to keep to maintain the most programs (all conditions); choose which programs to keep to serve the most people (comparison and tangential) or protect the most land (distal); partner with other agencies to fill the most gaps (all conditions); advocate for additional funding (all conditions); and resign as a form of protest over the cuts (all conditions). For precise wording of scenarios and responses refer to Appendix B.

Participants were likelier in most response options to place higher value on people affected by the cuts (comparison and tangential conditions) than on protected land affected by budget cuts. The comparison (drug treatment center) and tangential (PTA) conditions did not vary nearly as much with each other as with the protected land condition.

[Insert Figure 9]

[Insert Figure 10]

Response choice "*Save programs that save the most programs.*" The response with no statistically different options was choosing programs to save based on saving the most programs

(comparison mean = 4.72, Std. Dev. = 1.22; tangential mean = 4.56, Std. Dev. = 1.64; distal mean = 4.91, Std. Dev. = 1.42; non-significant $p = 0.348$).

Response choice “*Save programs which serve the most clients/students/land.*” When asked to consider saving programs that served the most clients (comparison mean = 5.71, Std. Dev. = 1.12), students (tangential mean = 5.32, Std. Dev. = 5.34), or land (distal mean = 5.09, Std. Dev. = 1.40), statistically significant results were found overall ($p < 0.05$), though one-way analysis revealed only significant differences between the comparison and distal conditions ($p < 0.01$, $d = 0.48$). Regression analysis showed no significant relationships other than experimental conditions.

Response choice “*Partner with other agencies to fill the gap.*” Significant differences were found in the response choices to partner with different agencies ($p < 0.001$), as the comparison condition’s mean was the highest of the three (mean = 6.68, Std. Dev. = 0.59; tangential mean = 6.57, Std. Dev. = 0.70; distal mean = 6.17, Std. Dev. = 1.01). Significant differences were found in one-way analysis between the comparison and distal conditions ($p < 0.001$; $d = 0.64$) and the tangential and distal conditions ($p < 0.01$; $d = 0.47$). Regression analysis found statistically significant differences for both the comparison vs. distal conditions ($p < 0.001$) and tangential vs. distal conditions ($p < 0.001$). Another variable, level of degree, also had statistically significant difference ($p < 0.01$), with those working on higher levels of degrees (master’s vs. bachelor’s) being more likely to respond in this way. Thus the for-profit setting was significantly less likely to partner with other agencies to save the programs.

Response choice “*Advocate for additional funding.*” These responses differed significantly overall ($p < 0.05$), though the means were close to each other (comparison mean = 6.76, Std. Dev. = 0.51; tangential mean = 6.59, Std. Dev. = 0.88; and distal mean = 6.38, Std.

Dev. = 0.94). Only the comparison and distal conditions showed significant differences in one-way analysis ($p < 0.05$, $d = 0.53$). Regression analysis showed no significant relationships other than experimental conditions.

Response choice “*Resign as a form of protest*” over budget cuts. The last response choice showed statistically significant differences in participants deciding to resign as a form of protest over the budget cuts ($p < 0.001$; comparison mean = 1.54, Std. Dev. = 0.99; tangential mean = 1.57, Std. Dev. = 0.85; distal mean = 2.23, Std. Dev. = 1.20). These data, analyzed one-way, show significant differences between distal and each of the comparison ($p < 0.001$, $d = 0.63$) and tangential ($p < 0.001$, $d = 0.64$) conditions. Regression analysis confirms these differences controlling for variance among other measured variables (comparison vs. distal $p < 0.001$; tangential vs. distal $p < 0.001$). Two other factors were significant in this condition as well—those from non-Western childhood religious upbringing (non-Christian, non-Jewish) were likelier to resign, as were those with a higher level of education (master’s degree or doctoral degree).

3.7 Scenario 5—Duty to Warn. Scenario five presents settings in which a social work student might be confronted with someone threatening harm toward someone else. The disclosure of threat varies by condition: a client to the participant in a clinical setting; a friend of the participant; a stranger on the street in a city across the country. In the comparison condition, the participant is a therapist working with a man with a history of impulsive antisocial behaviors who discloses he is planning to kill his girlfriend because she is dating another man. The tangential condition presents a participant with a friend who has a history of impulsive antisocial behaviors who discloses he is planning to kill his girlfriend because she is dating another man. The distal condition places the participant on a downtown street of a city the participant is

visiting, who comes across a disheveled-looking man muttering with his head down that he is planning on killing a woman, whom he names, because she is dating another man. One participant wrote back to the primary investigator that the participant would feel uncomfortable approaching a man on the street in that condition, and the participant cited her gender as a reason for her discomfort.

Responses included “*do nothing*” (all conditions); discuss the man’s statements with him until feeling assured the man will not harm the woman (all conditions); inform the man the participant must warn the woman and the police; and inform the police and the woman without informing the man the participant will do this. For precise wording of scenarios and responses refer to Appendix B.

Participants working with a client or speaking to a friend were likelier to take responsibility to address the person’s concerns than participants bumping into a stranger. In the professional setting participants were likeliest to inform clients of a duty to warn and least likely to warn without informing the client relative to the other conditions. The stranger condition was least likely to elicit responsibility to inform of a duty to warn, but also likelier than the professional setting to warn authorities or a potential victim without informing the person the participant would be doing so. Professional and friend loyalties surpassed loyalties to a stranger.

[Insert Figure 11]

[Insert Figure 12]

Response choice “*Do nothing.*” Participants were unlikely to do nothing when they were in the comparison or tangential conditions (comparison mean = 1.03, Std. Dev. = 0.16; tangential mean = 1.09, Std. Dev. = 0.71) and less unlikely to do nothing in the distal condition (mean = 2.77, Std. Dev. = 1.83). Compared against each other in one-way analysis, significant

differences were found between the comparison and distal conditions ($p < 0.001$, $d = 1.74$), and between the tangential and distal conditions ($p < 0.001$, $d = 1.31$). Regression analysis also found statistical significance controlling for other variables contrasting the comparison and distal conditions ($p < 0.001$), and the tangential and distal conditions ($p < 0.001$). Another variable, years of experience, was associated significantly with the outcome ($p < 0.05$), in that those with more years experience were more likely to do nothing in this scenario.

Response choice “*Discuss statements with person until feel assured*” of no threat of harm. Comparison and tangential groups again were similar in their willingness to discuss the person’s statements until feeling assured of no threat (comparison mean = 5.49, Std. Dev. = 1.73; tangential mean = 5.38, Std. Dev. = 1.95) as opposed to the distal condition (mean = 3.39, Std. Dev. = 1.83), where participants in a stranger-situation were less likely to do so ($p < 0.001$). Again, significant differences were found in one-way analysis between the comparison and distal conditions ($p < 0.001$, $d = 1.18$) and between tangential and distal conditions ($p < 0.001$, $d = 1.05$). Regression analysis found statistically significant differences for the comparison vs. distal conditions ($p < 0.001$) and tangential vs. distal conditions ($p < 0.001$). Another variable, the geographical location of most of the participant’s social work experience, correlated significantly with the other significant results in that Western U.S. participant’s experience was positively related with discussing the person’s feelings until feeling assured of no threat.

Response choice “*Inform of duty to warn.*” There was greater divergence in the response choice to inform of duty to warn prior to warning, as comparison participants were more likely to do this (mean = 6.33, Std. Dev. = 1.15) than those in the tangential (mean = 5.51, Std. Dev. = 1.88) or distal (mean = 4.64, Std. Dev. = 2.08) conditions ($p < 0.001$). Significant differences were found between all conditions in one-way analysis: comparison vs. tangential conditions (p

< 0.01, $d = 0.54$); comparison vs. distal conditions ($p < 0.001$, $d = 1.99$); and tangential vs. distal conditions ($p < 0.001$, $d = 1.11$). Regression analysis indicated significant differences between all conditions (comparison vs. tangential $p < 0.05$; comparison vs. distal $p < 0.001$; tangential vs. distal $p < 0.001$), as well as the geographic location of the participant's experience (the West region being likelier to inform of duty to warn, $p < 0.05$). This means participants in the comparison condition were likelier to inform the man of the duty to warn than in the other two conditions, and those in the tangential condition were likelier to inform the man than in the distal condition.

Response choice "*Report to woman or police without informing of duty.*" Significant differences also were found in the option to warn police or the woman without informing the subject of this duty, as comparison condition participants (mean = 3.47, Std. Dev. = 2.23) were less likely to do so than tangential (mean = 4.27, Std. Dev. = 2.23) or distal (mean = 4.64, Std. Dev. = 2.08) conditions ($p < 0.01$). Only the comparison condition compared against the distal condition showed statistically significant differences ($p < 0.01$, $d = 0.54$). Regression analysis showed no significant relationships other than experimental conditions.

