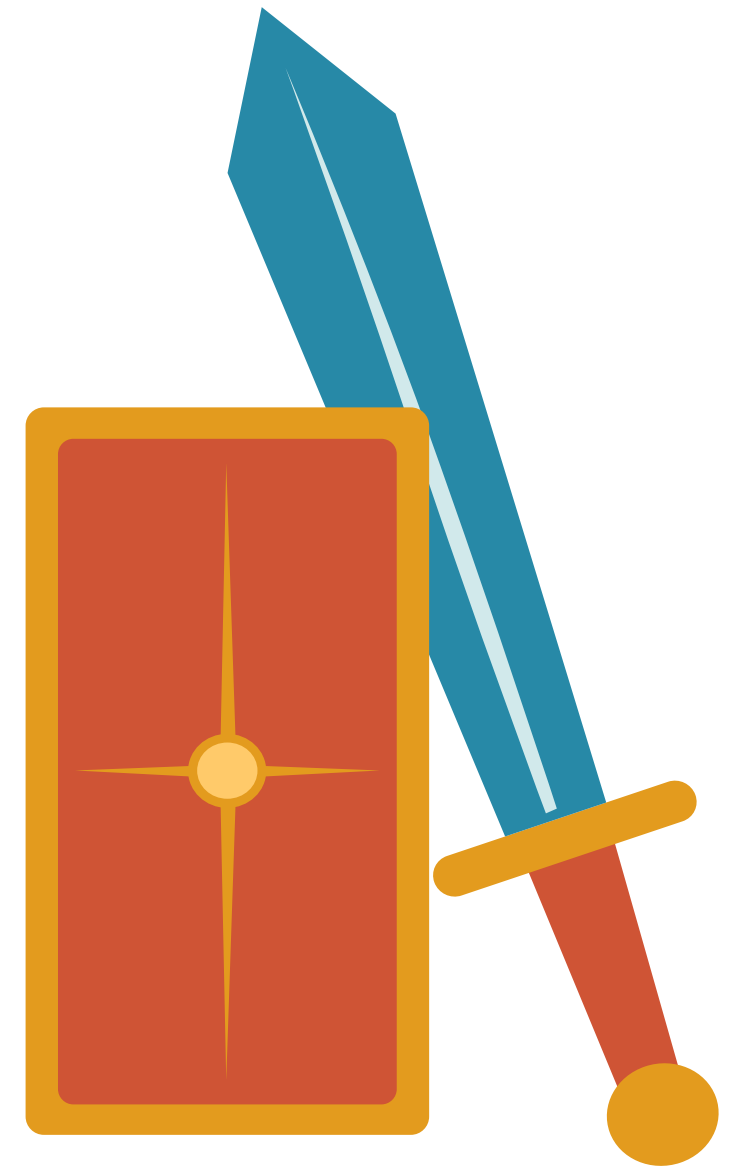


# Working with Clients

## Standards, Bias, and Confidentiality

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Fall 2026 SOWK 430 Week 06



Protecting Clients  
and Our Ethical  
Responsibilities  
Towards Them

# Plan for Week Six

## Agenda

### Tasks for week 6

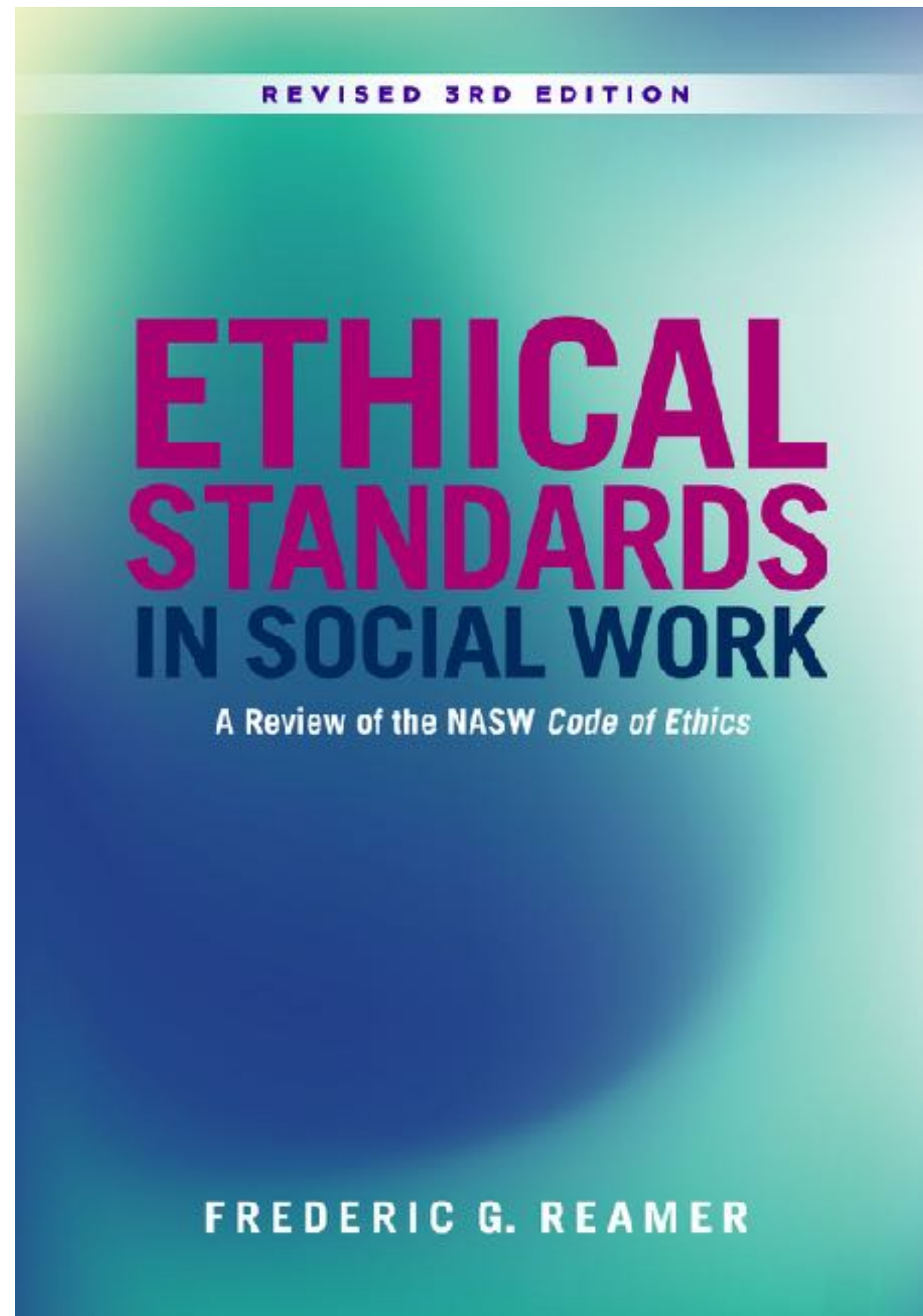
### Understanding bias

### Confidentiality for SUDPs

#### Learning Objectives

- Describe implicit attitudes, implicit stereotypes, and ingroup bias, and how each can shape the way we see and work with clients
- Reflect on a personal bias you are likely to encounter in practice and why it matters for providing non-judgmental services
- Explain how 42 CFR Part 2 and the NAADAC Code of Ethics add to NASW Standard 1.07 when working with clients with substance use disorders

# Tasks Week Six



Read Chapter 2 in  
Reamer (2023) *Ethical  
Responsibilities to Clients*

## Review Section 1 of the NASW Code of Ethics

- Make three replies across this week's five forums (including at least one in Ethical Standard 1)
- Make at least one post on the Padlet

# What do we mean by implicit bias?

Implicit biases are associations outside our conscious awareness that lead to a negative evaluation of a person because of an irrelevant characteristic, such as race or gender. They can exist even in people who explicitly reject those ideas and want to treat everyone equally (FitzGerald & Hurst, 2017).

