

Ethics While in the House

National Wx Conference
2005

Rick Karg
© 2005 R.J. Karg Associates
rjkarg@karg.com

What We Will Talk About

- What is ethics?
- Why is ethical behavior important?
- Conduct with clients.
- Abuse in clients homes and reporting this abuse.
- Tools for ethical decisions.



Introduction

What is Ethics?

- A system of principles governing the appropriate conduct for an individual or group.
- Primarily concerns the effects of our actions on others.
- Ethics goes beyond self-interest.
- Ethical conduct is for the benefit of the larger society.
- Rather than using a personal point of view, use the perspective of a spectator.

Underlying Ethics of Wx Program

- The Weatherization Program is based on the ethical principles of the:
 - Obligation to assist.
 - Redistribution of income.

Are These Guys Ethical?



Ethics While in the House

Code of Ethics or Conduct

- Does your agency have a code of ethics?
- If so, have you read it?

- An ethics code is very important for any organization today, especially a social service organization.

7 

Ethics While in the House

Black, White, and Gray

- Some actions are clear ethical violations.
 - Stealing from clients.
 - Insulating YOUR house with agency materials.
 - Your weatherization director re-roofing his girlfriend's house (she doesn't qualify for the program).
- Other actions fall into the ethical gray area.
 - Accepting garden produce from a client.
 - Buying a valuable antique from a client for a "steal".

8 

Ethics While in the House

Why is Ethical Conduct Important?

- Ethics helps bring civility to our society.
- Ethical behavior fosters equality and fairness.
- Ethical behavior goes beyond self-interest, to the good of society.
- Do you prefer to be treated ethically? If you do, you had better be ready to give it back.

9 

Ethics While in the House

General Principles for Making Ethical Decisions

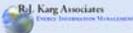
1. Your principles must be acceptable to other reasonable people.
2. The facts of each case must be testable by reliable and non-private methods.
3. You must be willing to make all your reasons public.

10 

Ethics While in the House

Is There an Ethical Message Here?



11 

Ethics While in the House

Conduct with Your Clients

12 

Ethics While in the House

Full Disclosure of Wx Services

- Provide clients with complete and accurate information about the extent and nature of weatherization services.
 - Chances are they haven't received services before, so they don't know.
 - Inform the clients of their obligations, if any.
 - Help client do the best they can with the services offered.

13 

Ethics While in the House

Don't Misuse Your Position or Power

- Don't use your power to exploit.
- Weatherization services are free.
 - This might make some clients feel indebted to you.
 - This might make some clients feel they have no control over the weatherization process.

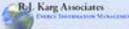
Should you ask to purchase an item at the client's house that interests you?

TG story 14 

Ethics While in the House

Any Conflict of Interest Issues?

- Accepting gifts or gratuities.
- Accepting food from clients.
- Your "moonlight" work.
- Your political activities.
- Benefiting family members.
- Others?

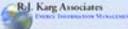
15 

Ethics While in the House

Confidentiality

- This is the ethical and legal responsibility to safeguard the client's privacy.
 - Primarily has to do with income, but also includes the manner in which they must or choose to live.
 - Confidential information should not be used in any way other than in the manner intended.

Should you reveal your function and/or employer to a watchful neighbor?

16 

Ethics While in the House

Discrimination

- There should be no tolerance for discrimination of any kind. This includes:
 - Racial.
 - Ethnic.
 - Socioeconomic.
 - Gender.
 - Sexual orientation.
 - Age.

17 

Ethics While in the House

Sexual Relations with Clients

- Remember, ethics goes beyond self-interest. Enough said!!
- If someone "comes on to you", it might be a good idea to document this in the job file. This might protect you later.

If you feel you have a romantic interest in a client, what is the ethical approach?

18 

Ethics While in the House

No Adult at Home, Only Kids

- What is your agency policy for:
 - Energy auditors?
 - Agency employed crews?
 - Subcontractors?

Does the gender of the Wx person and the age and gender of the kid make a difference?

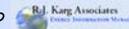
19 

Ethics While in the House

Unlawful Drug Use by Clients

- What would you do if you saw a client smoking marijuana?
- What if she had no kids?
- What if she had kids and she had no idea what they were doing?



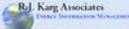
20 

Ethics While in the House

Unlawful Drug Production

- Cannabis (marijuana) production.
- Production of crystal meth (methamphetamine, A.K.A. crystal, crank, tweak, go-fast). In this case, it is a good idea to get out of the house ASAP.

What will you do if you find unlawful drugs?

21 

Ethics While in the House

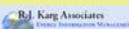
Marijuana




22 

Ethics While in the House

Abuse in Client Homes: What is it and Should You Report it?

