

NASP ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES PROBLEM-SOLVING WORKSHEET

1. Describe the problem situation and determine whether an ethical dilemma exists.

Describe the problem situation.			
Colleague, another school psychologist, placed an “All Lives Matter” bumper sticker on their car, which is highly visible in the school parking lot.			
Does an ethical dilemma exist?			
What does the bumper sticker mean to the person displaying it? What might it mean to those who encounter it? Is there an understanding that it may be harmful to others? May need to gather additional information.			
Competing values or priorities	Competing views of best practice	Policy and procedure adoption/implementation	Additional factors pertinent to situation/decision
<p>Need to address systemic racism in the schools and in school psychology practice</p> <p>Advocate for systemic change for anti-racist policies and procedures</p> <p>Protect students, families, and school personnel from ongoing microaggressions from a white supremacy mindset</p> <p>Preserving personal belief systems</p>	<p>Engaging in anti-racist practices enhances system and elevates opportunities for historically marginalized persons</p> <p>Belief that best practices in assessment and intervention addresses the needs of all students, from all racial and ethnic backgrounds</p>	<p>School policy is vague regarding freedom of expression</p>	
Identify the broad ethical and legal issues pertinent to the situation. Based on the identified concerns, topics to research include:			

Legal (federal/state)	Ethical	Local policy/procedure
<p>Freedom of speech case law in educational settings</p> <p>State law regarding freedom of speech issues</p>	<p>Ethical standards related to social justice</p> <p>Ethical standards related to personal vs professional speech</p>	<p>Consult district HR guidelines and school board documents regarding freedom of expression on school campuses</p>

2. Consult available ethical and legal guidelines.

List the specific ethical standards that may relate to the situation.	List the specific federal statutes that may relate to the situation.
<p>Standard I.3.1 Discrimination School psychologists do not engage in or condone actions or policies that discriminate against persons, including students and their families, other recipients of service, supervisees, and colleagues based on actual or perceived characteristics.</p> <p>Standard I.3.2 Correcting Discriminatory Practices School psychologists strive to ensure that all children and youth have equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from school programs and that all students and families have access to and can benefit from school psychological services. They work to correct school practices that are unjustly discriminatory or that deny students or others their legal rights. School psychologists take steps to foster a school climate that is supportive, inclusive, safe, accepting, and respectful toward all persons, particularly those who have experienced marginalization in educational settings.</p> <p>Standard III.2.3 Priority of Child Welfare The school psychologist’s commitment to protecting the rights and welfare of children and youth is communicated to the school administration, staff, and others as their highest priority in providing services. School psychologists are ethically obligated to speak up for the interests and rights of students and families even when it may be difficult to do so.</p> <p>Standard III.5.1 Private Versus Professional Conduct The <i>Principles for Professional Ethics</i> provides standards for professional conduct. School psychologists, in their private lives, are</p>	<p>Case law has consistently supported a school employee’s freedom of expression on matters of public importance unless: their speech threatens to undermine the authority of the school administrators, interferes with in-school professional relationships based on trust, interferes with their professional performance or disrupts learning in the school.</p>

free to pursue their personal interests, except to the degree that those interests compromise trust in the profession or professional effectiveness.

Standard III.5.2 Separation of Personal Beliefs

School psychologists are aware of their own values, attitudes, and beliefs and how these affect their work with clients, families, school administration, staff, and the community. School psychologists' professional decisions, recommendations, and activities are guided by the evidence base and by best practices.

Standard III.5.3 Personal Beliefs and Experiences

School psychologists recognize when their own beliefs, attitudes, or experiences pose a barrier to providing competent services to a particular client or family. In such situations, the school psychologist obtains supervision that would allow them to provide quality services, if feasible. If not feasible, they ask for reassignment of the case to a different school psychologist, or they direct the client to alternative services and facilitate the transition to those services.

Standard IV.1.2 Promoting Systems Change

School psychologists use their professional expertise to promote changes in schools and community service systems that will benefit children and youth and other clients. They advocate for school policies and practices that are in the best interests of children and that respect and protect the legal rights of students and parents.

Standard IV.2.2 Intersection of Law and Ethics

School psychologists respect the law and the civil and legal rights of students and other clients. The *Principles for Professional Ethics* may require a more stringent standard of conduct than law, and in those situations school psychologists are expected to adhere to the Principles.

Standard IV.3.2 Resolution of Concerns with Colleagues

When a school psychologist suspects that another school psychologist has engaged in unethical practices, they attempt to resolve the suspected problem through a collegial problem-solving process, if feasible. If a collegial problem-solving process is not possible or productive, school psychologists take further action appropriate to the situation, including discussing the situation with a supervisor in the

<p>employment setting, consulting state association ethics committees, and, if necessary, filing a formal ethical violation complaint with state associations, state credentialing bodies, or the NASP Ethical and Professional Practices Board in accordance with their procedures.</p>	
<p>List the specific state statutes that may be related to the situation.</p> <p>None located</p>	<p>List the specific local policies that may be related to the situation.</p> <p>Consistent with case law</p>
<p>List the specific local procedures (both explicit and implicit) that may be related to the situation.</p> <p>None identified</p>	

