

# Professional Behaviors and Expectations

Social Work

Updated: August 5, 2019

West Chester University of Pennsylvania

Introduction

### **Professional Behaviors in the Classroom and Field**

All students in the Undergraduate and Graduate Social Work program within the College of Education and Social Work (CESW) must adhere to the code of ethics as outlined by the <u>National Association of Social Workers</u>. CESW views its students as mature individuals who are either preparing to be members of the profession or continuing to develop their knowledge and skills within the profession. Students are expected to exhibit a high level of integrity, humility and empathy when working with others (clients, peers, instructors, etc) all while upholding the professional standards of conduct. Students are also expected to adhere to additional expectations set forth by Faculty and Field Instructors.

**Problematic behaviors** refer to a student's behaviors, attitudes, or characteristics that may require remediation, but are perceived as not excessive or unexpected for professionals in training. Performance anxiety, discomfort with clients' diverse lifestyles and ethnic backgrounds, and lack of appreciation of agency norms are examples of problematic behaviors that are usually remedied and not likely to progress into ethical misconduct, impairment, or incompetence.

Ethical misconduct occurs when the NASW Code of Ethics is not followed. This code is intended to provide both the general principles and the specific decision rules to cover most situations encountered by professional social workers in their professional activities. It has as its primary goal the welfare and protection of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. It is the individual responsibility of each social worker to aspire to achieve the highest possible standards of conduct. Social workers promote social justice and social change, respect, protect human and civil rights, and do not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices.

**Impairment** is defined as an interference in professional functioning that is reflected in one or more of the following ways:

- Inability or unwillingness to acquire and integrate professional standards into one's repertoire of professional behavior;
- Inability or unwillingness to acquire professional skills and reach an accepted level of competency; or
- Inability or unwillingness to control personal stress, psychological disorder, or emotional reactions that may affect professional functioning.

**Incompetence** is defined as a lack of ability. This lack of ability may include inadequate professional or interpersonal skills, or academic deficiency. When students continue to provide social work services beyond their current level of competence they are violating the ethical standard of competence.

The following is a list of some, but not all, practice behaviors that can be used to infer students' ability to demonstrate the competencies outlined by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Students are provided opportunities to demonstrate these behaviors in a variety of settings. Behaviors can be displayed through the quality of assignments a student completes, their interactions with instructors, staff, and colleagues, and through experiences in field practicum settings. This document will be used when a student exhibits problematic behaviors, ethical misconduct, impairment or incompetence. These behaviors may also be in violation of West Chester University policy (ex. academic integrity).

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession's history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

### Social workers:

- make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context:
- use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior

### **Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice**

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power.

### Social workers:

- apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
- present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and
- apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

### **Evaluation of Professional Behaviors**

The evaluation of Professional Behaviors of students is conducted through online fillable forms and stored on Tk20, the assessment software system used by the College of Education and Social Work. Concern forms may be completed at any time over the semester by a faculty member, staff, or in conjunction with a Field Instructor.

Below describes the process:

### Level 1

A West Chester University faculty or staff member can submit a concern on a student by first completing section one of the Professional Behavior – Concern Form. The person completing the form should conference with the student to discuss the concern and complete section two. The form should be filled out and **signed** by those present at the conference and a copy given to the student. Lastly, the form should be scanned and emailed to CESWAssessment@wcupa.edu and is stored in Tk20.



### Level 2

A concern is Level 2 when there have been at least two concerns submitted or Level 2 was indicated on the initial concern submitted for a student. The department chairperson is notified via email and the Associate Dean for Curriculum and Accreditation is copied onto this communication. The department chairperson has the option to convene a committee to discuss the concern and to review Level 1 data. The department chairperson and/or the committee then conference with the student. *The Professional Behavior – Action Plan Form* is completed and signed by all appropriate parties and a copy must be given to the student. If the department chairperson or the committee determine the student will not have to submit any evidence (e.g., reflective statement, paper), then the department chairperson completes the *Professional Behavior Follow-Up Status Form* in Tk20 and *The Professional Behavior – Action Plan Form* must be uploaded before submission.

If the department chairperson or the committee determine the student will have to submit evidence, then the *Professional Behavior – Action Plan Form* is completed. A due date for the student to submit evidence must be noted on the form. Once the due date passes, the department chairperson or the committee must hold a follow-up conference with the student. Afterwards, the department chairperson completes the *Professional Behavior Follow-Up Status Form* in Tk20. The person completing the form must indicate the Level 2 status (e.g., action plan completed or not completed) along with uploading the *Professional Behavior – Action Plan Form* before submission. If the student did not complete the action plan, then proceedings move to Level 3.

