What is Sacred When Personal and Professional Values Collide?

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Recent contentious and, at times, radical positions dominate our societal debates. Within social work, these same value-based debates occur between Evangelical Christians and progressive writers. In both instances, these personal worldviews are the basis for their respective positions. To move the debate forward, the authors propose a six-stage model for addressing value conflicts between personal worldviews and the Code of Ethics.

What is sacred when personal and professional values collide? Richard Spano, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Terry Koenig, Ph.D., Assistant Professor*University of Kansas, School of Social Welfare Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics, Volume 4, Number 3 (2007)

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Abstract Recent contentious and, at times, radical positions dominate our societal debates. Within social work, these same value-based debates occur between Evangelical Christians and progressive writers. In both instances, these personal worldviews are the basis for their respective positions. To move the debate forward, the authors propose a six-stage model for addressing value conflicts between personal worldviews and the Code of Ethics. 1. Introd particular moment in our history, the social work profession finds itself embedded in a larger societal context in which public debates, some call culture wars (Stetson & Conti, 2005; Walsh, 2000), are reflected within professional dialogues. Contentious or radical positions appear in many professional journals, newsletters, and other forms of communication (Potok, 2006; Ranney, Gee, & Merchant, 2006; Sable & Galambos, 2006; Wallis & Jacoby, 2005). Certain threads appear to make up the tapestry of these shrill encounters. First, people who hold these radical positions believe they have arrived at truth (with a capital or authoritative “T”). Second, these “Truths” are based on personal belief systems typically rooted in religious or philosophical traditions. Third, when professional codes of ethics conflict with personal worldviews, personal worldviews are used to reinterpret the Code, thereby taking precedence because they are understood to represent an ultimate or higher truth. Fourth, given the belief that one has the “Truth,” there is little need for self-reflection related to the consequences for clients when we impose our “Truth” on them. In social work, where values have long been acknowledged as central to understanding practice with clients, arguments have been put forward that apply concepts like diversity, social justice, and self determination to professionals rather than to clients (Hodge, 2005; Melendez & LaSala, 2006; Ressler & Hodge, 2000). The authors propose that the NASW Code of Ethics (1996) provides the framework or screen through which professional social workers’ personal worldviews must be drawn to determine their acceptability in social work practice. Few current writings (Canda & Furman, 1999) on professional ethical decision-making frameworks emphasize ways to examine conflicts between personal worldviews and the Code of Ethics. To move the debate forward this article examines: (1) the context of social work practice; (2) value tensions between some types of Christianity and social work as an example of personal worldviews colliding with the Code of Ethics; (3) the nature of professional relationships and the use of the Code; and, (4) a model for examining congruence between personal worldviews and the Code. 1.1 Context of practice There is a long standing tradition in social work literature acknowledging the complex challenges faced by social workers as they interact with clients. The person-in-environment focus of social work has been central to our conceptions of practice for nearly a century (Hollis, 1964; Perlman, 1957; Pincus & Minahan, 1973; Richmond, 1930; Smalley, 1967; Taft, 1962). This systematic examination of the nature of social work practice continues in the work of Shulman, who uses Schwartz’s ideas to more fully develop his “mediating model” (Schwartz, 1961; Shulman, 2006). In this model, the definition of the social worker’s professional function is to facilitate a process through which individuals and society reach out for each other in mutual need for growth and self-fulfillment. Shulman then uses a triangular model to diagram three key elements of practice--client(s), worker, and agency/family/peers. He acknowledges that the mediation among these systems can include a broader range of behaviors, including activities like advocacy and confrontation. The richness of this conceptualization is quite useful to social workers, because it provides a way to include multiple system foci as we work with clients (e.g., individual, family, group, and community). It also incorporates the idea that there are often value conflicts among these systems and that conflict resolution is endemic to practice. Unfortunately, it leaves out an important system—the profession. Social work writers, with the exception of those focusing on spiritually-sensitive social work practice (Canda & Furman, 1999; Derezotes, 2005), typically identify professional values and the Code of Ethics as part of their discussion of practice (Hepworth, Rooney, & Larson, 2002; Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2001; Miley, O’Melia, & DuBois, 2001), but they presume that there is a fit between the worker’s personal values and the profession’s values. Consequently, value conflicts are typically described as between workers and their agencies or workers and their clients. In contrast, we propose the following schematic as a more useful representation of the context of practice in which the potential for values conflicts between workers’ personal values and the profession’s values is directly acknowledged. Figure 1: The profession as the fourth element of practice

