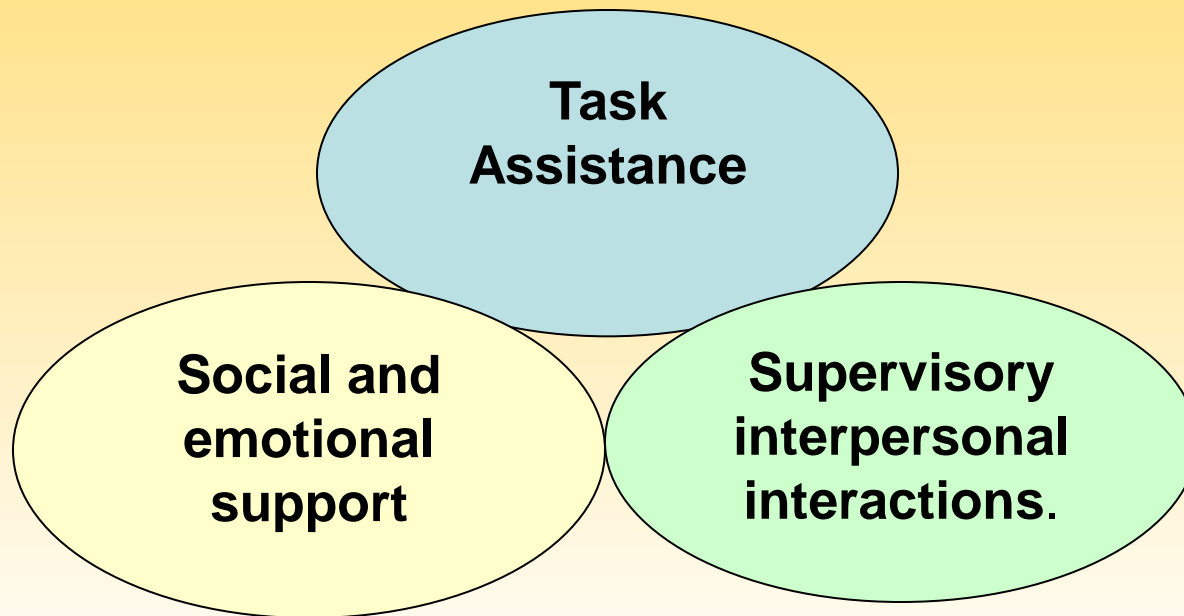


# **Ethical Issues Specific to Supervision and Child Welfare**

**Elizabeth Lightfoot, Ph.D.**

# Supervision

- Supervision is a key task of social work
- Supervisors has multiple dimensions



# Supervision Dimensions

## Task Assistance:

- work-related instruction,
- teaching,
- advice, with a strong educational component.

## Social and emotional support:

- the worker's job stress
- other emotional needs.

## Supervisory interpersonal interactions:

- perceptions
- satisfaction

# Supervision in the Code of Ethics

<b>Social workers</b>	<b>Social Work Supervisors</b>	<b>Social Work Administrators</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Should seek supervision and consultation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Should have necessary knowledge and skills</li><li>• Should set clear, appropriate and culturally sensitive boundaries</li><li>• Should avoid dual or multiple relationships</li><li>• Should evaluate performance fairly and respectfully</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Should take steps to ensure that resources are available for staff supervision</li></ul>

# Supervision is Important for Social Work

- There is much research that shows that effective supervision can lead to:
  - Increased worker job satisfaction
  - Increased worker retention
  - Higher quality service delivery
- Effective supervision may also lead to:
  - Better client outcomes

# Supervisory Code of Ethics?

- There is no code of ethics specific to social work supervision
- However, the NASW code of ethics does give guidance on ethical issues related to social work supervision.



# Social Work Code of Ethics on the NASW

- Go to the Social Work Code of Ethics on the NASW Website.

<http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>

- **Read the Code of Ethics.**

On a piece of paper, write down how can the NASW Code of Ethics help social workers and social work supervisors make ethical decisions in the field of child welfare?

# Code of Ethics Reflection

- Now that you have reviewed the NASW Code of Ethics, take a moment to list three ethical standards in the NASW Code of Ethics that you think are of prime importance for social workers and social work supervisors working in the field of child welfare.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_



# Areas of Social Work Practice

- **Directing community practice**
- **Children**
- **Adults**
- **Disability**
- **Immigrants**
- **Refugees**
- **Different ethnic groups**

# Child Welfare Values

- **Protection of children**
- **Preservation of families**
- **Respect for families**
- **Respect for individuals**
- **Client self-determination**
- **Individualized Intervention**



# NASW Standards for Social Work Practice in Child Welfare (2005)

- Read the NASW Standards for Social Welfare Practice in Child Welfare.

<http://www.socialworkers.org/practice/standards/NASWChildWelfareStandards0905.pdf>

# Ethical Issues in Child Welfare

- Bureaucratic system with competing demands, with an ultimate goal of protecting children's lives



# Some Issues

- **Supervisors in child welfare are in the “middle”**
- **Clients are often involuntary clients**
- **Workers have numerous stressors**
  - High case loads
  - Safety issues
  - Administrative burdens
  - High travel time
  - Inadequate training
  - Conflicting policies
  - Lack of resources
  - Poor and stressful outcomes
- **Racial disparities in child welfare**

# Ethical Practice

- Ethical decision making is a process
- Not always simple answers
- Use the values, principles, and standards in the Code of Ethics, while being mindful of your own personal values, your client's values, societal values, cultural values, agency values and federal, state and local laws and policies.

Please continue working on the module content by watching the following presentation:

[Ethical Dilemmas and Ethical Decision Making](#)

For more content or to access other modules, please go to:

<http://pebbles.cehd.umn.edu/ssw/CASCW/Modules/Ethics-Supervision/Ethics-Supv.htm>

**Thank you!**