### Chairperson and Associate Dean are notified of Level 2 concern(s)

Chairperson (or Committee) reviews concern(s) and conferences with the student

If appropriate, complete the Professional Behavior– Action Plan Form (follow-up conference with student after the due date must occur before submission)

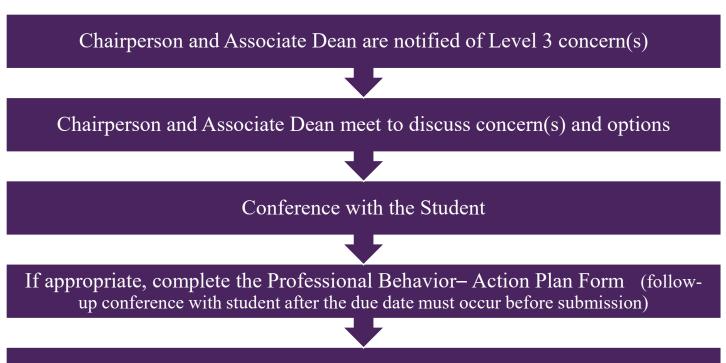
Complete the Professional Behavior Follow-Up Status Form in Tk20

### Level 3

A concern is Level 3 when a third concern has been submitted after a Level 2 action plan or when a student did not successfully complete the Level 2 action plan. The student's department chairperson and the Associate Dean for Curriculum and Accreditation are notified. They meet to discuss the situation and to determine how the process proceeds. Possibilities include:

- Determining the concern should be elevated to Level 4 and then conferencing with the student to inform them of the decision and next steps.
- Outlining a comprehensive Action Plan and then conferencing with the student to explain the terms of the plan.
- Conferencing with the student to discuss if the concern should remain a Level 3 with an Action Plan or if the concern should be elevated to Level 4.

If the concern is to be elevated to Level 4, the department chairperson and Associate Dean for Curriculum and Accreditation conference with the student to discuss next steps. The Professional Behavior – Action Plan Form is also completed and signed by all appropriate parties and a copy must be given to the student. The department chairperson completes the Professional Behavior Follow-Up Status Form in Tk20 and uploads the Professional Behavior – Action Plan Form. If the concern is to remain at Level 3, the department chairperson and Associate Dean for Curriculum and Accreditation conference with the student to outline the specific expectations and to sign the Professional Behavior – Action Plan Form. A copy of the signed form must be given to the student. Upon the passing of the due date, if the student successfully completed the action plan, the department chairperson completes the Professional Behavior Follow-Up Status Form in Tk20 and uploads the Professional Behavior – Action Plan Form. If the student did not successfully complete the action plan, the department chairperson completes the Professional Behavior Follow-Up Status Form in Tk20 and uploads the Professional Behavior – Action Plan Form. The concern is automatically elevated to Level 4.



### Complete the Professional Behavior Follow-Up Status Form in Tk20

### Level 4

A concern is Level 4 when a fourth concern has been submitted after a Level 3 Action Plan has been initiated or when a student did not successfully complete the Level 3 Action Plan. The student's department chairperson and the Associate Dean for Curriculum and Accreditation are notified. They meet and then communicate the concern to the Dean of the College of Education and Social Work. Other relevant parties may provide input. The Dean or their designee conferences with the student. Afterwards, the Dean decides if the student should be recommended for probation. If the student is not recommended, then they may be counseled out of the social work program into another career opportunity by the Dean or their designee. If the student is recommended for probation, then the Dean and all appropriate parties will outline the specifics of the student's probation. The Dean or their designee will conference with the student to explain the terms of the probation and both parties will sign the probation contract. The Associate Dean for Curriculum and Accreditation or the Dean will complete the *Professional Behavior Follow-Up Status Form* in Tk20 and will upload the signed *Professional Behavior - Action Plan Form* before submission.