By adding a fourth component, we draw attention to potential conflicts that exist in other conceptualizations, but explicitly identify the role of the profession as separate from the other systems. Practice occurs in the shared area (i.e., oval with lines) at the center of the diagram. What this suggests is that each system (i.e., client, worker, agency, and profession) has a life and a set of values that may compete with the needs and values of other systems within a specific practice encounter. For example, agencies’ interests exist beyond their individual clients, their workers and the profession, e.g., the agency may constrain client choices because of policies established by funding sources. Workers have personal lives and values that may compete with their employment in an agency, e.g., their professional membership. Finally,

clients’ values may conflict with workers’ personal values, e.g., client and worker may disagree on views of marriage or homosexual behavior. The vast majority of ethics writings focus on the management of ethical dilemmas or values conflicts occurring between workers and their agencies or workers and their clients. Only a few authors have more directly addressed the conflicts between workers’ personal values and the Code of Ethics (Canda, Nakashima, & Furman, 2004; Keith-Lucas, 1985; Letendre, Nelson-Becker, & Kreider, 2005; Levy, 1976; Rhodes, 1992; Sherwood, 2002). More specifically, we focus on conflicts between personal worldviews held by workers (i.e., some types of Christianity) and professional ethical obligations outlined in the Code of Ethics. By examining the nature of the relationship between Christianity and social work, as well as the nature of the profession, we identify areas in which inherent tensions exist and present a model to manage conflicts between workers’ personal worldviews and their professional responsibilities. 2. Christianity and social work To highlight the current debate about the role of personal values within the social work profession, the authors have chosen to use some types of Christianity as exemplars. Current literature, produced by Evangelical Christians who are social work professionals, puts forward the argument that their particular views of Christianity should be included within the social work profession (Hodge, 2005). For our purposes, Evangelical Christianity is defined as a trans-denominational Protestant movement that emphasizes (1) salvation only through a belief in Christ’s death and resurrection, (2) a transformed life that involves improved moral conduct and participation in religious rituals, and, (3) relies on the authority of the Bible (Hodge, 2003; Mardsen, 1987, Pellabon, 2000). These Evangelical Christians argue that social work’s respect for diversity should apply to an acceptance of professionals’ personal worldviews that encompass an ultimate divine authority that takes priority over the Code of Ethics. This runs counter to the traditional application of respect for diversity as applied to clients who have been marginalized as a result of “race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, and mental or physical disability” (NASW Code of Ethics, 1996, 1.05, p. 9). What some Evangelicals argue for is inclusion of diverse perspectives for professionals’ personal worldviews without placing that worldview in the context of the Code (Hodge, 2005; Ressler & Hodge, 2005). They refer to the Code of Ethics, Section 2.01b on Respect (1996, p. 15), which states that “colleagues should avoid unwarranted negative criticism of other colleagues as well as avoid demeaning comments that refer to colleagues’ level of competence or individual attributes including race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion and mental or physical disability.” We concur with this standard, but point out that this does not mean all ideas, whether political, religious, or representing other ideological perspectives, are acceptable within the profession. If one hears ageist, racist, or homophobic comments made about colleagues, this is to be addressed in a respectful manner; nowhere does the Code condone discrimination against people. More specifically, the Code states, “Social workers should not take unfair advantage of any professional relationship or exploit others to further their personal, religious, political or business interests” (p. 9). What some Evangelical Christians have experienced may be a level of disrespect and dismissive attitudes toward them personally. Such behavior may, in fact, be unethical. However, strong critiques of their perspective based on differences that are anchored with the Code (e.g., non-discrimination) are not only justifiable, but essential to maintain the integrity of the profession. Not all perspectives can find a home within the social work profession. Some of the problems associated with this current Evangelical Christian argument were foreshadowed by Keith-Lucas (1985), who writes about the connection between Christianity and social work (1972; 1962). Amazingly, few current Evangelical Christian writers acknowledge Keith-Lucas’ in-depth examination of Christianity and social work. We think it is critical to acknowledge the role Alan Keith-Lucas, as a respected scholar, practitioner, and founder of the National Association of Christian Social Workers (NACSW), played in distinguishing among different types of Christianity. He developed a four-fold typology of Christianity (Keith-Lucas, 1983) which appears useful for our discussion