

# Social Work Education: Systemic Ethical Implications

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## Abstract

The ethical significance of power differences between students, social work educators, and the higher educational system needs to be more fully explored. All social workers, including educators, must follow the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics. A systemic ethic of relational responsibility enhances student/faculty ethical conduct.

*Key words:* NASW Code of Ethics, Social Work Educators, System of Higher Education, Harassment and Bullying, Ethic of Relationships

“Kindness as a public virtue, built upon a commitment to social justice, embraces critique.” (Clegg & Rowland, 2010, p. 723)

## 1. Introduction

All social workers, whether working under supervision or in an independent practice, are to adhere to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics. This includes social workers who supervise and educate. Yet most case studies and ethical training are geared toward those in the field rather than the social work educators responsible for developing new social workers. Social work educators in higher education have extensive responsibilities to socialize, teach, and gatekeep for the profession, but it is not clear how these responsibilities interact with systemic higher education responsibilities as well as personal career goals. Of special concern is the lack of focus on the possible ethical dilemmas that

may result from working in a larger higher educational system. Systemic goals may diverge from those of both the social work profession and the individual social work educator. Social work ethics for the educator in higher education must recognize the systemic issues the educator faces in this environment.

## 2. The NASW Code of Ethics as Guide for Social Work Education

The NASW *Code of Ethics* states that “a historic and defining feature of social work is the profession’s focuses on individual wellbeing in a social context and the wellbeing of society” (NASW, 2008, Preamble). Found here are the six core values of social work: service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. Together they form the foundation for the social work mission, reflecting “what is unique to the social work profession.” All social workers are responsible for enacting the *Code of Ethics*. Most considerations of social work ethics reflect the practice responsibilities of social work professionals: “The Code socializes practitioners new to the field to social work’s mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards....Ethical responsibilities flow from all human relationships, from the personal and familial to the social and professional” (NASW, 2008, Purpose).

The *Code of Ethics* includes the responsibilities of the social work faculty: “Social workers promote social justice and social change...

[through] direct practice, community organizing, *supervision* (emphasis added), consultation, administration, advocacy, social and political action, policy development and implementation, *education* (emphasis added), and research and evaluation” (NASW, 2008, Preamble). The *Code of Ethics* emphasizes that supervisors, professors, and field instructors must have the appropriate knowledge and skills, be mindful of boundaries, avoid inappropriate relationships, and evaluate the performance of student supervisees in a “fair and respectful” way (NASW, 2008, 3.01-3.03).

Protection against student grade inflation and other competency concerns are recognized ethical goals to protect the public (Homonoff, 2008; Sowbel, 2011). Case studies of ethical dilemmas have offered a needed emphasis on decision-making for social workers (Dolgoff, Loewenberg, & Harrington, 2007; Strom-Gottfried, 2007), but often do not fully explore systemic power differences found in hierarchical relationships beyond the case itself. It is rare to find an examination of ethics for academics, though Strom-Gottfried and D’Aprix (2006) have examined common ethical dilemmas for social workers in higher education. Another study of ethical cases filed with NASW from 1986 through 1998 found a small percentage (under 4 %) involved students filing a complaint against faculty or field supervisors (Strom-Gottfried, 2000). Though this is a very small percentage, the differences in power between faculty or field instructors and students were not explored.

Few studies examine the implications for students of quality field director training, though many learn “on the job” and through “trial and error” (Deal & Clements, 2006; Raskin & Ellison, 2011). The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE, 2010) now designates field as the *signature pedagogy* of social work, which should give an added impetus to focusing on the social work educator in class and field. Barretti (2004) comments that “though social work has always stressed the importance of relationships in the change process, it is curious that so little empirical inquiry has been directed to the critical influence of faculty

and field instructors on students’ professional socialization” (p. 277). A better understanding of faculty ethical relationships and responsibilities is needed, because they are central to modeling professional social work for students (Clifford & Royce, 2006), and because faculty themselves are part of the larger system of the academic workplace.

Overall, it continues to appear that “the historical investment of social workers in challenging issues of power and oppression has not facilitated the examination of abuses of power within the social work profession. “Sensitivity to these issues actually may have increased resistance to such painful self-examination” (Jacobs, 1991, p. 130). Most of the emphasis on social work ethics is in the social world beyond that of higher education rather than of the systemic ethical relationship outcomes between faculty or field instructors and students (Kircher, Stilwell, Talbot, & Chesborough, 2011).

