Integral Ethics in Social Work Education
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At a time when religious and political diversity issues can be as polarizing among social workers as they are in the general public, and when it seems easier to "shut down" philosophical debates within social work education because they are just too complicated, this curriculum workshop has the dual purpose of introducing educators to "integral ethics," a framework that *they* can use to think through ethical issues that arise with students and colleagues, while also providing them with an easily accessible tool they can use to introduce this approach to their students. The workshop will demonstrate how an integral perspective provides a useful lens for re-cognizing where and how educators (as well as students) often get stuck, a variety of defensible ethical options, and ultimately a more balanced and holistic approach to social work education.

Wilber's integral paradigm (Wilber, 2006, 2001, 2000, 1997) used widely across disciplines and translated into more than 25 languages, articulates four simultaneous, inseparable and irreducible dimensions of reality. He uses a graph containing four quadrants, key words and arrows pointed in four directions to illustrate the interrelatedness, depth and complexity of each dimension. Simply put, human beings simultaneously have interior (subjective) and exterior (objective) perspectives/experiences as both individuals and as members of various groups; each dimension is also multi-layered and interrelated to the other three.

Applied specifically to ethical theory and ethical decision-making, this meta-paradigm expands the way ethics can be understood and taught, offering social work educators an opportunity to teach ethics in a richer, more authentically inclusive way. Building on principle-based (deontological) and utilitarian (teleological) schools of reasoning usually presented as individually-oriented approaches to ethical decision making in social work (Strom-Gottfried, 2008; Reamer, 2006; Robison & Reeser, 1999; Mattison, 2000), Augustine (2010) suggests that two collectively-oriented schools of reasoning could complete the four quadrant schema: virtue ethics and care ethics. Interestingly, these two ethical approaches have gotten more attention in recent years (Pullen-Sansfacon, 2010; Adams, 2009; Meagher & Parton, 2004; McBeath & Webb, 2002). And, since these four ethical paradigms are inseparable, irreducible and interconnected in an integral framework, they are not presented in mutually-exclusive terms. Rather, they represent four concurrent dimensions of human experience relevant to both educators and students in various decision-making contexts and at various points in their own development.

This meta-ethical framework allows practitioners to *see* the co-existence of multiple, simultaneous and interrelated dimensions of *any* ethical dilemma. In any ethical dilemma, for example, there are individually-oriented outcomes (consequentialist ethical focus) as well as individual principles and motivations relevant to decisions (deontological ethical focus). Similarly, there are usually collectively-oriented outcomes to consider (focus of care ethics) as well as collectively-determined virtues (focus of virtue ethics). Once *seen* in this way, practitioners are free to respond more authentically and in more nuanced ways to various expressions of these dimensions as they arise without feeling pressured to agree with all of them or to exclusively defend one particular position. Most importantly, without suggesting that everything is relative or that "anything goes," this framework doesn't privilege one worldview while marginalizing others.

Teachers, for example, often get stuck when they encounter religious or political perspectives that appear to be oppressive, unjust or wrong to *them*. Rather than clamming up, taking sides, feeling pressured to say the "right" thing, or "faking" a politically correct response, an integral ethical perspective provides a way of noticing *their* subjective (interior) and objective (exterior) experiences as individuals *and* as members of various groups while simultaneously realizing that students are also engaging in a similarly multi-layered process, perhaps with less conscious awareness. This re-cognition allows them to be genuinely curious about other perspectives (in the moment!) and to authentically engage them without

getting "trapped" by their own defensiveness or need to be "right." Integral teachers can thus support the development of integral students, integral classrooms and integral curricula (Esbjorn-Hargens, 2006).

The integral paradigm is helpful in deconstructing a number of persistent debates among social work educators: philosophies related to research, false dichotomies between micro/macro practice and between research and practice, and tensions surrounding the profession's current emphasis on competencies, to name just a few. Its beauty lies in how it can bring seemingly disparate viewpoints into a more coherent whole: individual principles and motivations as well as consequences to individuals, *and* collective motivations and perceptions as well as collective outcomes. Because on some level, the importance of each cannot be denied, conversations can actually be illuminating rather than polarizing. The challenges have to do with getting lost or overwhelmed with the complexities, and developing the discipline required for such an inclusive perspective. A user-friendly, visual depiction of the 4 dimensions and related schools of ethical reasoning will be distributed to participants. They will explore how they can help their students (as well as themselves) become more conscious of the differing ethical approaches they use and consider how the integral ethical perspective can inform their teaching.

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