3.8 Scenario 6—Confidentiality. The sixth scenario presented participants with the dilemma of what to do when people who work for a hospital speak openly about confidential information. The setting was the basis for variation between conditions: a hospital social worker hearing other hospital social workers (comparison condition); being a patient in a hospital and hearing two hospital workers outside participant's door (tangential condition); and hearing fellow national conference attendees (distal condition). In the comparison condition the participant was a hospital social worker who overhears two other hospital social workers discussing a patient in a public hallway at the hospital, including both the patient's name and

behaviors the patient has done. In the tangential condition, the participant was a patient at a hospital recovering from a procedure and overhears two hospital staff in a public hallway discussing both a patient's name and behaviors the patient has done. The distal condition presented the participant at a national conference for hospital employees when the participant heard two other attendees discussing patients by name and their behaviors in the main entrance hall.

Responses for this scenario include “*do nothing*” (all conditions); discuss concerns with their behavior privately (all conditions); locate their supervisor and report concerns (all conditions); and locate their professional accrediting body and report concerns (all conditions). For precise wording of scenarios and responses refer to Appendix B.

Participants in the various conditions responded based on the most appropriate level of engagement given the setting: fellow social workers were likeliest to be intervened through direct, private conversation; a hospital patient was likeliest to intervene through the hospital administration; and national conference attendees were likeliest to be reported to a professional body for accountability. There is a tiered level of accountability and responsibility presented in these conditions.

[Insert Figure 13]

[Insert Figure 14]

Response choice “*Do nothing.*” Social work student participants were least likely to do nothing ($p < 0.01$) in the comparison condition where the participant was a medical social worker (mean = 1.96, Std. Dev. = 1.30) relative to the tangential condition (mean = 2.37, Std. Dev. = 1.60), relative to the distal condition (mean = 2.99, Std. Dev. = 1.87), each of which did not place the participant in a social work setting. Compared in a post-hoc one-way analysis,

significant differences were found only between the comparison and distal conditions ($p < 0.001$, moderate $d = 0.65$), meaning participants with a role in a clinical setting were less likely to do nothing in the midst of this ethical dilemma. Regression analysis also found a significance difference relationship between the comparison and distal conditions ($p < 0.01$), and also based on age of the participant (the higher the age, the likelier to do nothing; $p < 0.05$).

Response choice “*Discuss concerns in private.*” Significant differences ($p < 0.001$) were also found when participants were given the choice to discuss concerns in private, as comparison condition participants (mean = 6.06, Std. Dev. = 1.22) were likelier relative to tangential condition participants (mean = 4.78, Std. Dev. = 1.88), while participant in the distal condition fit between them (mean = 5.31, Std. Dev. = 1.63). Post-hoc comparisons indicated significant differences between the comparison and tangential conditions ($p < 0.001$, $d = 0.83$) meaning participants in the comparison group (hospital social worker) were likelier to initiate a conversation in private to address the ethical dilemma. Post-hoc analysis also showed significant differences between the comparison and distal conditions ($p < 0.05$, $d = 0.53$). Regression analysis found statistically significant differences in the relationships between the comparison and distal conditions ($p < 0.01$) and comparison versus tangential conditions ($p < 0.001$). Gender also differed significantly, with females being significantly more likely to discuss concerns in private than males ($p < 0.01$).

Response choice “*Report concern to supervisor.*” For the response category to locate and report the concern of breach of confidentiality to supervisors, this was likelier ($p < 0.001$) in the tangential condition in which the participant is a hospital patient (mean = 5.21, Std. Dev. 1.50) relative to the comparison condition (mean = 4.35, Std. Dev. = 1.75), relative to the distal condition (mean = 4.06, Std. Dev. = 1.89). Participants in the tangential condition were likelier

than those in the comparison condition to report to a supervisor ($p < 0.01$, $d = 0.53$), as were those in the tangential condition relative to the distal condition ($p < 0.001$, $d = 0.68$).

Regression analysis found that there were statistically significant differences between the comparison and tangential conditions ($p < 0.05$), and between the tangential and distal conditions ($p < 0.001$). Age (the older the person, the likelier to report to a supervisor, $p < 0.05$) and degree already held by participants (students with a bachelor's or less were less likely to report, while those with a higher degree were likelier to report to a supervisor) also accounted for statistically significant variance.

Response choice "*Report concerns to professional body.*" When asked how likely it is participants would report concerns to a professional body, comparison condition participants were less likely make this report (mean = 2.73, Std. Dev. = 1.51) relative to the tangential condition (mean = 2.96, Std. Dev. = 1.42), relative to the distal group where participants are at a national conference (mean = 3.51, Std. Dev. = 1.81; $p < 0.01$). Only the difference between the comparison and distal conditions was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$, $d = 0.47$), meaning in the national conference condition were participants most likely to want to report to a professional body for the perceived ethical infraction. Regression analysis showed no significant relationships other than experimental conditions.

3.9 Importance of Ethical Dilemmas. The question of how important of an ethical dilemma each scenario presented followed each scenario in all conditions. Participants in the comparison condition found the ethical dilemmas most important compared with the other conditions in all dilemmas except confidentiality. For dual relationship, analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed overall significant differences among the conditions ($p < 0.001$), and one-way analyses demonstrated significance when comparing comparison vs. tangential conditions ($p <$

0.001) and comparison vs. distal conditions ($p < 0.01$), meaning comparison condition participants viewed this dilemma as more important than those in the distal and tangential perspectives, respectively. In the professional competence condition, the ANOVA showed overall statistical difference among conditions ($p < 0.001$), and significant differences were found by one-way analysis between the comparison and tangential conditions ($p < 0.05$) and also between the comparison and distal conditions ($p < 0.001$). The sexual misconduct dilemma also showed significant differences overall ($p < 0.01$), though one-way analysis found significant differences only between the comparison and tangential conditions ($p < 0.01$). The dilemma on funding cuts had strong overall statistically significant differences ($p < 0.001$), and significant differences were again found between the comparison and tangential conditions ($p < 0.001$) and between the comparison and distal conditions ($p < 0.01$). The fifth dilemma, concerning duty to warn, found significant differences overall ($p < 0.001$) but the one-way differences were between comparison and distal conditions ($p < 0.001$) and between tangential and distal conditions ($p < 0.001$). No statistically significant differences were found in participant-rated importance of the dilemma on confidentiality ($p = 0.541$). This indicates that social work students view potential breaches of confidentiality as a more universal ethical concern relative to other ethical dilemmas, which vary in proximity to typical social work settings.

[Insert Figure 15]

[Insert Figure 16]

[Insert Figure 17]

3.10 Reasons for Ethical Reasoning. Participants were asked to rate their top five ethical reasons out of a list of fourteen for responding to the dilemmas as they did. Only two of the reasons differed significantly by condition: consistent with values learned from a mentor, coach,

or teacher ($p < 0.05$); and consistent with values from religious upbringing ($p < 0.05$). One-way comparisons found that those in the tangential condition were more likely than those in either the comparison condition ($p < 0.05$) or the distal condition ($p < 0.05$) to cite values passed on by a mentor, coach or teacher as a top-five reason for their ethical reasons. One-way analyses of the values from religious upbringing revealed significant differences only between the tangential and comparison conditions, in which participants in the tangential condition were significantly more likely to cite values instilled from childhood religion as a top-five reason for their ethical decision making in the dilemmas.

[Insert Figure 18]

[Insert Figure 19]

[Insert Figure 20]

4. Discussion

The results indicate one conclusion: regardless of the ethical dilemma, social work students respond differently based on the context. In traditional social work settings, social work students say they are likely to respond in ways that are normative of social work ethics; they are less likely to respond in those ways when in alternative contexts. Thus we reject our null hypothesis, that there would be no difference between experimental conditions. Context matters when it comes to responding to ethical dilemmas.

Perhaps the most interesting finding is how alike participants in all conditions rated the reasons for their ethical reasoning. The vast majority cited the same most common reasons for their responses: consistent with the Code of Ethics, social work values, ethical reasoning system, legal mandates, and even intuition were all highly represented (at least 50% in two out of three conditions) with no significant differences between the groups. In spite of different responses,

social work students believed themselves to be drawing from the same sources. And where there were significant differences between groups, the numbers were small and the sources were from earlier in life (mentor, teacher or coach; or childhood religious upbringing).

4.1. Summary of Results by Dilemma. Summarizing the results by dilemma, statistically significant differences between conditions were found in at least two responses of each ethical dilemma. In all but the duty to warn and the confidentiality dilemmas participants in the comparison condition rated the importance of the ethical dilemma significantly higher than in the other conditions; participants in both the comparison and tangential dilemma rated the importance of the ethical dilemma higher than the distal condition participants; and there were no significant differences among the conditions regarding how important an ethical dilemma confidentiality was.