## **2.1 Some Indicators of Bullying in Professional Social Work**

Bullying is defined by the Norwegian social scientist Stale Einarsen as “the systematic persecution of a colleague, a subordinate, or a superior, which, if continued, may cause severe social, psychological, and psychosomatic problems for the victim” (1999, p. 17). These hostile and aggressive behaviors may or may not be physical but do lead to a victimization and stigmatization of the recipient. Bullying, Einarsen observes, may alternately be called *mobbing*, *emotional abuse*, *harassment*, *mistreatment*, and *victimization*. In the United States, the term harassment may be used instead of bullying, though often in the narrower context of sexual harassment. Bullying, however, is much broader than sexual harassment and there may not be any gender or sexual aspect to it. Bullying can be done by either the superior or inferior in the social hierarchy, though it is usually an issue of superior power and control. The person who is bullied may feel humiliation and distress, which can interfere with both personal and occupational

performance. The systemic aspect of bullying isolates the victim from the rest of the group, who then tend to further the bullying process either directly by harassment or indirectly by ignoring or disparaging the contributions of the victim. Einarsen finds that, to one observing this process, it may appear that the bullied person is at fault for the situation, acting in a less than professional manner and even deserving to be treated in this way.

Bullies target those whom they find threatening because the victim refuses to be subservient, may have better skills, is liked more than the bully, or has exposed some weakness of the bully, perhaps even an unethical or illegal activity. Such victimized workers may be less confrontational, finding it difficult to protect themselves once they are attacked (Namie, 2007). In the United States, state and federal laws protect certain classes of employees (e.g., gender, race, age, disability, ethnicity, religion) from harassment under risk of a lawsuit; however, most bullying involves an unprotected group member or is instigated by a protected group member. For example, women may target other women, although a high percentage (80%) of women who are targeted are targeted by superiors of either gender (Namie, 2007).

Few studies of social worker harassment or bullying exist either in field or in higher education (Kircher, Stilwell, Talbot, & Chesborough, 2011). A small study in the United States found that sexual harassment of social workers at work was a common occurrence. Out of half of a NASW chapter membership, 27% reported experiencing sexual harassment at work by co-workers (Maypole, 1986). Harassment must be defined as more than sexual, rather as a power play for social control. This study is unusual because of its focus in an American setting on harassment or bullying in a social work workplace. The potential for bullying in social work is often related to status inequity and organizational context in supervisory bullying. Much of social work is dependent on such hierarchical relationships.

Three studies or reports outside the United States have focused on social workers who have

themselves been the objects of bullying in the workplace. Van Heugten (2010) explored, 17 New Zealand social workers who had been bullied at their workplace. Bullying in this study resulted from stressful changes in the workplace as a result of status uncertainty and competition for positions and power. Christie (2009), another New Zealand researcher, found little previous literature on social work supervisor/supervisee roles in remediating abusive experiences for the supervisee. This study found a lack of support for the bullied social workers by their supervisors. Kenny (2007) reported that social service staff in Britain were “the third largest group of callers to a national advice line for workplace bullying, accounting for more than 800 cases over the eight years it ran” (p. 16).

Roscigno, Lopez and Hodson (2009) found that one is vulnerable to bullying not only when one belongs to a less protected out-group (a minority in a low hierarchical position) but also when the workplace itself is disorganized with unclear role and responsibility mandates. In such organizations, the division of labor is ambiguous and even contradictory. There are unclear power relationships, making the environment ripe for bullying behavior to emerge. They state that bullying more commonly targets female staff members where women continue to have less status than men and are culturally perceived as less competent and more compliant in the face of aggression. Much of social work is organizationally in flux due to the nature of social work itself, as well as challenging economic times. Women form the large majority of social workers (81%) but, as with women in general, earn less than male social workers for the same position (Whitaker, Weismiller & Clark, 2006).

American researchers have been more successful reviewing school or workplace bullying where the social worker or other professional is in the role of helper (Meyer-Adams & Conner, 2008; Namie, 2007); however, in European societies, workplace bullying has become an important area for research in a variety of professional fields, including nursing (Randle, 2003), business (LaVan

& Martin, 2007), and social work (Kenny, 2007). The British Commonwealth, as well as some Western European countries, appear to be especially attuned to the term bullying, perhaps because it was adopted in Britain in the late 1980s (Namie, 2007).