of value conflicts between social workers’ personal, Christian beliefs and the NASW Code of Ethics. See Table 1 for a summary of this typology. Table 1. Keith-Lucas Christian Typology Type of ChristianHuman natureNature of sinSerious SinsRemediesChristians of EthicsNeeds perfecting, not forgiving; to be self fulfilledFailure to find self-fulfillment; maladjustmentInjustice, indifference, and violenceTherapy, environmental change, education, and social reformChristians of GraceGood, but fallibleState of being or mind, not unlawful actsPride, arrogance, and acting autonomouslyGrace as divine and human loveChristians of LawEvil; will naturally cheat, lie, avoid work, and indulge sexWillful disobedience of the lawCheating, lying, avoiding work, and having sex outside of marriageFollowing literal interpretation of law; involves punishment and rewardsChristians of MoralityEvil, controlled by devilWillful disobedience of the lawLike Christians of Law; Sins com-mitted by othersI’m saved; preach fear, punishment, and rewards for others In a description of his four-fold typology, Keith-Lucas describes two types of Christians (i.e., Christians of Ethics and Grace) as subscribing to values and behaviors in which love for God and others and a nonjudgmental stance are compatible with social work practice and the Code of Ethics (Keith-Lucas, 1985; 1983; 1972). However, Keith-Lucas also indicates that certain types of Christians, namely those of the Law and Morality, will have greater difficulties in refraining from judging or imposing their worldviews or Christian values on clients. According to Keith-Lucas, Christians of Morality and Law are characterized by the following beliefs: · Christians of Law cannot allo any knowledge except the Law of the Bible and believe all that is needed to help another person is to follow the Law and preach it to others;· The only way to eternal life is to follow the Law;· If s/he (Christians of Law) could or exhort a troubled person to make a commitment to Christ, then, that person’s problems would be solved;· Wh dealing with choices made by clients that do not reflect the views of the Christians of Law, the temptation is to reject the client for considering such actions;· Christians of Morality do not see love as necessary for helping people because t objective is to see people act morally;· Christians of Morality are certain of their authority to interpret the Law and substitute control for help. They have no questions about trying to induce belief by any means, i.e., through fear, shame and punishment;· Christians of Morality are quick to forbid, judge and reject the sinner (Keith-Lucas, 1983). While it i beyond the scope of this article to analyze the totality of his critique of these worldviews, it is quite clear that those

individuals holding these Christian views (i.e., many Evangelical or Orthodox Christians) will face significant tensions or value conflicts between their personal worldviews and the ethical principles found in the NASW Code of Ethics. 2.1 Value conflicts between Christianity and social work In the Code, social workers are admonished to take into account multiple sources of information, including ethical theory, social work theory, research, laws, regulations and agency policies, but recognize that “social workers should consider the NASW Code of Ethics as their primary source” (1996, p. 3). Further, the Code directs us to be aware of the impact of personal values, cultural, and religious beliefs on ethical decision-making processes in our practice. Among those areas in which we see value conflicts or tensions between Christians of the Law/Morality and our professional Code of Ethics are the ethical standards related to the social workers’ responsibilities to clients. For example, in the section on “Commitment to Clients,” we are responsible for promoting the well-being of clients and that, in general, clients’ interests are primary (1.01, NASW Code of Ethics, 1996). The NACSW, as a Christian social work organization, has put forward an interpretation of this standard (Ressler, 1997). It equates “abortion, sexual behavior, gambling, and control of pornographic material” (p. 7) with child abuse. In doing so, they significantly expand the idea of harm to self or others (Tarasoff, 1976) to justify the suppression of a broad range of client behavior based on a perceived threat to the well-being of the larger society. This interpretation supports a sweeping, judgmental stance toward others that is reflective of a Christian of Law or Morality perspective. In another example, the NASW Code of Ethics, Cultural Competence and Social Dignity section (1.05c) states that social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, and mental or physical disability. The NACSW interpretation of this standard (Ressler, 1997, p. 9) is as follows: An historic orthodox Christian worldview is supportive of this standard. It suggests that increased educational attention be given to religion, especially those with orthodox worldviews. There are a number of ethical dilemmas that emerge when various diverse groups are juxtaposed. Especially difficult are questions about sexual orientation and orthodox theological beliefs. An historic orthodox Christian worldview believes that the controversy is not about sexual orientation but sexual behavior. Persons with an historic orthodox Christian worldview believe that it is in society’s best interest to have social policies that direct sexual intimacy to heterosexual married adults. While persons with a progressive worldview tend to compare sexual orientation to race or gender, persons from an [sic] orthodox perspective compare sexual orientation to alcoholism. This NACSW position is articulated by David Hodge (2005), who argues that Evangelical Christians are accepting of homosexuals, but that just as in the case of unmarried heterosexuals, sexual intimacy is reserved for married couples. However, he never addresses the reality that homosexual couples are denied marriage, which he asserts is the basis for sexually intimate behavior, and thus denies gays and lesbians one of the central elements of our human existence. He further fails to see any connection between his statement and the oppression emanating from his interpretation, which is solely based on his worldview (i.e., a Christianity of Law/Morality worldview) with no connection to the Code of Ethics. What is thematic in each of these examples is that these writers start with a stance that their personal worldview, i.e., self-described Orthodox or Evangelical Christianity, provides the preeminent framework for understanding the world and that the NASW Code is relegated to serve that larger purpose. Even when empirical knowledge suggests that an approach won’t work, i.e., sexual conversion therapy, no mention is made of a lack of empirical evidence to support this approach (Jenkins & Johnston, 2004). 2.2 The nature of a profession Because we are focusing on the relationship between the practitioner’s personal worldviews (e.g., Evangelical Christianity) and her or his profession, it becomes important to examine (1) what special responsibilities are placed on practitioners as part of this profession and (2) the role of a professional code of ethics in monitoring personal values. 2.3 Special responsibilities of practitioners As members of a profession, social workers have special responsibilities in their relationships with clients, students, and supervisees. These are fiduciary relationships in which the less powerful client, student, or supervisee places trust in the more powerful practitioner, educator, or supervisor. The practitioner has certain responsibilities and limitations placed on his/her behavior because of the greater power endowed to him or her as a member of the profession. Clients, students, and supervisees trust that the practitioner will do no harm and act in their best interest. Practitioners are called to put their personal worldviews (e.g., Evangelical Christianity), values, and needs second to the interest of those whom they serve. Because of the power imbalance, practitioners can unduly influence or sway clients to change their behavior to reflect the practitioners’ views, not clients’ views and behaviors. We are not arguing, as some have indicated (Loewenberg, Dolgoff, & Harrington, 2006), for agreement on personal worldviews or values as the best ingredients for growth within professional relationships. On the contrary, differences between worker/client, educator/student, or supervisor/supervisee values can positively challenge and enhance growth within professional relationships. 2.4 The role of the code of ethics Rather than continuing an unending and irresolvable debate about whose worldview (e.g., progressive or orthodox) captures the “Truth,” which then should be imposed on clients, we argue for the insertion of the NASW Code of Ethics as a screen through which competing worldviews must be drawn to create constraints on professionals’ behavior. The social work profession’s long history of acknowledging the central role ethics play in professional practice is carefully documented by Reamer (1998), who traces early twentieth century efforts to develop, revise, and update codes of ethics to reflect emerging practice issues. What the Code of Ethics provides is not final answers regarding what is ultimately “right” or “wrong.” It represents an agreed upon framework within which social workers are expected to formulate their actions in their professional roles. Social workers’ actions may be judged as correct or incorrect within this particular framework, and this is the function of a professional code. It is not designed to address ultimate moral answers as to how the world “ought to be.” In response, we are proposing a six-stage model that builds on some existing literature and adds new elements that focus on ethical dilemmas or value conflicts between professionals’ personal worldviews and the Code of Ethics. This model views the social work professional’s thorough understanding of the Code as central to competent and ethical social work practice. 3. Implications: A model for examining personal worldviews and the

Code of Ethics To address tensions between personal worldviews and the Code of Ethic, we propose a six-stage model that builds on existing literature and adds new elements. This model views social work professionals’ thorough understanding of the Code of Ethics and its professional knowledge base (See Stage 3) as central to competent and ethical practice. This model includes the following components (See Table 2): (1) self-awareness, (2) self-refection, (3) understanding and applying the Code of Ethics within a professional knowledge base, (4) comparing personal worldviews with the Code, (5) ethical decision-making, and (6) professional ethical action. Table 2: Model for Examining Personal Worldviews and the NASW Code of Ethics StagesDescriptionStage 1:Self-awarenessDevelop an awareness of one’s personal worldview and the values that undergird that perspectiveStage 2:Self-reflectionUse self-reflection skills to examine the implications of and consequences of one’s personal worldview on professional workStage 3:Understanding and applying the Code of Ethics within a professional knowledge baseThoroughly examine the NASW Code of Ethics to understand its meaning, historically and currently, as the basis for defining values and principles like diversity, social justice, self-determination, respect for human