

Book Reviews

Social Work Ethics on the Line, Charles S. Levy, The Haworth Press, Inc. (1993), New York, ISBN 1-56024-282-5 hb, 124 pp inc index, price: US\$25.95.

Social Work on the Line discusses the justification and premise for social work ethics. It captures the need for codifying ethics and enunciates a paradigm for making ethical judgements. Furthermore, it sets precedences for ethical judgements and evaluation. Finally, the author calls for *broadcasts of ethics to social work professionals* and students.

It is the author's assertion that, privatisation of services promotes profitable self-interest over community service, thus diminishing the traditional public and agency-sanctioned practice safeguards. Modern technology, on the other hand, alters levels and standards of professional services, putting the application of values to severe test, hence compounding ethical problems. The need to regulate and control the behaviour of social workers therefore becomes imperative.

Dr Levy implores social work organisations to codify ethics to which their members subscribe, and publicly declare the ethics to which their members are said to be collectively committed and what these ethics may expect of them, thus engendering professionalism. The author's assertions emit signals to social work associations seeking to uphold credible professional status, effective service and practice; to develop codes of ethics, to act as benchmarks for the enforcement of social work ethics and adjudication of any ethical conduct complaints.

Social Work on the Line proposes a model for ethical decision-making and evaluation demonstrated in twenty-four vignettes, representing occurrences common to social work practice. The package serves as a handy manual for both social work practice and practice control procedures. The vignettes clearly enunciate dilemmas in practice affecting ethical conduct, and are invaluable as a framework for social work practice, supervision, administration, community work, and education.

This book provides an important guide to both social work educators and practitioners and also provides essential literature for social work students.

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