

## **MAKING SOUND ETHICAL DECISIONS GUIDELINES**

Counselors must make sound ethical decisions but, often, determining the appropriate course to take when confronted with a difficult ethical dilemma can be a challenge.

There are five principles that are globally valuable in ethical decision making and provide a model for professionals to utilize in their practice.

### **The five moral principles that are viewed by many as the cornerstone of ethical guidelines:**

- 1. Autonomy: The right of self-government**
- 2. Nonmaleficence: Non evil-doing; or, ill-conduct**
- 3. Beneficence: Benefit to a person or entity**
- 4. Justice: To do right**
- 5. Fidelity: Personal honesty**

These **principles provide an absolute against which counselors can explore an ethical dilemma**, thereby gaining a better understanding of conflicting issues.

A **sequential, seven-step, ethical, decision-making model** is presented next and comprises the following:

- (1) Identify the problem**
- (2) Apply YOUR Code of Ethics**
- (3) Determine the nature and dimensions of the dilemma**
- (4) Generate potential courses of action**
- (5) Consider the potential consequences of all options –  
then determine a course of action**
- (6) Evaluate the selected course of action**
- (7) Implement this action.**

**ABSTRACT:** The diverse, multicultural population that constitutes today's work force faces ethical dilemmas on the job that bring pressures to protect their own or their company's interests, at the risk of losing their personal integrity. Employers and vocational and career development personnel are recognizing the need for decision-making and problem-solving skills that will facilitate negotiation and conflict resolution in the workplace. Conflicts arise between two or more personally held values, between personal values and those of another person or the organization, between principles and the need to achieve a desired outcome, and between two or more persons or groups to whom one has an obligation. The resolution of conflicts requires interpersonal and negotiation skills; the application of "employability skills" such as honesty, cooperation, and integrity; and the participation of all stakeholders in a situation. Ethics training should help employees (1) recognize which decisions involve ethics; (2) understand the values of all stakeholders; and (3) weigh the potential impact of various options on those values. As part of a career development curriculum, discussions and analyses of case studies, use of ethics committees and resource people, and training in critical thinking, conflict resolution, communication, group processes, and mediation skills can prepare students for the ethical dilemmas they may face in the workplace