dignity, and other core elements articulated in the profession’s literatureStage 4: Comparing personal worldview with professional CodeEngage in a process of examining discrepancies between the Code of Ethics and one’s personal worldviewStage 5:Professional Decision MakingMake decisions about what needs to be done to remain faithful to the Code of Ethics (Decisions in practice should never be made solely based on one’s personal worldview.)Stage 6: Professional Ethical ActionTake action and monitor conformity to the Code of Ethics Stage 1: Self-awareness. Some writers identify the need to examine personal values within an Ethical Assessment Screen (Loewenberg, Dolgoff, & Harrington, 2005; see also Abramson, 1996; Levy, 1976; Rhodes, 1992; Sherwood, 2002). They suggest workers become self-aware in an attempt to minimize conflicts among personal, societal, and professional values. However, they offer little guidance about how this can be done or what to do when these values are sufficiently divergent that workers must choose to honor one or the other of these value configurations. What makes sense is for workers in Stage 1 to focus on developing a clear understanding of their personal worldview and the values that undergird that perspective. Without the capacity to develop self-awareness of our values, no other steps can be taken to move toward competent ethical practice (see Spano & Koenig, 2003). Stage 2: Self-reflection. The social work profession has a long history that places self-reflection at the heart of competent practice. This skill is most often connected to clinical practice; however, it has great importance in ethical decision-making. In this arena, self-reflection involves examining the consequences of our worldview on our work. The idea of “moral dialogue” involves workers’ examination of clients’ perspectives on ethical dilemmas, and self-reflective questions workers can ask themselves to deal with these value conflicts (Spano & Koenig, 2003). Here, the focus moves toward understanding how these consequences are or are not consistent with the Code of Ethics. Stage 3: Understanding and applying the Code of Ethics within a professional knowledge base. This component of the model diverges from what has been done in the current polemics addressing conflicts between personal and professional values. What many writers do is use their personal worldviews as a basis for interpreting the Code of Ethics (Latting, 1995; Parr, 1996; Pellabon, 2000; Ressler & Hodge, 2000; Vanderwoerd, 2002). This approach leads to distortions in meaning that allow writers to impose their personal worldviews on the Code of Ethics. Thus, some argue that “respect for diversity” as it appears in sections of the Code that relate to clients should be transformed into respect for a diversity of ideas held by professionals (Hodge, 2005; Ressler, 1997). While their argument that social work professionals have a responsibility to understand and respect various worldviews held by clients is valid, to suggest that professionals should be recruited based on the existence of worldviews that are held in the larger society, no matter how those views fit within a professional code, opens the door to the deconstruction of the profession. Our approach starts with the assertion that the Code of Ethics provides a broad framework for professionals to adhere to in their practice. However, the values, principles, and guidelines in the Code are sufficiently broad to allow reasonable people to understand and apply principles in different ways. Therefore, we must add another element that moves beyond familiarity with the Code. For our purposes, the application of our professional knowledge base provides a way to translate the general principles and values in the Code into specific practice situations and suggests courses of action that are most likely to be considered ethical when examined by one’s colleagues or other relevant regulatory bodies. The following excerpt provides a classic example of the application of one’s personal worldview to the Code. The NACSW critique (see italics immediately following Section 1.02) of the Code states: 1.02 Self-Determination: Social workers respect and promote the right of clients to self-determination and assist clients in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals. Social workers may limit clients’ right to self-determination when, in the social workers’ professional judgment, clients’ actions or potential actions pose a serious, foreseeable, and imminent risk to themselves or others. An historic orthodox Christian worldview is supportive of this standard. Christian theologies that endorse the concept of human freedom [sic] are compatible with this standard. Persons with an orthodox worldview may reach different conclusions as to what actions are serious, foreseeable, and of imminent risk to persons or others. Among the most controversial is the right of persons to try to change sexual preference or behavior. The Code of Ethics supports this right if so desired by clients (Ressler, 1997, p. 8). The professional literature provides very clear guidance on the meaning of self-determination and what constitutes a “serious, foreseeable and imminent risk to themselves or others.” Nowhere in the professional literature is there an argument that suggests sexual orientation or consensual actions related to sexual orientation present circumstances that would warrant invoking Tarasoff actions (Tarasoff, 1976). Further, the professional literature and professional associations have been clear that “reparations” or “conversion” therapy are in fact harmful, because they do not work (Drescher & Zucker, 2006; Haldeman, 2001; Jenkins & Johnston, 2004). Therefore, one can hold a personal (theological) position regarding sexual orientation but would be practicing unethically if that perspective led to harming clients. In summary, we are saying that the Code provides broad perameters for defining the ethical foundations for practice. However, it does not, nor can it provide the specific formula to apply in a specific situation. It is the interaction of knowledge with values

