

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
HEALTH SERVICES
GENERAL STATEMENT OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

The SFASU Health Services' General Statement of Ethical Principles and Guidelines is as follows:

SFASU Health Services is dedicated to advancing the health of our university students. We are a group of professionals who provide health promotion, health education, and clinical services to the student population of the campus community who seek our services. We are committed to enhancing the health and affirming the value, worth, and dignity of each individual student:

- Social justice, human dignity, and respect for all;
- Provision of student centered services;
- Professional excellence, responsiveness, and ethical practice;
- Multidisciplinary and collaborative approaches to health;
- Commitment and participation of those who advance health;
- Active involvement of students

All staff members of Health Services are expected to adhere to the general principles and standards of ethical conduct set forth in this General Statement.

Ethical Principles

Although a General Statement cannot offer standards that anticipate all possible situations with ethical implications, or provide precise formulae for resolving all ethical questions or conflicts, certain ethical principles assist SFASU Health Services in making appropriate decisions when confronted with ethical dilemmas. This document is not only a resource when responding to problems and conflicts in daily practice, but also a framework for dialogue about moral issues among all those involved in advancing the general health of the student population.

Do no harm. Engaging in activities designed to cause physical, psychological, or social harm to other individuals is unacceptable and contrary to all standards of practice in the helping profession. Risk of harm must be managed and weighed against the potential benefit to the patient. Monitor and take steps to assure that association and institutional

policies, programs, and practices do not threaten any individual's health, self-worth, dignity, or safety, or are unjust or illegal.

Provide service in a caring manner. Commitment to humane, kind, merciful, and compassionate, treatment of people is essential to meet their physical, psychological, cognitive, and interpersonal needs. Caring treatment creates affirming relationships, reduces anxiety and avoidance, and encourages health-seeking behavior.

Respect autonomy. Autonomy addresses individual freedom and the right to choose what will happen to one's own person. The individual has an inherent knowledge of his/her needs and is most profoundly affected by any decision made. Supporting autonomy mitigates against undue influence to choose a particular course of action.

Protect privacy. Privacy refers to the ability of the individual to maintain control over the time, place, manner, and extent to which information about one's self, beliefs, or person is shared. Safeguarding privacy, respecting confidentiality, and protecting against disclosure of information except when required by law or authorized by the patient is essential to foster the establishment of a trusting relationship, preservation of the dignity and autonomy of the individual, and an increase in the likelihood that those who need services will seek them.

Maintain competence. Competence requires using currently accepted and established knowledge and skills to conduct all professional activities. Participation in formal and informal continuing education is necessary to stay abreast of new developments in the field.

Promote justice. The ethical principles of impartially, fairness, equity, and reciprocity are basic elements in promoting justice. When the interests of constituencies conflict, distributive justice requires the equitable distribution of benefits and burdens.

Respect diversity. A fundamental precept of SFASU Health Services is the appreciation and affirmation of the value of human differences, and vigorous opposition to all intolerance and discrimination concerning those differences, including but not limited to: age; gender identity, including transgender; marital status; and veteran status. Concern for maintaining human dignity and working toward social justice supports the development of health disciplines responsive to the needs of all.

Ethical Guidelines

All staff members of SFASU Health Services are expected to adhere to these ethical guidelines set forth in this General Statement.

1. **Responsibility in the Provision of Services.** Commit oneself to excellence in university health programs. Provide services in a compassionate, equitable, and unbiased manner to all patients.

- a. Obtain informed consent before performing a procedure, embarking on a treatment course, enrolling individuals in a information research study, and when appropriate, presenting an educational program. Supply patients with the relevant information needed to ensure they have the ability to make an informed decision.
 - b. Routinely inform patients of the nature and limits of confidentiality of information. Share confidential information only in accordance with professional ethical standards and requirements of law. Limit access to information, data, and records, including electronic records, only to authorized personnel. Appropriate levels of security must be established, with levels of access defined and restricted to identified users. University health professional should be aware of exceptions for disclosure permitted by law (e.g., when an individual is threatening harm to self or others).
 - c. Identify one's own beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors with ethical implications. Treat others with dignity and respect even in the face of a values conflict and avoid the imposition of personal values. Recognize how one's personal values conflict may interfere with one's professional decisions and actions. Consultation and referral should be considered under these circumstances.
 - d. In one's personal and professional relationships, affirm human differences and combat bigotry, intolerance, and oppression.
2. **Professional Responsibility and Competence.** Maintain appropriate level of knowledge, skills, and judgment to provide competent health-related services based on the established needs of the population. Accept ultimate responsibility for the consequences of one's action or inaction.
- a. Promote acquisition of new knowledge, improve skills, and seek opportunities for professional development. Encourage colleagues and co-workers to enhance their own training and skills and assist them in identifying opportunities to do so.
 - b. Monitor personal and professional activities and effectiveness. Accept feedback from colleagues, co-workers and patients. Seek appropriate assistance from professionals when warranted.
 - c. Accurately represent one's professional credentials, abilities, and limitations and correct any intentional or accidental misrepresentation of these qualifications by others or oneself.
 - d. Conduct one's professional work according to sound theoretical principles based on scientific research, and in accordance with the basic tenets of the profession.

Acknowledgment

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