### **3. The Academic System and Power Differentials**

In higher education, more men hold advanced positions than women. Women are more likely than men to be non-tenured instructors or assistant professors than in higher academic positions. Two Canadian articles have examined bullying in academia. McKay, Arnold, Fratzi, and Thomas (2008) have researched workplace bullying with a survey sent to faculty, instructors, and librarians at a Canadian university. The results document that workplace bullying is a systemic concern for those who are newly hired or untenured. The costs of this behavioral phenomenon include academic employee turnover, less respect and loyalty for the university by employees and students, as well as modeling negative behaviors for students who may then carry these role behaviors into a future workplace setting.

A second Canadian research study is an ethnography delineating the techniques of normalization that university professors use when accused of bullying practices (Nelson & Lambert, 2001). Bullying may be self-interpreted as a normal way of behaving, or even as necessary. That study observed how organizational structure and university values protect this behavior by discouraging the bullying label itself. Instead, the bully is seen as having a right to own opinion as part of the university academic freedom mandate. In this scenario, the bully becomes the victim, needing protection, while the person bullied becomes the bully. Untenured professors and students, being lower in the university hierarchy, are especially prone to being the real victims in this process: "The ethos of the university and the existence of tenure may be seen to provide structural scaffolding for both ivory tower bullying and its toleration within the university" (p. 99). Ninety percent of female social

workers in colleges and universities earn less than their male counterparts (National Association of Social Workers Center for Workforce Studies and Social Work Practice, 2011).

### **4. Responsibilities to Students**

According to the *NASW Code of Ethics*, the social work educator has the responsibility to consider both the wellbeing of the student as well as the wellbeing of society (NASW, 2008, Preamble). More specifically, educators must consider the six core values of social work: service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. First, teaching itself is a *service*. The objects of this service are students, the specific higher educational entity, as well as the discipline of social work and clients. Systemically, the educator will also be serving the larger community. Second, *social justice* is the goal of the educator, sought at each systemic level from micro through macro systemic social levels. Social work seeks to help students develop their abilities in a world that is often unjust. Social work educators also seek to change unjust social structures through research and advocacy. Third, all students have their own *dignity and worth*, whether they are diligent and quick learners or less focused and have difficulty grasping new concepts. This core value is very much also a systemic value where the educator seeks to act as a role model throughout the higher educational system and larger community. Fourth, the *importance of human relationships* is also a core educator emphasis which encompasses all the other core values. More important than successful students or a successful social work career for an educator is the importance of working with others toward their goals as well as being with them on their life journey. Fifth, the *integrity* of the educator is the model for student socialization and development. If educators are not trustworthy, seeking their own career advancement before the needs of others, all social levels, from student to the wider community, will be stymied in their development. Sixth and finally, the social work

educator must be *competent*, seeking to develop an expertise and focus in certain social work areas. The educator does not over-promise as an expert. As with the other core values, competency is a value that has systemic implications for the higher educational facility and the larger community.

According to some social psychologists, human beings are aggressive and territorial as well as loving and caring (DeLamater & Myers, 2011). Therefore, it seems probable that abusive relationships exist between social work educators and students, between social work educators themselves, and between social work educators and others in their academic organizations. Yet the higher education literature, especially for American higher education, does not offer much insight into this powerful and potentially devastating ethical abuse of the social work relationship. Students, as the lowest group in the social hierarchy, would presumably be most affected by a bullying atmosphere within a higher education structure. Student socialization can be a road to a negative re-socialization and loss of self (Egan, 1989), as well as to a professionally desirable socialization process which develops the ability to use oneself as a tool in relationship building.

The paradox here is that coming to higher education as an undergraduate or graduate student may to some extent mean risking or perhaps even losing independence and self-identity. By deferring to teaching or supervising professionals, the student hopes to emerge with a refurbished and re-socialized professional self at some future time. This paradoxical process can be especially significant for those students perceived as out-of-step because they are different from the majority, whether these differences are in appearance, knowledge, skills, or abilities. Such differences may not be applauded by the majority or by those in charge.

A particular issue for social work is the ability of the profession to both encourage and discourage any student who struggles with the demands of integrating knowledge, skills, and values into a coherent professional self. Students, for instance, may be first generation college students

with different loyalties and understandings of college, work, and family life. They may have major concurrent responsibilities in all three of these areas of life. Social work faculty, more used to middle class expectations of time and effort, may miss cues from these working class students who are making major changes in their world views and life practices at the same time as undertaking, often with little outside support, to meet extensive academic requirements. Some have poor writing and mathematical skills or other difficulties that students from a more privileged academic and social background can find mystifying (Lareau, 2007; Palmore, 2011).