that informs professionals how to behave in a given situation. The majority of this knowledge is drawn from theory and empirical research in the social sciences – and not in theological writings. Stage 4: Comparing personal worldview and professional code. In this stage, professionals engage in a process of identifying discrepancies between the Code of Ethics and their personal worldviews. For example, for social workers who are Christians of Law and Morality, serving gay and lesbian clients or single, pregnant women present challenges to their personal worldviews and run contrary to traditional understandings of sexuality and marriage. Common responses are on a continuum from referral to overt condemnation (i.e., conversion therapy). These responses shift the focus to solving the professional’s conflict with this clientele and further ignore the work (e.g., self-reflection) that the professional needs to do in addressing discrepancies between his/her worldview and the Code of Ethics. Clients may also see these referrals as a form of rejection, contributing even further to their experiences of discrimination. To develop and grow as ethical practitioners, social workers need to wrestle with personal worldviews and their congruence with the Code. We also think this wrestling should occur in a community of social work colleagues within clinical, administrative, educational, and supervisory settings where personal worldviews can be discussed and weighed against the Code. In spite of agency shortages in funding for supervision and ongoing professional training, this process should not be ignored or sidestepped. Stage 5: Professional decision making. Professionals must make decisions about what needs to be done to be faithful to their professional ethical responsibilities. Decisions in practice can never be made solely on the basis of the professional’s personal values. Instead, decisions must be made in a way that is consistent with the Code of Ethics, and when personal values conflict with professional values, the Code of Ethics, as understood within the knowledge base of the profession, should take precedence. Social workers must seek to promote client self-determination by assisting clients “in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals” (NASW Code of Ethics, 1996, Section 1.01, p. 5). For example, a gay couple may meet with the social worker to strengthen their emotional, spiritual, and physical connections. If the social worker refuses to assist the couple in meeting their goal based on a personal worldview that defines homosexual relationships as inherently immoral, this represents a lack of professional integrity, runs contrary to the Code, and is an outright rejection or denial of the clients’ expressed goals. For social workers to be faithful to their professional ethical obligations, they must be able to manage their disagreement with clients’ worldviews and make decisions that limit the influence of their personal values on professional work. Stage 6: Professional ethical action. Professionals need to take action and monitor their conformity to the Code of Ethics. Practicing ethically involves not only making decisions, but acting on those decisions. Once action is taken, social workers have a responsibility to monitor the consequences of their actions on clients, the agency, and others and to pay attention to unforeseen consequences that may present ethical dilemmas or other ethical issues. For example, a social worker who believes that abortion is wrong may work with a single, pregnant woman struggling with whether or not to give birth and keep her baby. Consistent with the social worker’s personal worldview, the client may choose to have her baby. However, the client may face unforeseen consequences when, contrary to previously developed plans, her parents are now unavailable and cannot provide child care. Even though the client made an initial decision that is consistent with the social worker’s personal worldview, it is imperative for the social worker to remain involved with the client (and not abruptly terminate services) to help her address difficult decisions about whether or not she can keep and provide for her baby because she must return to work. As consistent with the Code of Ethics (Section 1.16), social workers should not terminate services abruptly, but continue to monitor the client’s situation even if clients are considering decisions that are not consistent with the social workers’ personal worldviews. In conclusion, our proposed model for managing personal and professional value conflicts stresses the importance of fidelity to the Code of Ethics in the context of the power and special responsibilities we hold as professionals in relation to our clients. This model makes the Code of Ethics the primary document that sets parameters within which professionals must operate as they delineate their personal worldviews within the context of their professional roles. Furthermore, professional literature, not personal worldviews, becomes a central source for understanding the Code of Ethics. When mediating conflicts or dilemmas that arise between personal and professional values, our model encourages reliance on the Code of Ethics and provides a way to manage the complex process of ethical decision-making. 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