3. Consider, to the best of your ability, all factors pertinent to the decision.

<p>Consider whether racial, ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, and background factors are important to understanding the context and/or the individuals involved.</p>	<p>Pause to examine your own biases and how they could affect your perception of the situation and your professional judgment.</p>
<p>Yes, but no additional information needs to be gathered regarding context.</p>	

4. Confer with supervisors, colleagues, others.

<p>Source</p>	<p>Input</p>
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<p>Identify administrative supervisor(s) to be consulted or trusted alternative with the authority to assist</p> <p>Administrative supervisor- Special education director</p>	<p>Administrative supervisor is consulted for clarification regarding school policy- the administrator says there is no existing school policy addressing the issue</p>
<p>Identify clinical supervisor(s) to be consulted.- Lead school psychologist or trusted alternative with the authority to assist</p>	<p>Clinical supervisor- you have an ethical obligation to speak to this person directly and engage in conversation regarding how you feel they are potentially violating ethical principles. When you do that, you need to be ready to suggest resources for them to consult and/or specifically state which principles you are concerned about</p>
<p>Identify professional colleagues to be consulted.- Professional support group that has a private group chat to discuss professional issues</p>	<p>Most members of the support group are also disturbed by this behavior and feel that ethical principles are being violated, and most likely specific standards are being violated. They feel that you should not engage this person because these attitudes and belief systems are hard to change. They feel like you should file a complaint with the EPPB.</p> <p>A few members of the support group feel that direct conversation with the person is the most effective way to address the issue from a collegial standpoint and offer resources to assist the person in examining their own belief systems.</p> <p>One member of the group responds by saying that it is the person's individual prerogative to display the bumper sticker and it has nothing to do with their job responsibilities as a school psychologist.</p>
<p>Identify trusted colleagues and/or others (e.g., community leaders) who may be familiar with</p>	

contextual variables (e.g., historical, economic, cultural, racial) fundamental to understanding the situation.	
Identify professional resources to be consulted.	Social justice and ethics resources on NASP website Various literature available regarding implicit bias Professional standards

5. Evaluate the rights, responsibilities, and welfare of all affected parties.

Party	Rights	Responsibilities	Welfare
Self	To work in a system that protects the rights of all students and addresses injustices	Advocate for social justice and recognize and address systemic issues that perpetuate marginalization of groups of children	Address concerns that impact my ability to engage in professional practice
Child	Equal treatment and absence of discriminatory, racist or unjust practices The right to attend a school that has a welcoming climate		Receive FAPE, to be free from racist rhetoric and systems of oppression
Parent	The right to be a part of a school system with a welcoming climate		To be free from racist rhetoric and systems of oppression
Teacher	The right to be a part of a school system with a welcoming climate.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Administrator	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Service Provider	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Other	Freedom of thought and speech	Advocate for social justice and recognize and address systemic	

Colleague in question		issues that perpetuate marginalization of groups of children Provide equitable services to students and families without discriminatory, racist or unjust practices	
Other			

6. Consider alternative solutions and the likely consequences of each.

Solution	Potential Positive Consequences	Potential Negative Consequences
1. Do nothing.	1a. Avoid difficult conversation 1b. Avoid appearance of being critical of district policies or lack thereof 1c. Avoid creating a conflictual relationship	1a. Perpetuate white supremacy attitudes and structures within the system 1b. Allow children and families who experience harm when seeing this symbol that negates experiences of Black persons
2. Have discussion with colleague	2a. Increase their awareness of their implicit and explicit bias. 2b. Increase their understanding of ethical responsibilities related to social justice 2c. Provide resources for their personal growth.	2a. Experience uncomfortable confrontation from a person with racist beliefs 2b. Risk retribution toward vulnerable groups or yourself 2c. Escalate their racist behavior
3. Work with administration to create professional development opportunities to address systemic racism and implicit and explicit bias for all school psychologists	3a. Increase understanding of the individual in question and in other school psychologists 3b. Potentially develop plan to address specific anti-racist strategies in the context of school psychological services	3a. Lack of participation/ engagement from the person who needs this intervention 3b. Negative reaction from other colleagues who don't feel training is necessary

8. Select a course of action and assume responsibility for this decision.

Decision	Next Steps
Having considered the rights, responsibilities, and welfare of all involved, I decide to have discussion with colleague about the bumper sticker.	Consult NASP website for recommendations when approaching a colleague with an ethical concern.

<https://www.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification/professional-ethics/informal-ethical-problem-solving-of-colleagues-misconduct>

Consider a system-wide needs assessment to determine if more training is warranted regarding explicit and implicit bias

Note. Created by the NASP Ethics and Professional Practices Board Chair Laurie Klose and Cochair Melissa Pearrow, 2020. Adapted from *Professional ethics for school psychologists: A problem-solving model casebook (2nd ed.)* by L. Armistead, B. B. Williams, & S. Jacob, 2011, National Association of School Psychologists. And from *Principles for professional ethics*, by the National Association of School Psychologists, 2010, National Association of School Psychologists.