More than most other professional disciplines, social work demands that the intern or supervisee be able to both defer to a superior and also take initiative. This process can be confusing and unclear for both the social work educator and the student.

Cousins (2010) explores the games of avoidance and dominance that can be played between the social work supervisor and supervisee, as well as how this can affect client services. Interpersonal dynamics, which relate to the relative power between the social work educator and student, must be considered of primary importance in social work education. Also at issue is the concern that social work educators themselves may not be getting the support and training needed to best work with students.

## **5. Gatekeeping Responsibilities**

Gatekeeping procedures are necessary to maintain quality in professional social work education. Social work educators – program administrators, classroom professors, field liaisons and instructors, advisers, and adjunct faculty--must work together to create and carry out some quality control of the professionalization process. Gatekeeping is vital in order to protect the public, especially those who are more likely to be vulnerable because of their need. In addition, the gatekeeping process is important for students, as it gives them

competency markers which can help them better understand both their assets and liabilities as they pursue a social work career.

For those students who cannot make the grade as future social workers, it is vital to spend time to counsel them out of the program. Solution-focused advising emphasizes student strengths and moves toward their hopes for the future (De Jong & Berg, 2008). When there is a mismatch between student abilities or effort and student hopes, helping students find new directions is both ethical and a good administrative tactic. Students are not only the raw material that is necessary for the higher education system to develop, but they also form part of the larger community in which the social work department and the higher education institution itself must relate. Students are much less likely to feel that they have been mishandled when there has been an effort to help them move on.

How much effort should be made by social work educators to work with students who are having difficulty keeping up with the three prongs of social work education – knowledge, skills, and values? Here, a developmental understanding of students can be helpful. While some social work educators may try too hard to remediate students, others may demand too much, too soon, as a kind of tough-love approach which can rapidly veer into an abusive, bullying situation. Neither approach is, in the end, ethical. It is not ethical for any of the stakeholders (the public, higher education, faculty, or student) to ignore student failings, nor is it ethical to push students along, never giving them enough time to absorb the complex new cognitive, behavioral, and affective learning they are undertaking. Because so much of social work professionalization comes through developing relationships with specific persons who have particular personalities, it may be important sometimes to give a student a second chance with another field site and/or a second field instructor or faculty liaison.

Formalizing standards of competency through the new CSWE competency requirements may be a helpful first step. However, competency-based education has important limitations as well

as strengths. Although an experienced field instructor may get at certain performance behaviors social workers must master, competency-based education involves more difficulty in discerning how to develop social worker judgment and reflexivity within the content of the specific case (Bogo et al., 2006). Standardized policies on sensitive student information and confidentiality are also needed (Duncan-Datson & Culver, 2005; Wayne, 2004).

Social work educators have an advising role to aid students as well as a gatekeeping role for the profession and higher education (Moore, Dietz, & Wallace, 2003). Formalizing relational rather than adversarial processes for performance reviews and grade appeals is necessary. Such processes should take up the concerns of both the student and the school as represented by social work educators who are knowledgeable about the performance of the student. Students should be encouraged to articulate a well-developed delivery of their concerns, regardless of what decision may ultimately have to be made. They should expect to get due procedural support from faculty at the evaluation meeting as well as an objective appeal process as needed.

The formalizing process for gatekeeping does not stop after it is first created by students and educators. Gatekeeping is a process as well as a product and “needs to be presented as a support for faculty and students, not a punishment” (Urwin, Van Soest, & Kretzschmar, 2006, p. 177). Faculty members need to hear of positive outcomes of student gatekeeping in order to encourage their active participation. Social work educators as well as students can improve in their performance through student classroom and field evaluative measures.

## **6. Educator Ethical Considerations**

Student affective development should also be a major area for support and growth. Entering students experience a high level of anxiety (Gelman, 2004), especially at the graduate level, when they may be expected to perform both in class and in the field, often with little preparation for the

rigors of the graduate program. Though students learn values cognitively, behaviorally, and affectively, the affective realm is the most complex, since its foundation lies in an emotional understanding of oneself and others (Allen & Friedman, 2010). For both the social work educator and the student, affective learning requires a process for handling conflicts between professional values and doing tasks that are expected. This conflict has been labeled *professional dissonance* (Taylor, 2007), a performance gap between what one values or believes and what one is expected to do. Without a process for both the social work educator and student to discuss and get support when grappling with such conflicting responsibilities, either burnout or distancing is often the result. When distancing is the result, the danger increases that important responsibilities will be neglected (Abramovitz, 2005; Gallina, 2010).