Chairperson and Associate Dean are notified of Level 4 concern(s)

Chairperson and Associate Dean meet and then communicate concern(s) to the Dean

Dean or designee conferences with the student

If appropriate, complete the probation contract and Professional Behavior— Action Plan Form

Complete the Professional Behavior Follow-Up Status Form in Tk20



### College of Education and Social Work SOCIALWORK PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIORS – CONCERN FORM

UNIVERSI	1 1	SECTION ONE – CONCERN		
Student's Name:		Date (when	n concern was initiated):	
Name of Person C	Completing Form:	Competend	ey:	
	*Staff only complete Section One a	and email this form to CESWAsses	sment@wcupa.edu*	
Description of the	Behavior			
Use measurable to behavior at issue)	erms to describe the behavior. Include th	e date(s), setting(s), and a descript	tion of the concern (the professional	
	SECTIO	N TWO – CONFERENCE		
Complete this sec	tion if you are meeting with the student	in a formal conference regarding t	he concern outlined above.	
Date of Conferen	the date the concern was initiated)	Program: _		
Faculty/Staff Pres	ent at Conference:			
Expected Behavio	<u>or</u>			
After the conferer	nce, describe the changes expected from	the student and/or what the studer	nt will do differently in the future.	
Door the company	wamont o Lavel 2 Department Devices			
	warrant a Level 2 Department Review?	sonoome of ours maint duning 41.	mo omomo thosy will be in a district of the district	
	If the student receives another Level 1 c to Level 2 requiring a Departmental Rev		rogram, they will be immediately elevated	
	The concern will be elevated to a Level contact the student.	2 requiring a Departmental Review	w. The Department Chairperson will	
*Add	ditional concerns may result in Level 2,	3, or 4 review process (see Profes.	sional Behaviors Handbook)*	
		SIGNATURES		
Signatures indicat	e you were a participant at the conference	ce and read the above information		
Student:			Date:	
Faculty/Staff:		Title:	Date:	
Other:		Title:		



# College of Education and Social Work WEST CHESTER SOCIAL WORK PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIORS – ACTION PLAN FORM

WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY	CC	ONFERENCE INF	FORMATION	
Student's Name				orongo
Student's Name: Date of Conference: Faculty/Staff Present at Conference:				
r acuity/Starr r resem at		ECTIONS		
This Country Island			D ( D :	
<ul> <li>The faculty/staff me</li> <li>An action plan will</li> <li>If the concern status</li> <li>This may require los</li> </ul>	be completed by a Department Chairpers ember will meet with the student to discussed be developed outlining the expected behaving review is a Level 3 or 4, a compring-term monitoring and follow-up by the contract outlining the specifics should be	ass the concern(s) an avior and strategies ehensive action plar e Associate Dean or	nd provide guidance to develop the beh n (Academic Suppo Dean (or Designee	e for support. avior to an acceptable level. ort Plan) may be developed.
	ACTI	ON PLAN		
Action Plan (additional o	documents may be attached)	Che	eck box if no additi	onal action is required $\square$
Student Actions/Respons	sibilities			
Faculty/Staff Role				
Date and Time of Follov	v-Up Conference:			
*Additiona	ul concerns may result in Level 2, 3, or 4	review process (see	e Professional Beho	avior Handbook)*
	FOLLOW-UP CONFERENCE	E & OUTCOME (I	IF APPLICABLE	
Has the Student successing Rationale	fully completed the Action Plan?	□ YES	□NO	
*Faculty/	Staff complete the Professional Behavior	<u> </u>	Form and upload ti	his form in Tk20*
		IATURES		
	were a participant at the conference and	read the above infor	mation.	_
Student:		• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •		Date:
Faculty/Staff:		itle:		Date:
Other:		itle:		Date:

### **Competency #1 Ethical and Professional Behavior**

1a Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context

Acceptable	Concern
Models ethical decision making (models appropriate decorum and ethical behavior) in a variety of situations (field, class, community, etc). The following are some, but not all, examples related to this professional behavior:	Ethical decisions are made haphazardly or without a process to ensure the decision that was made was appropriate for the situation. The following are some, but not all, examples related to this professional behavior:
<ul> <li>Consistently apply ethical principles</li> <li>Seek consultation with others (when appropriate)</li> <li>Evaluates the impact of ethical decision making</li> <li>Acknowledge faulty reasoning</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Does not consistently apply ethical principles</li> <li>Refuses or does not seek consultation from others</li> <li>Has difficulty seeing implications of ethical decisions</li> <li>Cannot acknowledge errors in reasoning</li> </ul>
Compliance with relevant laws, regulations and procedures as outlined by the NASW code of ethics as appropriate to the situation. The following are some, but not all, examples related to this professional behavior:	Non-compliance with relevant laws, regulations and/or procedures as outlined by the NASW code of ethics in at least one situation. The following are some, but not all, examples related to this professional behavior:
<ul> <li>Refers to various ethical codes when faced with ethical dilemmas</li> <li>Identifies and applies ethical principles</li> <li>Complies with mandated reporting laws</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Does not reference various ethical codes when faced with ethical dilemmas</li> <li>Struggles to identify and apply ethical principles</li> <li>Does not comply with mandated reporting laws</li> </ul>
Compliance with the university and program specific policy and procedures (i.e. academic integrity policy, student handbook, field manual, etc.).	Non-Compliance with university and program specific policy or procedures (i.e. academic integrity policy, student handbook, field manual, etc.).
Produce original work and/or cites/references other's work according to current APA style.  • Free from grammatical errors • Little to no issues with content and structure	Produces work that is either not original and/or cited/referenced incorrectly according to current APA style. The following are some, but not all, examples related to this professional expectation:  Self-plagiarism or plagiarizing the work of others Purchasing and submitting pre-written materials for an assignment
1b.Use reflection and self-regulation to manage persona	l values and maintain professionalism in practice