The dual relationships scenarios asked participants to imagine themselves in situations in managerial or administrative positions in which they discover in a public setting that a colleague had both professional and personal relationships with at least one client. Social work student participants were significantly less likely to do nothing (more likely to choose to intervene) in the traditional social-work setting in a supervisor's office than in the less-social-work settings (non-profit food bank board, non-profit award ceremony). Comparison condition participants also were more likely to report concerns to a professional body than those in either of the other two conditions. This suggests that while those in a traditional social work setting may not be significantly more likely to discuss concerns in public or private—which may fall into competition of values with social norms—social work students in the social work setting found one particular means of differentiating their actions from others: reporting to a professional

body. Those in the social work setting found an impetus to respond professionally to this dilemma, more than with the same dilemma in other conditions.

The referral to a professional whose competence is not trusted yielded very significant differences between the conditions in all response categories, and these differences lead to questions of what a social work setting is, as well as a difference of loyalties between clients, friends, and family. These take place at a clinical-level. Professionalism is the best descriptor of the choices the comparison participants made. Those in the comparison condition (clinical social work setting), were most likely to follow through with the professional referral as directed by their supervisor, but were also most likely to question the properness of the referral given the questionable competence of the other worker. The willingness to follow the chain of command while also advocating most strongly for the client compared with the other conditions shows strong professionalism. The other response options—discussing concerns with the other worker whose competence is questioned is highly professional, as is not interfering with the therapeutic relationship by going to the referred person (client, friend, family member) and expressing concerns there. As the comparison condition was most likely to respond in each of these ways, the questions arise as to why social work students would respond differently in other situations. There is a lack of consistency across settings. Perhaps, with friends and family and in which the participant is not in a social work role, there is a competition of loyalties. If the participant is less likely to affirm the referral and more likely to contact the referred family member/friend and discuss concerns, competing values are at work. This leads to the question of when is someone to act in a social work role, and when is that person free to step out of that role? Also, when does loyalty to a client differ from loyalty to a friend or family member?

The scenarios on sexual misconduct show a difference in responsibility for the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator, who is a fellow professional, and thus the scenarios take place on a micro-clinical level. While in no condition did participants suggest they shouldn't intervene, this response was significantly stronger in the comparison condition (social work setting). Those in the social work setting—in contrast to 12-step meetings to support family/friends—were likelier to work with the person to discuss her feelings, which makes sense given the larger responsibility for an actual client. Perhaps due to proximity—in the social work setting the alleged perpetrating therapist is in the same agency—in the comparison condition participants were significantly more likely to discuss concerns with the therapist, and they were also much more likely to report the concerns to the workplace administration. The most remarkable thing in these two response choices is the lack of difference between the tangential (12-step meeting to support a family member) and the distal (12-step meeting across the country to support a friend) conditions. It seems it would be simpler to find the alleged perpetrating therapist not out of the same part of the country and report to that therapist's administration; yet the two conditions are almost identical. Perhaps taking a bit more responsibility, in the last condition the participants in the distal condition (supporting a friend across the country) were not significantly different from the comparison condition in reporting to a professional body. This level of ethical responsibility remains a theme in this scenario.

The fourth ethical dilemma concerns an administrative response to budget cuts. No group of participants was significantly likelier to save programs for the sake of saving programs, but when people were involved, the comparison condition (therapeutic treatment center) saw significantly higher likelihood of stepping in to serve the most people, as opposed to saving the most land (distal condition). While all conditions rated partnering with other agencies to fill

gaps as likely- to very-likely, those in the land protection condition were less likely than the therapeutic treatment center of school PTA to do so. Similar results were found in advocating for additional funding (therapeutic treatment center much more likely than land-protection. Interestingly, while no condition showed a strong likelihood to resign as a form of protest, those in the land protections setting were significantly more likely to do so than the people-oriented conditions. These differences indicate a general orientation to people among social work students than to other entities, though there is no denying land rights, with their effect on person-in-environment (a social work slogan), can be social work for its impact on people. This raises the question of when social work stops and life outside of social work starts.

In the duty to warn ethical dilemma, which takes place at a micro-clinical level, the responses indicate a similar level of professional or personal responsibility in the comparison and tangential conditions for intervening (not doing nothing), talking with the person threatening harm until the threat diminishes, and informing the client/friend of a duty to warn. In the comparison and tangential conditions (clinical setting, talking with a friend), there were virtually no differences between these two groups. Participants in the distal condition, though hearing the same information (though granted with a decreased context, not knowing a stranger on a street), were less likely to take the same actions as those in the other two conditions. The situation changes, however, once the question of warning the other person without informing that person of a duty to do so. Those participants in the distal condition (stranger on a street) were much more likely to inform the police or the potential victim without informing the potential perpetrator of a duty to warn. This may very well have been a safety issue, with the sense of believing we know a client or friend better than a stranger. Participants did not feel as obligated

to inform a friend of a duty to warn as a client, due most likely to the professional relationship on which such a duty is based.

In the confidentiality dilemmas, all settings involved a hospital and micro-level practice. What is interesting is the level of responsibility participants took for the breach of confidentiality based on the setting. Participants take most personal responsibility when in a clinical setting, where they are likeliest to approach those who broke confidentiality in private. It is interesting that females were likelier to try to resolve the situation in private. The tangential condition (participant is a patient in a hospital) has the highest likelihood of finding a supervisor and reporting the breach at that level. The personal responsibility to address the infraction directly has decreased, and a desire to seek resolution perhaps confidentially heightens. This may be because a hospital patient is more vulnerable than a colleague. Also of interest is that the distal condition (national conference) is likeliest to incur a report to a professional body. In this setting, confronting directly is not highly considered, and it may be difficult to find a supervisor. But a national body would be a way to seek a resolution to this breach of patient confidentiality. In this scenario, a different response choice is favored for each condition. The level of reporting concerns matches the level of perceived infraction (co-workers, vulnerable situation, national stage).

4.2 Limitations of the Present Study. The current study was limited by several factors. The demographics of the population were heavily weighted toward Caucasian participants, and few ethnic minorities were represented. It is not believed that this is representative of the broader population of social workers or social work students, and suggests Caucasian students might be more likely to respond. A significantly larger percentage of females than males also participated in this study, though this may be somewhat close to the actual distribution of males

and females in social work. Both these factors made it difficult to say anything substantive about the results concerning race or gender, and external validity for statements about race or gender is thus limited. A larger sample size could have alleviated this limitation, as could a stratified sampling technique.

Participants were a convenience sample: only about twenty of a few hundred schools of social work responded to the principal investigator. From there, students were recruited via impersonal listservs in which schools sent out a generic recruitment email from the principal investigator. Only a small percentage of students agreed to participate (approximately 5%), though those who responded were very likely to follow through and complete the survey (about 85%). An improved study would be more proactive to build connections with schools prior to the need to be collecting data, and this process could take about a year. More personal recruitment and the addition of incentives to participate could increase the response rate, so that whole classes of students might participate. The narrowing of the recruitment focus for participants to a few classes that are representative of the populations of the schools of social work and the broader social work population would increase external validity.

Whether social work students, with a skewed representation to few years of experience, are representative of social workers at large has not been addressed. Thus caution is required should these results be considered for social workers as a whole. The data do not lend themselves to broad statements. Achieving a representative sample of all social workers would require significant efforts and coordination with the national body. It is hard to plan a true representative study.

Tests of measurement of the instrument were not completed, due to time. Such tests would enhance the internal validity of the study by clarifying if the various ethical dilemmas and their differences between conditions represent consistent variations.

It is necessary to address the large number of statistical analyses completed and the risk of Type I error. Such error was mitigated by two important factors: First, omnibus ANOVAs were run first, and subsequent Post Hoc and regression analyses were run only on results that showed statistically significant differences from the ANOVAs. Second, the sheer preponderance of evidence indicates that there is a real, measureable difference when examining social work students' ethical decision making based on the context with which students are presented with ethical dilemmas. Each ethical dilemma showed similar results between conditions. It is believed that the mitigating factors decrease the risk of Type I error by the large number of statistical analyses run on the data.

5. Conclusion

The preceding study sought to answer the question of consistency of responses to ethical dilemmas based on the setting: traditional social work (micro and macro), settings related to social work but not necessarily traditional social work settings (e.g., PTA, food bank board), and settings still further from social work settings (e.g., national conferences, for-profit agency). Overall, significant differences were found in responses to every scenario, meaning that social workers do respond differently in different settings. While the thrust of most responses were similar, the differences were significant in dilemma after dilemma. The best explanation for this is social work students have multiple loyalties, and different loyalties (to clients, friends, family, colleagues, and even strangers) may appear in different contexts. Some values may overshadow others when presented with dilemmas in various contexts. Further study is needed.