The social work educator should lead, teach, and advise developmentally, both in class and field (Allen & Friedman, 2010; Deal & Clements, 2006). In the classroom, the educator must learn the best teaching style(s) for a given class and, at times, for individual students. In the field, instructors and university liaisons must learn the most up-to-date practices and theories as well as the best approaches for working developmentally with individual students. This means working to foster successful outcomes for all students. The social work educator must begin where students are, as well as discern if and when students need to consider moving on to another career in which they can better apply their talents.

Although student satisfaction with an MSW program has been shown to be related to supervision quality (Kanno & Koeske, 2010), the quality of training for social work educators in the field has been uneven. At times, those supervising field practice have been perceived as not needing continuing education in the most recent social work theories, models, and practices, a supposition criticized by both Brashears (1993) and Homonoff (2008). Although the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social

Work Education (2010) specify field as the signature pedagogy of social work, a number of discrepancies separate the implied primacy of this designation and the reality of field placement:

- The social work field instructor as educator is usually a voluntary position, and as pointed out above, risks a lack of adequate time, energy, or training – especially advanced training in developmental student models, as well as the latest practice theories and research modalities.
- Due to the economic times and the nature of much of social work practice, a lot of stress often occurs at service agencies. Social workers are being asked to do more with less because of downsizing and other fiscal constraints. While field instructors in the past might have been given time release for working with students, this has become less frequent.
- Turnover in agency positions burdens the field program coordinator at the higher education site with more work and delivers the students less consistency.
- Students may need more help academically than in the past, with many of them coming to social work programs with less time and more outside responsibilities or unprepared academically for graduate school.
- The paperwork at agencies has increased because of the need to document and show evidence for all work.
- Critical thinking is essential to good social work practice and may be hard for the field social work instructor to teach.
- Cases, as a sign of the times, have increasingly fast turnovers, which may make it difficult for the social work intern to develop relationships with clients. This can give the field

instructor more work in finding suitable clients for the beginning intern and can make it harder for the intern to settle into a learning mode with clients.

- Financial downsizing is an issue for higher education staff and faculty, who must adjust to do more with less. This increases the work for the field program coordinator and perhaps for the faculty member acting as a liaison between the agency and university.
- The scaling used to measure competencies and practice behaviors has not been developed for reliability and validity (Wayne, Bogo, & Raskin, 2010). Different graders may grade competencies differently, especially as they get to know their student interns. The new competency grading, therefore, may not be more accurate than previous grading systems. In addition, it may be reductionistic in that it limits measures to individual behaviors rather than more complex judgments about the overall case (Bogo et al., 2006).
- Faculty practice experience is another possible issue, since fewer faculty have extensive, or even at times any, practice experience. In some higher education programs, most faculty never see a field site, making it more difficult to relate practice to either theory or research agendas which dominate the social work program (Johnson & Munch, 2010).

Appropriate supervision is essential for students and beginning social workers to develop a *professional concept of self* (Giddings, Cleveland, & Smith, 2006, p. 105), in order to develop social work knowledge, skills, and values. Through the use of critical thinking skills, the student learns to integrate theories with practice. Poor supervision may veer toward either a hands-off relationship with the social work student or, at the other extreme, an authoritarian and perhaps bullying posture. By studying the literature on professional socialization of social work students, Barretti

(2004) found that social work researchers themselves are not able to offer a broad framework for studying student socialization in the context of environmental forces. She also concludes, “Many of the findings inadvertently suggest that what social work students learn in their programs is not necessarily what is intentionally taught but what faculty and field instructors model” (p. 277). Thus, social work educators have an ethical responsibility to develop their skills as educators who can work with students in the field, in the classroom, in the higher education facility and in the larger community.

## **7. Academic Workplace Responsibilities**

Social work educators have responsibilities to both their social work departments and the higher education organizations where they are nested. Within the academic setting, social work educators must find ways to accommodate the demands of research, teaching, and service in order to reach tenure as well, as maintain and elevate their academic status. Though a main purpose for higher education is to educate students, many other responsibilities compete for faculty time, with greater and lesser rewards. As Robert Scott, president of Adelphi University reminds us: “Just as a checkbook can reveal the priorities of the holder, so can campus rewards reveal what is valued. In what ways are the rewards of appointment, tenure, promotion release time, and sabbaticals – board decisions all – related to the goals of student learning?” (Scott as cited in Reis, 2011).

