Core values of the Human Service Professional

What are the core values for the human service professional? Since the area of human services is made up of a variety of different disciplines, these values may be slightly different for each profession. For example, the core values of social work may be different than the core values for psychology. Whatever the difference, we know that core values are important to the human service setting.

In exploring this area, core values are those that are basic or fundamental and of worth or importance. When we think of such values, honesty, integrity, forthrightness, truthfulness, loyalty and kindness might be terms that come to mind. Core values refer to those values that are basic to our nature. These fundamental values intersect with concepts such as ethics, morals, and diversity.

One who works in the human service setting is committed to helping individuals in a variety of ways. This commitment is grounded in many of these core values. We see this in the ethical philosophies of many of the helping professions themselves.

In social work for example, there is a Code of Ethics that those employed in the profession must adhere to. In psychology, there are American Psychological Association Principles that psychologists must adhere to. Psychiatry is governed by the American Medical Association and American Psychiatric Association Principle of Medical Ethics. Addiction counselors are guided by the National Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors (NAADAC) Code of Ethics. All of these disciplines are human service oriented and all address core values or ethics in some particular way.

Ethics

Ethics is uniquely tied to the fundamental values that human services professionals espouse. Human service professionals have ethical duties and responsibilities typically set by the profession in which they practice. These ethical duties can be in the form of ethical obligations to clients, ethical obligations to other professionals, ethical obligations to society and ethical obligations in the practice of their profession.

Many times ethical dilemmas arise and a human service professional must make difficult decisions in the face of such dilemmas. The core values and code of ethics of their profession are many times put in place to guide them in making difficult decisions regarding such ethical issues.

Human service professionals can be brought up on ethical complaints typically to the entity that oversees the practice of their profession.

Diversity

Understanding diversity issues is paramount in the helping professions. Diversity does
not just mean, culture, ethnicity and race. It encompasses many more facets than that. People come to practitioners in the human service field from a variety of cultures, ethnicities, races and background. Some are heterosexual, some are homosexual, some are transgendered, some are young, some are old, some thin, some obese, some rich, some poor, some are democrat, some are republican, some are independent, some are Jewish, some are Protestant, some are Christian, some Catholic, some mentally ill, some physically