These differences raise the question, as noted above, of what constitutes social work. Is someone a social worker in one setting and not in another? What are the best responses to ethical dilemmas faced by social workers on a regular basis, and how might those responses be affected by mixed loyalties? There are interactive reasons that social work students are trained in various types of ethical reasoning. A dual relationship would affect one's ability to relate properly to a referral to a therapist, and professional judgments of the quality of work that therapist provides may or may not be relevant to the referred person. Questions of dual relationships and referrals to fellow clinicians who may not be competent also relate to confidentiality and the professionalism owed to our colleagues. Yet we have friends and family who interact with the systems in which we work. At what point do social workers turn off professionalism and enter into personalism? If there are situations in which a professional social worker steps out of the professional role, where are the boundaries of that? And might this intentional removal of the identity of a social worker lead to arbitrary choice of who does not qualify to receive the care social workers are known for providing? Could there be entire populations left out if social workers can decide when and with whom they are no longer in social work practice? The present study, as noted above, provides an empirical basis for asking these questions because social work students do respond differently to the same ethical dilemmas in different contexts.

From the preceding study numerous paths for further research necessary. Ongoing work must be done to understand the ethical decision making process. Even with a Code of Ethics, supposedly normative values, and ethical reasoning models now taught in many schools of social work, the same sources of reasoning lead to different ethical responses. While ethical reasoning

models may help bring these decision making processes to greater cognitive awareness, the results of this study show a gap between the source of reasoning and the responses.

Further research on the nuances of social work responses to ethical dilemmas should be done. Studies presenting similar ethical dilemmas (such as dual relationships intersecting with confidentiality) could provide valuable information on ways social workers differentiate the contexts of ethical decision making. Understanding what type of dual relationship settings, for example, a participant might intervene by confronting in private, public, or to a professional body would be valuable to know. Research is also recommended on combining methods of ethical reasoning taught by some schools of social work with hypothetical dilemmas to determine if certain reasoning methods can be considered evidence-based.

This study demonstrates further need for schools of social work to flesh-out the nuances of the intersectionality of social work professionals and ethical dilemmas. All social work students and social workers come to the dilemmas they face with a wide swath of forbears who taught them how to act ethically. Surely many social work students are drawn to the field because their latent values align to some degree with the normative values of social work. Social work education ought to include real-world examples of ethical dilemmas faced by social workers, both in and out of traditional settings, to enhance critical analysis and best practice. Giving students opportunities to discuss ethical dilemmas and work out solutions together will also enhance the process of seeking professional feedback and supervision to operate most ethically in the diverse types of social work practice. Continuing education on ethics ought to include nuanced examples to assist social workers perform best practice.

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Appendix A: Tables

Figure 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 233)

Characteristic	n	%
Age		
18-24	59	25.3
25-34	102	43.8
35-44	43	18.5
45-54	25	10.7
55-65	4	1.7
Gender		
Female	200	85.8
Male	31	13.3
Missing	2	0.9
Race		
Afro-Caribbean	2	0.9
Asian and Pacific Islander	8	3.4
Black/African American	12	5.2
Hispanic	14	6.0
Multi-racial (white/asian)	5	2.1
Multi-racial (white/black)	2	0.9
Native American	6	2.6
Other	6	2.6
White/Caucasian (non-Hispanic)	171	75.7
All non-White/Caucasian (non-Hispanic)	55	23.6
Missing	7	3.0
Religion		
None	66	28.3
Other	19	9.3
Western	120	51.5
Missing	28	12.0
Childhood religion		
None	26	11.2
Other	7	3.0
Western	181	77.7
Missing	19	8.2
Level of Education		
Less than a bachelors	17	7.3
Bachelors	178	76.4
Masters	31	13.3
Doctorate	2	0.9
Other	3	1.3
Missing	2	0.9
Degree Program		
Bachelor's	20	8.6
Master's	205	88.0

Doctoral	6	2.6
Demographics continued	n	%
Missing (education)	2	0.9
Years of social work experience		
0-4 years	113	48.5
5-9 years	46	19.7
10-14 years	19	8.2
15-19 years	9	3.9
20 or more years	10	4.3
Missing	36	15.5
Region of US where practiced most social work		
West (Rocky Mountains and west)	97	43.9
Midwest (east of Rockies, north of Texas, west of Pennsylvania, north of Ohio River to Mississippi)	29	12.4
South (east of Mississippi River, south of Ohio River and Pennsylvania)	51	21.9
Northeast (north of Ohio River to Atlantic, east of Ohio)	28	12.0
Other (including outside US, multiple regions)	16	6.9
Missing	12	5.2

Figure 2: Means, Standard Deviations and ANOVA of Usefulness of Ethical Instruction in Social Work by Experimental Condition

	Mean	SD	ANOVA	Sum Sq.	df	Mean Sq.	F	Sig.
Comparison	5.68	1.39	Between groups	0.55	2	0.28	0.172	0.842
Tangential	5.57	1.14	Within groups	367.71	230	1.60		
Distal	5.64	1.25	Total	368.26	232			

Figure 3: Scenario 1 ANOVA by Condition and Response Choices

ANOVA	Sum Sq.	df	Mean Sq.	F	Sig.
Do nothing: Between groups	18.195	2	9.098	3.689	0.027
Within groups	550.000	223	2.466		
Total	568.195	225			
Discuss concerns in private: Between groups	6.462	2	3.231	2.092	0.126
Within groups	347.521	225	1.545		
Total	353.982	227			
Discuss concerns in public: Between groups	11.822	2	5.911	1.828	0.163
Within groups	714.816	221	3.234		
Total	726.638	223			
Report Concerns: Between groups	76.456	2	38.228	12.437	0.000
Within groups	691.597	225	3.074		
Total	768.053	227			

Figure 4: Scenario 1 Post Hoc Tukey HSD Analysis Comparing Conditions; Effect Size (Cohen's D)

Response/Condition	Mean diff	Std. Error	Sig.	Effect size (Cohen's D)
Do Nothing, C vs T	0.635	0.257	0.038	0.41 (moderate)
Do Nothing, C vs D	0.561	0.254	0.072	0.36 (small)
Do Nothing, T vs D	0.074	0.257	0.955	0.04 (small)
Discuss concerns in private, C vs T	0.413	0.203	0.106	0.32 (small)
Discuss concerns in private, C vs D	0.174	0.201	0.663	0.15 (small)
Discuss concerns in private, T vs D	0.239	0.201	0.459	0.20 (small)
Discuss concerns in public, C vs T	0.386	0.296	0.394	0.21 (small)
Discuss concerns in public, C vs D	0.545	0.293	0.152	0.29 (small)
Discuss concerns in public, T vs D	0.159	0.295	0.852	0.09 (small)
Report concerns, C vs T	1.161	0.285	0.000	0.68 (large)
Report concerns, C vs D	1.285	0.283	0.000	0.78 (large)
Report concerns, T vs D	0.124	0.284	0.900	0.07 (small)

Figure 5: Scenario 2 ANOVA by Condition and Response Choices

ANOVA	Sum Sq.	df	Mean Sq.	F	Sig.
Make/affirm referral:					
Between groups	129.196	2	64.598	28.869	0.000
Within groups	498.986	223	2.238		
Total	628.181	225			
Discuss with referrer:					
Between groups	248.677	2	124.338	47.010	0.000
Within groups	600.406	227	2.645		
Total	849.083	229			
Discuss with professional:					
Between groups	106.343	2	53.171	20.062	0.000
Within groups	593.692	224	2.650		
Total	766.035	226			
Discuss with person referred:					
Between groups	239.922	2	119.961	35.069	0.000
Within groups	766.245	224	3.421		
Total	1006.167	226			

Figure 6: Scenario 2 Post Hoc Tukey HSD Analysis Comparing Conditions; Effect Size (Cohen's D)

Response/Condition	Mean diff	Std. Error	Sig.	Effect size (Cohen's D)
Make/affirm referral, C vs T	1.705	0.244	0.000	1.12 very large
Make/affirm referral, C vs D	1.474	0.243	0.000	0.97 very large
Make/affirm referral, T vs D	0.232	0.244	0.611	0.16 (small)
Discuss with referrer, C vs T	1.607	0.264	0.000	1.13 (very large)
Discuss with referrer, C vs D	2.482	0.260	0.000	1.83 (very large)
Discuss with referrer, T vs D	0.874	0.265	0.003	0.46 (moderate)
Discuss with professional, C vs T	1.112	0.265	0.000	0.62 (moderate)
Discuss with professional, C vs D	1.623	0.262	0.000	1.10 (very large)
Discuss with professional, T vs D	0.513	0.267	0.135	0.34 (small)
Discuss with person referred, C vs T	1.352	0.302	0.000	0.74 (large)
Discuss with person referred, C vs D	2.494	0.298	0.000	1.41 (very large)
Discuss with person referred, T vs D	1.142	0.302	0.001	0.59 (moderate)