23 

Ethics While in the House

Abuse Can Be . . .

- Child (to age 18) abuse by parents, relatives, etc.
- Elder (60 or older) abuse by children, relatives, etc.
- Intimate partner (18 to 59) abuse.
- Parent abuse by teenage children.
- Animal abuse by anyone.

24 

Abuse Can Be in the Form of . .

- Neglect.
- Physical abuse.
- Sexual abuse.
- Emotional abuse.

Abuse and Ethics

- When children are in danger, the ethical thing to do is to protect them.
- Does the same hold true for:
 - Animals?
 - Elders?
 - Intimate partners?
 - Parents of teenage children?

General Abuse and Violence Resource

National Center for Injury
Prevention and Control

www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/dvp.htm

Part of the
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Child Abuse Resource

The National Clearinghouse on
Child Abuse and Neglect Information

<http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov>

Child Abuse Can Be in the Form of . .

- Neglect (59 %).
- Physical abuse (19 %).
- Sexual abuse (10 %).
- Emotional abuse (7 %).

Percentages are from 2001 study of
903,000 investigated child abuse cases in US.

Child Abuse – Neglect

- Failure to provide for a child's basic needs.
 - Physical (lack of supervision or failure to provide necessary food, shelter, or medical care).
 - Educational (failure to educate a child or attend to child's special education needs).
 - Emotional (inattention to a child's emotional needs or exposure to domestic violence).

31

Child Abuse – Physical

- Physical injury ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death, resulting from:
 - Punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, hitting, burning, or otherwise harming a child.
- Considered abuse even if injury was not intended.

32

Child Abuse – Sexual

- Includes by a parent or caretaker such things as:
 - Fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, commercial exploitation through prostitution and the production of pornographic materials.

33

Child Abuse – Emotional

- Any pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth.
 - This may include constant criticism, threats or rejection, as well as withholding love, support, or guidance.

34

One State's Law for Hitting Kids*

- May only hit three times sequentially.
- May strike only with an open hand.
- Strike must be on fleshy part of body (butt, thigh, cheek).
- Must not leave any marks or bruises.

*Maine law

35

Reporting Child Abuse – 1

- All states require certain professionals to report child abuse.
- All states allow anyone to report.
- About eighteen states REQUIRE "any person" to report.

36

Reporting Child Abuse - 2

- Check with your local Child Protective Services to find out what the law is in your state.
- If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, contact Child Protective Services or local law enforcement so that professionals can assess the case.
- Reporters names are usually kept confidential.

Reporting Child Abuse - 3

- Some states call for reporting upon a mere "reasonable cause to believe" or a "reasonable suspicion."
- Other states require the reporter to "know the suspect".
- Whatever you decide to do, act in good faith.
- If you do report, understand the consequences for the reported person.

Intimate Partner Abuse



Contact Adult Protective Services or local law enforcement officials.

Elder Abuse



Contact the Agency on Aging or local law enforcement officials

National Center for Elder Abuse
www.elderabusecenter.org

Animal Abuse



Check your state's animal cruelty laws

Animal Abuse

American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals www.aspc.org

Humane Society of the United States
www.hsus.org

Ethics While in the House

Animal Abuse



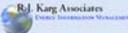
Is this true?

43 

Ethics While in the House

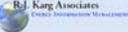
Ethics is Everyone's Responsibility in the Weatherization Program



44 

Ethics While in the House

Some Tools for Making Ethical Decisions

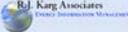
45 

Ethics While in the House

Five Stages of Moral Development*

1. Reason for doing the right thing is to avoid punishment.
2. The right thing is that which serves your own interests.
3. You do the right thing based on what others think of you.
4. You decide so that society as a whole can function.
5. Reason for doing right thing based on welfare of all people and protection of everyone's rights.

*Based on schema of Lawrence Kohlberg

46 

Ethics While in the House

General Principles for Making Ethical Decisions

1. Your principles must be acceptable to other reasonable people.
2. The facts of each case must be testable by reliable and non-private methods.
3. You must be willing to make all your reasons public.

Repeat of slide 10

47 

Ethics While in the House

Steps for Deciding What to Do - 1

1. What are the facts?
2. Make reasonable assumptions about the facts you don't know.
3. What do the facts mean?
4. What does the situation look like to the others involved? Put yourself in others shoes.

48 

Steps for Deciding What to Do - 2

5. What will happen if you choose one thing rather than another? Consider all consequences.
6. What do your feelings tell you?
7. What will you think of yourself if you decide one way or another?
8. Can you explain and justify your decision to others? Appropriate ethical decisions must pass the "public" test.