## 1b.Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations

	Concern	
Demonstrates the ability self-regulate (monitor and control emotions) personal values in accordance with the demand of the situation (e.g. field practicum, classroom setting, email communication, etc.). The following are some, but not all, examples related to this professional behavior:	Struggles to self-regulate (monitor and control emotions) personal values in accordance to the demand of the situation (classroom, practicum setting, email communication, etc.). The following are some, but not all, examples related to this professional behavior:	
<ul> <li>Models appropriate behavior when presented with negative verbal or non-verbal cues</li> <li>Models appropriate behavior in stressful situations</li> <li>Utilizes effective self-care strategies to monitor personal behavior</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Exhibits verbal or non-verbal aggression</li> <li>Does not regulate personal emotions or monitor behaviors</li> </ul>	

1c. Demonstrate professional demeanor and behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication

Acceptable	Concern
Completes work in a timely manner, meets deadlines and is punctual as outlined in the course syllabus, practicum site, etc.	Struggles to complete work in a timely manner, does not meet deadlines, is excessively tardy or absent and is not in accordance with course or field expectations.
Dress and appearance is consistently appropriate to the setting (classroom and professional settings).	Dress and appearance is not appropriate to the setting (classroom and professional settings).
Communicates in a non-judgmental, non-derogatory, respectful fashion (including email, face-to-face, social media, etc.) on campus and in the field. The following are some, but not all, examples related to this professional behavior:	Communicates in a judgmental, derogatory, disrespectful fashion (including email, face-to-face, social media, etc.) on campus and in the field. The following are some, but not all, examples related to this professional behavior:
<ul> <li>Polite, kind and courteous to others</li> <li>Communicates in a calm demeanor</li> <li>Respects others privacy</li> <li>Written or verbal comments are respectful of diversity of all individuals</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Inappropriate language (coarse or rude language) or threats</li> <li>Belittling others</li> <li>Makes assumptions or generalization based on opinions (not based on valid research or facts)</li> <li>Verbal or written work is discriminatory toward others</li> </ul>
	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,
Exhibits professional behavior in a variety of situations (field, class, etc.). The following are some, but not all, examples related to this professional behavior:	Exhibits unprofessional behavior (e.g. inattentiveness and/or disruptive) in a variety of situations (field, class, etc.). The following are some, but not all, examples related to this professional behavior:
Attentive and alert	
<ul> <li>Shows a genuine concern for others (caring and courteous)</li> <li>Treats others with dignity and respect</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Sleeping in class or field site</li> <li>Teasing others or engaging inappropriate side conversations</li> <li>Demeaning others</li> </ul>
Communicates with instructor (class, field) prior to the occurrence of tardiness or absence. In rare cases when this is not done prior, the instructor is contacted after scheduled class or field hours.	Students either rarely contacts the instructor (class, field) prior to the occurrence of tardiness or absence or the communication is generally happening after the occurrence.
Maintains appropriate boundaries with others (colleagues, peers, clients, instructors, etc.) in a variety of situations (class, field, interactions with others, email other social media outlets). This includes acting in the best interest of the client. The following are some, but not all, examples related to this professional behavior:  • Sets appropriate limits with others (especially will dealing with difficult clients, peers, etc.)	Has difficulty maintaining appropriate boundaries with others (colleagues, peers, clients, instructors, etc.) in a variety of situations (class, field, interactions with others, email and other social media outlets). The following are some, but not all, examples related to this professional behavior:  • Violates personal space
<ul> <li>Recognizes or avoids conflict of interest</li> <li>Resolves differences with colleagues</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Physical contact with others</li> <li>Engages in practices that can be interpreted as a conflict of interest</li> </ul>
Works collaboratively and adapts communication style to fit goal, audience, context and situation. The following are some, but not all, examples related to this professional behavior:	Has difficulty collaborating with others and struggles with the ability to effectively use verbal and nonverbal cues to fit goal, audience and situation. The following are some, but not all, examples related to this professional behavior:
<ul><li>Actively listens</li><li>Effectively uses verbal and nonverbal cues</li></ul>	Makes inappropriate, facial expressions, gestures, tone,
Conveys ideas that is sensitive to the level of knowledge and	pitch body language in a professional setting
degree of sophistication of others	Struggles with being an active listener
Openly communicates with others	Engages in frequent miscommunication