Figure 7: Scenario 3 ANOVA by Condition and Response Choices

ANOVA	Sum Sq.	df	Mean Sq.	F	Sig.
Do nothing: Between groups	30.188	2	15.094	11.044	0.000
Within groups	299.294	219	1.367		
Total	329.482	221			
Discuss person's feelings: Between groups	27.410	2	13.705	6.006	0.003
Within groups	515.734	226	2.282		
Total	543.144	228			
Discuss with therapist: Between groups	115.795	2	57.898	15.665	0.000
Within groups	827.896	224	3.696		
Total	943.692	226			
Report to therapist's admin: Between groups	149.121	2	74.560	27.603	0.000
Within groups	610.469	226	2.701		
Total	759.590	228			
Report to professional body: Between groups	49.445	2	24.722	8.087	0.000
Within groups	687.855	225	3.057		
Total	737.311	227			

Figure 8: Scenario 3 Post Hoc Tukey HSD Analysis Comparing Conditions; Effect Size (Cohen's D)

Response/Condition	Mean diff	Std. Error	Sig.	Effect size (Cohen's D)
Do Nothing, C vs T	0.468	0.194	0.043	0.61 (moderate)
Do Nothing, C vs D	0.894	0.190	0.000	0.98 (very large)
Do Nothing, T vs D	0.426	0.193	0.072	0.30 (small)
Discuss person's feelings, C vs T	0.852	0.246	0.002	0.55 (moderate)
Discuss person's feelings, C vs D	0.436	0.242	0.171	0.35 (small)
Discuss person's feelings, T vs D	0.416	0.246	0.210	0.25 (small)
Discuss with therapist, C vs T	1.511	0.314	0.000	0.76 (large)
Discuss with therapist, C vs D	1.506	0.310	0.000	0.80 (large)
Discuss with therapist, T vs D	0.004	0.314	1.000	0.00 (small)
Report to therapist's admin, C vs T	1.737	0.267	0.000	1.28 (very large)
Report to therapist's admin, C vs D	1.657	0.263	0.000	1.40 (very large)
Report to therapist's admin, T vs D	0.080	0.268	0.952	0.04 (small)
Report to professional body, C vs T	1.144	0.285	0.000	0.66 (moderate)
Report to professional body, C vs D	0.588	0.281	0.093	0.38 (small)
Report to professional body, T vs D	0.556	0.286	0.128	0.29 (small)

Figure 9: Scenario 4 ANOVA by Condition and Response Choices

ANOVA	Sum Sq.	df	Mean Sq.	F	Sig.
Save the most programs:					
Between groups	4.388	2	2.194	1.061	0.348
Within groups	450.861	218	2.068		
Total	455.249	220			
Save programs serve most:					
Between groups	14.937	2	7.469	4.494	0.012
Within groups	372.234	224	1.662		
Total	387.172	226			
Partner with other agencies:					
Between groups	11.379	2	5.689	9.250	0.000
Within groups	140.240	228	0.615		
Total	151.619	230			
Advocate additional funding:					
Between groups	5.424	2	2.712	4.278	0.015
Within groups	141.977	224	0.634		
Total	147.401	226			
Resign as a form of protest:					
Between groups	23.744	2	11.872	11.305	0.000
Within groups	237.339	226	1.050		
Total	261.083	228			

Figure 10: Scenario 4 Post Hoc Tukey HSD Analysis Comparing Conditions; Effect Size (Cohen's D)

Response/Condition	Mean diff	Std. Error	Sig.	Effect size (Cohen's D)
Save the most programs, C vs T	0.153	0.239	0.798	0.11 (small)
Save the most programs, C vs D	0.191	0.235	0.693	0.14 (small)
Save the most programs, T vs D	0.345	0.237	0.317	0.23 (small)
Save programs-serve most, C vs T	0.386	0.211	0.162	0.32 (small)
Save programs-serve most, C vs D	0.614	0.207	0.009	0.48 (moderate)
Save programs, serve most, T vs D	0.229	0.211	0.527	0.16 (small)
Partner with other agencies, C vs T	0.110	0.126	0.659	0.17 (small)
Partner with other agencies, C vs D	0.515	0.126	0.000	0.64 (moderate)
Partner with other agencies, T vs D	0.405	0.127	0.005	0.47 (moderate)
Advocate additional funding, C vs T	0.167	0.130	0.402	0.25 (small)
Advocate additional funding, C vs D	0.375	0.128	0.011	0.53 (moderate)
Advocate additional funding, T vs D	0.207	0.130	0.252	0.23 (small)
Resign as a form of protest, C vs T	0.029	0.166	0.983	0.03 (small)
Resign as a form of protest, C vs D	0.695	0.165	0.000	0.63 (moderate)
Resign as a form of protest, T vs D	0.666	0.169	0.000	0.64 (moderate)

Figure 11: Scenario 5 ANOVA by Condition and Response Choices

ANOVA	Sum Sq.	df	Mean Sq.	F	Sig.
Do nothing: Between groups	148.301	2	74.151	56.868	0.000
Within groups	292.077	224	1.304		
Total	440.379	226			
Discuss until feel no threat: Between groups	208.043	2	104.022	30.825	0.000
Within groups	752.528	223	3.375		
Total	960.571	225			
Inform of duty to warn: Between groups	337.947	2	168.973	63.904	0.000
Within groups	592.300	224	2.644		
Total	930.247	226			
Warn w/o informing of duty: Between groups	55.490	2	27.745	5.815	0.003
Within groups	1073.545	225	4.771		
Total	1129.035	227			

Figure 12: Scenario 5 Post Hoc Tukey HSD One-Way Analysis Comparing Conditions; Effect Size (Cohen's D)

Response/Condition	Mean diff	Std. Error	Sig.	Effect size (Cohen's D)
Do nothing, C vs T	0.068	0.186	0.929	0.04 (small)
Do nothing, C vs D	0.174	0.186	0.000	1.74 (very large)
Do nothing, T vs D	1.672	0.186	0.000	1.31 (very large)
Discuss until feel no threat, C vs T	0.109	0.298	0.929	0.06 (small)
Discuss until feel no threat, C vs D	2.095	0.298	0.000	1.18 (very large)
Discuss until feel no threat, T vs D	1.986	0.302	0.000	1.05 (very large)
Inform of duty to warn, C vs T	0.820	0.264	0.006	0.54 (moderate)
Inform of duty to warn, C vs D	2.893	0.263	0.000	1.99 (very large)
Inform of duty to warn, T vs D	2.074	0.266	0.000	1.14 (very large)
Warn w/o informing of duty, C vs T	0.802	0.353	0.062	0.36 (small)
Warn w/o informing of duty, C vs D	1.172	0.352	0.003	0.54 (moderate)
Warn w/o informing of duty, T vs D	0.370	0.358	0.557	0.17 (small)

Figure 13: Scenario 6 ANOVA by Condition and Response Choices

ANOVA	Sum Sq.	df	Mean Sq.	F	Sig.
Do nothing: Between groups	40.243	2	20.122	7.789	0.001
Within groups	570.882	221	2.583		
Total	611.125	223			
Discuss concerns in private: Between groups	63.343	2	31.672	12.477	0.000
Within groups	573.696	226	2.538		
Total	637.039	228			
Locate and report to supervisor: Between groups	54.140	2	27.070	9.093	0.000
Within groups	672.794	226	2.977		
Total	726.934	228			
Report to professional body: Between groups	25.166	2	12.583	4.965	0.008
Within groups	567.707	224	2.534		
Total	592.872	226			

Figure 14: Scenario 6 Post Hoc Tukey HSD Analysis Comparing Conditions; Effect Size (Cohen's D)

Response/Condition	Mean diff	Std. Error	Sig.	Effect size (Cohen's D)
Do nothing, C vs T	0.409	0.263	0.268	0.28 (small)
Do nothing, C vs D	1.026	0.262	0.000	0.65 (moderate)
Do nothing, T vs D	0.617	0.264	0.053	0.36 (small)
Discuss concerns in private, C vs T	1.282	0.259	0.000	0.83 (large)
Discuss concerns in private, C vs D	0.752	0.255	0.010	0.53 (moderate)
Discuss concerns in private, T vs D	0.531	0.260	0.105	0.30 (small)
Locate, report to supervisor, C vs T	0.863	0.280	0.007	0.53 (moderate)
Locate, report to supervisor, C vs D	0.286	0.278	0.560	0.16 (small)
Locate, report to supervisor, T vs D	1.148	0.280	0.000	0.68 (large)
Report to professional body, C vs T	0.227	0.261	0.660	0.16 (small)
Report to professional body, C vs D	0.782	0.255	0.007	0.47 (moderate)
Report to professional body, T vs D	0.555	0.261	0.087	0.34 (small)