Academic collegiality, often called academic citizenship, is now routinely emphasized, connecting the academic community to one another and the world beyond through networking relationships and common projects. Bruhn, Zajac, Al-Kazemi, and Prescott (2002) posit an intersection between ethics and academic professionalism, and it is at this intersection that good academic citizenship lies. More than many other disciplines, social work education as a practice discipline and profession looks to both the academic community



and the outside practice communities. It has been these practice communities that have traditionally given direction and impetus to the work done in the academic workplace.

The academic workplace and the practice community are two worlds which, while they cannot be blended, should not supersede one another. Each is necessary for a viable social work discipline. To be truly collegial, the academic community must look beyond itself to the larger world. In this way, it looks to its role in world citizenship, which is also how social work seeks to position itself (NASW, 2008, 6.01 Social Welfare). In the tension between social work as encouraging self-determination versus social work as encouraging social norms and control, the ethical dimension must always be the first concern. For instance, if we were practicing social work in Nazi Germany, social work would have a very different face than that in a democratic society (Johnson & Moorhead, 2011).

## **8. Toward a Systemic Ethic of Relationship in Social Work Education**

Another way to look at the mandate to develop social work ethics is to look at the value of relationships as the foundation for the other five core values. Social work is relational, seeking to connect each to the other at a human level (Hepworth, 2010). A social work ethic of relationships must include an ethic of care as Gilligan (1982) set forth in her pioneering feminist ethic, "In a Different Voice." There she concluded that moral reasoning can be based on women's traditional reasoning as the norm just as easily as that of the traditional male norm. While male reasoning seeks equality and fairness, ethical analysis can instead begin with the relationship, seeking balance between opposing positions. Gilligan concludes that an ethic of care emphasizes equity, differences, and need as a missing half of the moral equation—balancing rights with responsibility, individualism with community, and autonomy with care. An ethic of care is relational and contextual, looking at all levels of

social structure, whether micro, mezzo, or macro, and their interrelationships.

An ethic of social work relationships comes out of such an ethic of care and results in a social ethic. In lifting up kindness as an academic ethic for higher education, Clegg and Rowland (2010) argue for the practice of academic caring as a public virtue. They remind us that the word *kind* comes from the word *kin*, to be related: "The good teacher, one who is perceived as having particular personal qualities beyond simply exercising due care, appears to be the effective teacher by virtue of the personal not despite it" (p. 729). If I care about you, I will be able to critique your work honestly and help you improve or find another goal. If I care about you, I will respect you. This is my public, social responsibility. The ethic of relationships binds us together, as kindred (caring, relational) spirits and whole people, enhancing our contributions and abilities rather than pulling us down.

The goal of higher education, among other ends, is to help students become citizens (Bruhn et al., 2002). The definition of citizenship varies, because the structure of political systems and organizations vary, but citizenship at its broadest goes beyond nationality and toward that of being part of the human community. Citizens create and add to the common good. Social work seeks a world citizenship when it works for the common good. Jane Addams, a founder of social work and a world citizen, is a helpful guide here. Her social experiments of first, settlement house living, and later, world peace advocacy, led her to believe in the solidarity of the human race. We are all related, kin to one another; without the advancement of the weakest we cannot advance as a whole. Ethics, Addams held, is social. Writing in "Democracy and Social Ethics," she admonishes us: "To attain individual morality in an age demanding social morality, to pride oneself on the results of personal effort when the time demands social adjustment, is utterly to fail to apprehend the situation" (Addams, 2002, p. 6). Her life work was to help others to realize their citizenship as part of humanity. This is also the life work of the ethical social work educator.

## 9. Conclusion

In the face of so many potential structural limitations and concerns it is important to note that most social work educators, whether in higher education or the field seek to be faithful to their call, going far beyond what is asked, even at a personal cost. Yet, social work faculty must be aware of the ethical implications of power differentials, just as other social workers in agencies and other avenues of social work employment are called to manage these complex differences. It is imperative to proactively defend vulnerable students and other faculty as well as clients from poor social work. Social work educators have a special need for clear and ethical structures in light of the *Code of Ethics*. Making a difference as change agents requires more ethical transparency in the social worker educator model, where practice skills, classroom theory, and research meet.

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