Shows respect for others Demonstrates a lack of respect for others Offers little or no contribution to a group 1d Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; Acceptable Concern Adheres to the ethical (e.g. maintaining confidentiality) and Violates confidentiality or unprofessional use of technology, professional (e.g. tone, appropriate conversational language, and email and social networking sites. The following are some, etc.) use of technology, email, and social networking sites. The but not all, examples related to this professional behavior: following are some, but not all, examples related to this professional behavior: Uses flaming ("online screaming") or sentences in all Use appropriate intensifiers to help convey meaning Presents inaccurate or inappropriate information (especially using email or other social media outlets). Does not follow the NASW code of ethics when Presents information that is accurate and consistent with providing services to others NASW code of ethics Ignores protocols and policies to protect client Constantly evaluates the risk and benefits of the use of confidentiality when using technology technology (weighs to benefits of face to face versus online communication) when providing services or communicating with others 1e Use supervision and consultation to quide professional judgment and behavior Acceptable Concern Accepts and utilizes constructive feedback (e.g. from peers, Has difficulty accepting and utilizing constructive feedback instructors, clients, and etc.) and engages in a process of from others (e.g. peers, instructors, clients, etc.) and reflection and self-correction to improve personal, professional struggles with engaging in a process of reflection and selfpractice, judgement and behavior. The following are some, but correction to improve personal, professional practice, not all, examples related to this professional behavior. judgement and behavior. The following are some, but not all, examples related to this professional behavior: Acts promptly to resolve identified problems with performance or professional responsibilities Expresses anger, or dismisses constructive feedback Uses feedback to modify behavior Continues to exhibit behavior that impedes working relationships with others **Competency #2 Diversity and Difference** 2a Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels Acceptable Concern Demonstrates the ability to appreciate the perspective of others Demonstrates the unwillingness to appreciate the in developing an in-depth understanding of the situation. The perspective of others in developing an in-depth following are some, but not all, examples related to this understanding of the situation. The following are some, but professional behavior: not all, examples related to this professional behavior: Engages in unfriendly dialogue Asks clarifying questions when appropriate to understand the Abruptly interrupts with counter arguments perspective of others

# professional behavior: Asks clarifying questions when appropriate to understand the perspective of others Summarizes comments when appropriate Utilizes the perspective of others to develop empathy Demonstrates the ability to actively work to eliminate biases through education, dialogue, or introspection of others. The following are some, but not all, examples related to this professional behavior: Manages in unfriendly dialogue Abruptly interrupts with counter arguments Uses discouraging communication Monopolizes conversations Ignores or dismisses the perspective of others Demonstrates the inability to actively work to eliminate biases through education, dialogue, or introspection of others. The following are some, but not all, examples related to this professional behavior: Advocates for social justice and human rights Asks clarifying questions when appropriate to understand the perspective of others Demonstrates the inability to actively work to eliminate biases through education, dialogue, or introspection of others. The following are some, but not all, examples related to this professional behavior: Advocates for social justice and human rights

constituencies as experts of their own experience  Concern
Unwilling to see others as experts of their own experience. The following are some, but not all, examples related to this professional behavior:
<ul> <li>Ignores input of others</li> <li>Shows indifference towards others</li> <li>Withholds information</li> <li>Has difficulty recognizing one's limitations or accepting new ideas, contradictory information and advice</li> </ul>
e influence of personal biases and values in
Concern
Demonstrates the inability to self-regulate (monitor and control emotions) personal beliefs and attitudes related to human diversity (racial, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, etc.) in accordance with the demand of working with diverse clients and constituencies. The following are some, but not all, examples related to this professional behavior:
e C c h re w s

etc.

Imposes personal values and beliefs on others

Makes discriminatory remarks to clients, peers, faculty

Comments are sensitive and respectful to the cultural

diversity of clients, peers, faculty etc.

Lamb, D. H., Presser, N. R., Pfost, K. S., Baum, M. C., Jackson, V. R. & Jarvis, P. A. (1987). Confronting professional impairment during the internship: Identification, 366 due process, and remediation. Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 18, 597-603.

[Lamb, Cochran, & Jackson (1991). Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 22, 291-296.] III.