Figure 15: Importance of Ethical Dilemmas Means and Standard Deviations by Scenario and Condition

Importance	Comparison		Tangential		Distal	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Scenario 1: Dual relationship	6.08	0.97	5.01	1.33	5.41	1.27
Scenario 2: Professional competence	5.70	0.79	5.13	1.29	4.69	1.50
Scenario 3: Sexual misconduct	6.91	0.29	6.44	1.30	6.64	0.81
Scenario 4: Funding cuts	5.78	0.56	4.74	1.50	5.16	1.17
Scenario 5: Duty to warn	6.80	0.56	6.54	1.33	5.71	1.47
Scenario 6: Confidentiality	5.95	0.80	5.76	1.17	5.82	1.28

Figure 16: Importance of Dilemma ANOVA by Condition and Response Choices

ANOVA	Sum Sq.	df	Mean Sq.	F	Sig.
Scenario 1: Dual Relationship Between groups	44.358	2	22.179	15.352	0.000
Within groups	329.391	228	1.445		
Total	373.749	230			
Scenario 2: Professional competence Between groups	39.763	2	19.882	13.236	0.000
Within groups	343.991	229	1.502		
Total	383.754	231			
Scenario 3: Sexual misconduct Between groups	8.636	2	4.318	5.469	0.005
Within groups	180.808	229	0.790		
Total	189.444	231			
Scenario 4: Funding cuts Between groups	42.255	2	21.127	13.563	0.000
Within groups	353.593	227	1.558		
Total	395.848	229			
Scenario 5: Duty to warn Between groups	49.622	2	24.811	17.775	0.000
Within groups	316.852	227	1.396		
Total	366.474	229			
Scenario 6: Confidentiality Between groups	1.483	2	0.742	0.615	0.541
Within groups	274.906	228	1.206		
Total	276.230				

Figure 17: Importance of Ethical Dilemmas Post Hoc Tukey HSD One Way Analysis
Comparing Conditions

Response/Condition	Mean diff	Std. Error	Sig.
Dual Relationship, C vs T	1.065	0.194	0.000
Dual Relationship, C vs D	0.668	0.193	0.002
Dual Relationship, T vs D	0.397	0.194	0.103
Referral to Incompetent, C vs T	0.563	0.198	0.013
Referral to Incompetent, C vs D	1.004	0.196	0.000
Referral to Incompetent, T vs D	0.563	0.198	0.069
Sexual Misconduct, C vs T	0.471	0.143	0.003
Sexual Misconduct, C vs D	0.270	0.142	0.139
Sexual Misconduct, T vs D	0.201	0.144	0.343
Budget Cuts, C vs T	1.042	0.202	0.000
Budget Cuts, C vs D	0.629	0.200	0.005
Budget Cuts, T vs D	0.413	0.203	0.107
Duty to Warn, C vs T	0.257	0.191	0.372
Duty to Warn, C vs D	1.083	0.189	0.000
Duty to Warn, T vs D	0.257	0.191	0.000
Confidentiality, C vs T	0.193	0.178	0.525
Confidentiality, C vs D	0.129	0.175	0.743
Confidentiality, T vs D	0.064	0.178	0.932

Figure 18: Ethical Reasoning Means and Standard Deviations for Each Reason by Condition

Ethical Reason	Comparison		Tangential		Distal	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Avoid Professional or Legal Reprisal	0.24	0.43	0.14	0.35	0.18	0.39
Financial Need	0.01	0.11	0.03	0.16	0.01	0.11
Consistent with Professional Code of Ethics	0.86	0.35	0.80	0.40	0.71	0.46
Consistent with Social Work Values	0.92	0.27	0.92	0.27	0.89	0.31
Consistent with Intuition (Gut Reaction)	0.59	0.49	0.67	0.47	0.76	0.43
Protection of Personal/ Professional Reputation	0.33	0.47	0.26	0.44	0.29	0.46
Consistent with Ethical Reasoning System	0.58	0.50	0.26	0.44	0.53	0.50
Consistent with Values from Family of Origin	0.14	0.35	0.28	0.45	0.22	0.42
Consistent with Values from Race or Ethnicity	0.03	0.16	0.04	0.20	0.03	0.16
Consistent with Values from Mentor, Coach or Teacher	0.28	0.45	0.12	0.33	0.28	0.45
Consistent with Values from Religious Upbringing	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.27	0.39	0.19
Consistent with Current Religious Affiliation	0.03	0.16	0.05	0.22	0.04	0.19
Consistent with Legal Mandates	0.56	0.50	0.61	0.49	0.51	0.50
Consistent with Values from Community	0.15	0.36	0.20	0.40	0.23	0.42

Figure 19: Ethical Reasoning ANOVA Table Comparing Each Ethical Reason by Conditions

ANOVA	Sum Sq.	df	Mean Sq.	F	Sig.
Avoid Legal or Professional Reprisal					
Between groups	0.366	2	0.183	1.190	0.306
Within groups	35.325	230	0.154		
Total	35.691	232			
Financial Need					
Between groups	0.009	2	0.005	0.277	0.758
Within groups	3.922	230	0.154		
Total	3.931	232			

Consistent with Professional Code of Ethics					
Between groups	0.970	2	0.485	2.955	0.054
Within groups	37.726	230	0.017		
Total	38.695	232			
Consistent with Social Work Values					
Between groups	0.414	2	0.207	2.172	0.116
Within groups	21.904	230	0.164		
Total	22.318	232			
Consistent with Intuition (Gut Reaction)					
Between groups	1.024	2	0.512	2.347	0.098
Within groups	50.186	230	0.218		
Total	51.210	232			
Consistent with Personal/Professional Reputation					
Between groups	0.169	2	0.084	0.401	0.670
Within groups	48.398	230	0.210		
Total	48.567				
Consistent with Ethical Reasoning System from Higher Ed or Work					
Between groups	0.133	2	0.066	0.266	0.766
Within groups	57.335	230	0.249		
Total	57.468	232			
Consistent with Values from Family of Origin					
Between groups	0.735	2	0.367	2.226	0.110
Within groups	37.961	230	0.165		
Total	38.695	232			
Consistent with Values from Race or Ethnicity					
Between groups	0.010	2	0.005	0.170	0.844
Within groups	6.780	230	0.029		
Total	6.790	232			
Consistent with Values Learned from Mentor, Coach or Teacher					
Between groups	1.342	2	0.671	3.896	0.022
Within groups	39.603	230	0.172		
Total	40.944	232			
Consistent with Values from Religious Upbringing					
Between groups	0.241	2	0.121	3.301	0.039
Within groups	8.411	230	0.037		
Total	8.652	232			
Consistent with Values of Current Religious Affiliation					

Between groups	0.029	2	0.014	0.385	0.681
Within groups	8.623	230	0.037		
Total	8.652	232			
Consistent with Legal Mandates					
Between groups	0.329	2	0.165	0.662	0.457
Within groups	57.139	230	0.248		
Total	57.468	232			
Consistent with Values from Community					
Between groups	0.246	2	0.123	0.785	0.457
Within groups	36.063	230	0.157		
Total	36.309	232			

Figure 20: For Statistically Significant Differences in Ethical Reasoning (Consistent with Values Learned from Teacher, Mentor or Coach; and Consistent with Values from Religious Upbringing) Post Hoc Tukey HSD One Way Analysis Comparing Conditions

Significant Reasons	Mean diff	Std. Error	Sig.
Teacher, Mentor, Coach, C vs T	0.160	0.067	0.045
Teacher, Mentor, Coach, C vs D	0.004	0.066	0.998
Teacher, Mentor, Coach, T vs D	0.164	0.067	0.040
Religious Upbringing, C vs T	0.079	0.031	0.029
Religious Upbringing, C vs D	0.038	0.031	0.419
Religious Upbringing, T vs D	0.040	0.031	0.389

Appendix B: Surveys

The following presents all three surveys as they appear on the Catalyst survey. Each participant will complete only one of the following surveys: Comparison, Tangential or Distal

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON CONSENT FORM Ethical Reasoning Among Social Work Students

Researchers: Micah Kurtz, MSW student, mkurtz@u.washington.edu

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Eric Brown, Thesis Committee Chair

Researchers' statement

You are asked to participate in a research study examining social work students' responses to scenarios of ethical dilemmas. The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether to be in the study or not. Please read the form carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, what we would ask you to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear prior to completing this survey. Please contact the researcher via the email account listed above. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study. This process is called "informed consent." You may request a copy of this form for your records.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Ethical social work practice is an expectation of the women and men in the field of social work as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics. The purpose of this study is to provide social work students an opportunity to anonymously respond to scenarios of ethical dilemmas commonly encountered in various types of social work practice. The results will assist the researcher in identifying ethical reasoning in social work students which will have implications for social work education.

STUDY PROCEDURES

This study is a randomized control survey. Each participant completes one survey in one sitting, lasting no more than 20 minutes, with no further obligations.

The survey consists of open-ended questions, scenarios in which the participant takes the role of a social worker or a social work student, and identifying factors in ethical reasoning. Because these survey items ask sensitive questions about self-identification on issues of ethical dilemmas, gender, race, and religion, the study acknowledges that the questions may provide discomfort to participants.

All questions are derived from multiple prior studies in peer-reviewed literature.

Participants may refuse to answer any question or item in the survey, whether administered electronically, by interview, or by hand.

All questions are written and will be administered electronically, orally, or on paper. There will be no other media.

RISKS, STRESS, OR DISCOMFORT

This study's risks center on each participant's willingness and ability to provide answers to self-identifying questions concerning how social work students respond to ethical dilemmas often found in social work practice. As these concepts are largely socially constructed and achieve actualization developmentally, there is a risk that participants will feel uncomfortable providing responses to questions on any of these fields. Stress and emotional discomfort might result from participating in this study.

If the participant feels distress during the survey, that participant is requested to inform the surveyor immediately. If the participant feels distress following the survey, that participant is directed to contact the surveyor or a local crisis line.

There will be no recording of this survey, either audio or visual.

BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

By participating in this study, participants have the opportunity to (1) provide information that will be valuable in assessing the quality of ethical education in various schools of social work, and (2) reflect on one's ethical reasoning in various situations.

OTHER INFORMATION

You may refuse to participate and you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

All of the information you provide will be anonymous. However, if we learn that you intend to harm yourself or others, we must report that to the authorities.

By continuing this study, you acknowledge that this study has been explained to you. You hereby volunteer to take part in this research. If you later have questions about the research, I can ask one of the researchers listed above. You may request a copy of this form from the researcher.

Comparison Arm

1. Please rate how useful your social work education about ethics has been to you as you consider current and future social work practice.

Limit response to one answers.

- Very Not Useful
- Not Useful
- Somewhat Not Useful
- Neither Useful Nor Not Useful
- Somewhat Useful
- Useful
- Very Useful

Scenarios

2. In your workplace, you manage several social workers. During a monthly managers meeting in your office, the most experienced supervisor says she has relied on a few clients as friends, hosting them in her house and talking socially on the phone.

On the following scale, rate how likely it is you would respond in each way to this situation.

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
Do nothing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss any concerns afterwards in private	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss any concerns immediately in front of others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Report concerns to agency administration and/or professional/licensing body	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How important of an ethical dilemma is this?

- Very Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Somewhat Unimportant
- Neither Unimportant nor Important
- Somewhat Important
- Important
- Very Important

3.) In your workplace, you are a clinician. Your clinical director asks you to refer a client to a particular social worker with whom you have worked before. Based on past actions by the social worker, you do not respect that social worker’s professional abilities.

On the following scale, rate how likely it is you would respond in each way to this situation:

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
Make the referral	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss professional concerns about worker with your clinical director	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contact worker and discuss professional concerns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss professional concerns with client receiving referral	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How important of an ethical dilemma is this?

- Very Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Somewhat Unimportant
- Neither Unimportant nor Important
- Somewhat Important
- Important
- Very Important

4. In your workplace you are a clinician. A client tells you that a prior therapist at your office made sexual advances toward her. This is the third client from whom you have heard such allegations.

On the following scale, rate how likely it is you would respond in each way to this situation:

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
Do nothing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss her feelings and explain professional standards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss the concerns with the therapist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Report the allegations to therapist's workplace administration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Report the allegations to the state licensing board and/or professional accreditation body	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How important of an ethical dilemma is this?

- Very Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Somewhat Unimportant
- Neither Unimportant nor Important
- Somewhat Important
- Important
- Very Important

5. As the executive director in your drug treatment center, you learn that funding has been cut for your agency's services. You know this means certain clients will not receive services as a result of these cuts. As the executive director, you have been asked to decide which clients will be served by your agency.

On the following scale, rate how likely it is you would respond in each way to this situation:

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
Choose which programs to fund the most programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Choose which programs to fund based on most people served	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Partner with other agencies that might be able to fill the gap caused by the cuts for clients	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advocate for additional funding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Resign as a form of protest over the funding cuts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How important of an ethical dilemma is this?

- Very Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Somewhat Unimportant

- Neither Unimportant nor Important
- Somewhat Important
- Important
- Very Important

6. You are a therapist for a man with a history of impulsive antisocial actions who discloses that he is planning to kill his current girlfriend because she is dating another man.

On the following scale, rate how likely it is you would respond in each way to this situation:

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
Do nothing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss his statements until you are sure he will not harm the woman	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inform the man you must warn the police and the woman	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inform the police and the woman without informing the man you will do so	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How important of an ethical dilemma is this?

- Very Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Somewhat Unimportant
- Neither Unimportant nor Important

- Somewhat Important
- Important
- Very Important

7. You are a hospital social worker and overhear two fellow social workers discussing a patient in a public hallway at the hospital. They describe the patient by name and discuss behaviors they say the patient has done.

On the following scale, rate how likely it is you would respond in each way to this situation:

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
Do nothing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss your concerns with their behavior privately	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Locate their supervisor and report your concerns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Locate their professional accreditation body and report your concerns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How important of an ethical dilemma is this?

- Very Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Somewhat Unimportant
- Neither Unimportant nor Important
- Somewhat Important
- Important
- Very Important

Attribution of Ethical Reasoning

Based on your responses to the ethical dilemmas proposed in the scenarios above, please check the top five reasons you have made the decisions you made in response to those scenarios. Consider what reasons and ethical bases you used for your responses.

Limit response to five answers.

- Avoid reprisal professional or legal reprisal from client, supervisor, or colleague
- Financial need
- Consistent with professional code of ethics
- Consistent with social work values
- Consistent with intuition (gut reaction)
- Protection of personal/professional reputation
- Consistent with ethical reasoning system learned in higher education or at work
- Consistent with values from family of origin
- Consistent with values from race or ethnicity
- Consistent with values learned from a mentor, coach or teacher
- Consistent with values instilled from religious upbringing
- Consistent with values of current religious affiliation
- Consistent with legal mandates
- Consistent with values from community
- Other:

Demographics

What is your age?

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 or older

What is your gender?

What is your race?

What is your ethnicity?

What is your religion, if any?

What was your childhood religion, if any?

What is your highest level of completed education?

- Less than a Bachelor's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree

Other:

What level of social work degree are you currently pursuing?

- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree

Other:

How many years have you practiced social work? Please include all years of professional social work, human services, etc.

In which state in the United States have you most practiced social work?

Tangential Arm

1. Please rate how useful your social work education about ethics has been to you as you consider current and future social work practice.

Limit response to one answers.

- Very Not Useful
- Not Useful
- Somewhat Not Useful
- Neither Useful Nor Not Useful
- Somewhat Useful
- Useful
- Very Useful

Scenarios

2. You are a community member on the board of directors at a local food bank. During a monthly board meeting at the food bank, another board member setting says she has relied on food bank customers as friends, hosting them in her house and talking socially on the phone.

On the following scale, rate how likely it is you would respond in each way to this situation.

.....

	Very		Somewhat	Neither	Somewhat	Very
	Unlikely	Unlikely	Unlikely	Likely nor	Likely	Likely
				Unlikely		

.....

Do nothing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss any concerns afterwards in private	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss any concerns immediately in front of others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Report concerns to agency administration and/or professional/licensing body	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How important of an ethical dilemma is this?

- Very Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Somewhat Unimportant
- Neither Unimportant nor Important
- Somewhat Important
- Important
- Very Important

3.) A family member needs mental health counseling and tells you his physician has referred him to a particular counselor with whom you have worked before. Based on past actions by the counselor, you do not respect that counselor's professional abilities.

On the following scale, rate how likely it is you would respond in each way to this situation:

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
Affirm the referral	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss professional concerns about worker with family member	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Contact worker and discuss professional concerns

Discuss professional concerns with family

How important of an ethical dilemma is this?

- Very Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Somewhat Unimportant
- Neither Unimportant nor Important
- Somewhat Important
- Important
- Very Important

4. You are sitting in an open 12-step meeting to support a family member. During a 12-step member's share she states that her therapist—whom she names—has made sexual advances toward her and two other clients.

On the following scale, rate how likely it is you would respond in each way to this situation:

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
Do nothing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss her feelings and explain professional standards after the meeting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss the concerns with the therapist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Report the allegations to therapist's workplace administration

Report the allegations to the state licensing board and/or professional accreditation body

How important of an ethical dilemma is this?

- Very Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Somewhat Unimportant
- Neither Unimportant nor Important
- Somewhat Important
- Important
- Very Important

5. As the PTA vice president at your child's school, you learn funding has been cut for the school's sports, art, music, and physical education programs. PTA funds can support some of these programs, but some will be cut. As the PTA vice president, you have been asked to decide which of these programs the PTA will financially support.

On the following scale, rate how likely it is you would respond in each way to this situation:

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neither Unlikely nor Likely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
Choose which programs to fund the most programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Choose	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

which programs to fund based on most people served

Partner with other agencies that might be able to fill the gap caused by the cuts for clients

Advocate for additional funding

Resign as a form of protest over the funding cuts

How important of an ethical dilemma is this?

- Very Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Somewhat Unimportant
- Neither Unimportant nor Important
- Somewhat Important
- Important
- Very Important

6. You have a friend with a history of impulsive antisocial actions who discloses that he is planning to kill his current girlfriend because she is dating another man.

On the following scale, rate how likely it is you would respond in each way to this situation:

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
Do nothing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss his statements until you are sure he will not harm the woman	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inform the man you must warn the police and the woman	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inform the police and the woman without informing the man you will do so	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How important of an ethical dilemma is this?

- Very Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Somewhat Unimportant
- Neither Unimportant nor Important
- Somewhat Important
- Important
- Very Important

7. You are recovering in a hospital and overhear two hospital employees outside your door discussing another patient loudly in the hallway at the hospital. They describe the patient by name and discuss behaviors they say the patient has done.

On the following scale, rate how likely it is you would respond in each way to this situation:

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
Do nothing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss your concerns with their behavior privately	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Locate their supervisor and report your concerns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Locate their professional accreditation body and report your concerns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How important of an ethical dilemma is this?

- Very Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Somewhat Unimportant
- Neither Unimportant nor Important
- Somewhat Important
- Important
- Very Important

Attribution of Ethical Reasoning

Based on your responses to the ethical dilemmas proposed in the scenarios above, please check the top five reasons you have made the decisions you made in response to those scenarios. Consider what reasons and ethical bases you used for your responses.

Limit response to five answers.

- Avoid reprisal professional or legal reprisal from client, supervisor, or colleague
- Financial need

- Consistent with professional code of ethics
- Consistent with social work values
- Consistent with intuition (gut reaction)
- Protection of personal/professional reputation
- Consistent with ethical reasoning system learned in higher education or at work
- Consistent with values from family of origin
- Consistent with values from race or ethnicity
- Consistent with values learned from a mentor, coach or teacher
- Consistent with values instilled from religious upbringing
- Consistent with values of current religious affiliation
- Consistent with legal mandates
- Consistent with values from community
- Other:

Demographics

What is your age?

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 or older

What is your gender?

What is your race?

What is your ethnicity?

What is your religion, if any?

What was your childhood religion, if any?

What is your highest level of completed education?

- Less than a Bachelor's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree
- Other:

What level of social work degree are you currently pursuing?

- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree
- Other:

How many years have you practiced social work? Please include all years of professional social work, human services, etc.

In which state in the United States have you most practiced social work?

Distal Arm

1. Please rate how useful your social work education about ethics has been to you as you consider current and future social work practice.

Limit response to one answers.

- Very Not Useful
- Not Useful
- Somewhat Not Useful
- Neither Useful Nor Not Useful
- Somewhat Useful
- Useful
- Very Useful

Scenarios

2. You are sitting at a table with a friend and other guests at a reception where your friend is receiving an award from a non-profit agency for her service. She mentions she has relied on some clients as friends, hosting them in her house and talking with them socially on the phone.

On the following scale, rate how likely it is you would respond in each way to this situation.

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
Do nothing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss any concerns afterwards in private	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss any concerns immediately in front of others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Report concerns to agency administration and/or professional/licensing body	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How important of an ethical dilemma is this?

- Very Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Somewhat Unimportant
- Neither Unimportant nor Important
- Somewhat Important
- Important
- Very Important

3.) A friend in another state discusses her son's counseling for chemical dependency over the phone with you. You recognize the name of the counselor as a past colleague. Based on past actions by the counselor, you do not respect that counselor's professional abilities.

On the following scale, rate how likely it is you would respond in each way to this situation:

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
Affirm the referral	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss professional concerns about worker with your friend	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contact worker and discuss professional concerns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss professional concerns with your friend	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How important of an ethical dilemma is this?

- Very Unimportant

- Unimportant
- Somewhat Unimportant
- Neither Unimportant nor Important
- Somewhat Important
- Important
- Very Important

4. You are sitting in an open 12-step meeting to support a friend in another state. During a 12-step member's share she states that her therapist—whom she names—has made sexual advances toward her and two other clients.

On the following scale, rate how likely it is you would respond in each way to this situation:

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
Do nothing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss her feelings and explain professional standards after the meeting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss the concerns with the therapist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Report the allegations to therapist's workplace administration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Report the allegations to the state licensing board and/or professional accreditation body	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How important of an ethical dilemma is this?

- Very Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Somewhat Unimportant
- Neither Unimportant nor Important
- Somewhat Important
- Important
- Very Important

5. You are at a national conference for a for-profit agency, where you serve as a committee vice president. One meeting you learn that funding has been cut for a program that you help oversee which has maintained protection on protected lands. As the committee vice president, you have been asked to decide which lands will remain protected.

On the following scale, rate how likely it is you would respond in each way to this situation:

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
Choose which programs that protect the most programs maintained	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Choose which programs to fund based on most land protected	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Partner with other agencies that might be able to fill the gap caused by the cuts for clients	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Advocate for additional funding

Resign as a form of protest over the funding cuts

How important of an ethical dilemma is this?

- Very Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Somewhat Unimportant
- Neither Unimportant nor Important
- Somewhat Important
- Important
- Very Important

6. You come across a disheveled man on a downtown street in a city you are visiting, muttering with his head down that he will kill a woman, whom he names, because she is dating another man.

On the following scale, rate how likely it is you would respond in each way to this situation:

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
Do nothing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss his statements until you are sure he will not harm the woman	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inform the man you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

must warn
the police
and the
woman

Inform the
police and
the woman
without
informing
the man
you will do
so

How important of an ethical dilemma is this?

- Very Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Somewhat Unimportant
- Neither Unimportant nor Important
- Somewhat Important
- Important
- Very Important

7. You attend a national conference for hospital employees. You hear two people from another part of the country talking in the main reception room. They describe patients by name and discuss behaviors they say the patients have done.

On the following scale, rate how likely it is you would respond in each way to this situation:

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
Do nothing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss your concerns with their behavior privately	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Locate their supervisor and report your	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

concerns

Locate their professional accreditation body and report your concerns



How important of an ethical dilemma is this?

- Very Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Somewhat Unimportant
- Neither Unimportant nor Important
- Somewhat Important
- Important
- Very Important

Attribution of Ethical Reasoning

Based on your responses to the ethical dilemmas proposed in the scenarios above, please check the top five reasons you have made the decisions you made in response to those scenarios. Consider what reasons and ethical bases you used for your responses.

Limit response to five answers.

- Avoid reprisal professional or legal reprisal from client, supervisor, or colleague
- Financial need
- Consistent with professional code of ethics
- Consistent with social work values
- Consistent with intuition (gut reaction)
- Protection of personal/professional reputation
- Consistent with ethical reasoning system learned in higher education or at work
- Consistent with values from family of origin
- Consistent with values from race or ethnicity
- Consistent with values learned from a mentor, coach or teacher
- Consistent with values instilled from religious upbringing

- Consistent with values of current religious affiliation
- Consistent with legal mandates
- Consistent with values from community
- Other:

Demographics

What is your age?

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 or older

What is your gender?

What is your race?

What is your ethnicity?

What is your religion, if any?

What was your childhood religion, if any?

What is your highest level of completed education?

- Less than a Bachelor's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree
- Other:

What level of social work degree are you currently pursuing?

- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree
- Other:

How many years have you practiced social work? Please include all years of professional social work, human services, etc.

In which state in the United States have you most practiced social work?