## Who's the Doctor?

Researchers at Boston University gave this riddle to 197 psychology students and 103 children ages 7 to 17. Only 14% of the students and 15% of the children said the surgeon was the boy's mother (Barlow, 2014).



# What does the research show?

## Implicit Bias Toward Clients

- Helping professionals are not immune
- Many kinds of clients might be the object of bias
- Bias can impacts care
- Identities often intersect
- Applying a group level stereotype to an individual is problematic

(FitzGerald & Hurst, 2017)

# Types of Implicit Bias

## Naming What Happens Outside Our Awareness

### **Implicit attitude**

How we feel about one person can spill over onto people connected to them.

### **Implicit stereotype**

An association between a trait and a social group or category.

### **Ingroup bias**

Favoritism toward groups to which one belongs.

# Reflecting on Biases Worksheet

A-02 due Monday 10/12/26 at 8:00 AM

A bias can be defined as prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair. All humans have biases. As social workers, considering our biases and how they might impact our work is essential to provide ethical practice. This worksheet is to help students process their biases.

1. **Identify a bias you have that you are likely to encounter in social work practice.**  
For example: This could be something rooted in your own cultural or religious beliefs, such as a belief that no elder should live in a nursing home or that abortion is wrong. This could be a bias toward using stereotypes to understand other religious groups, ethnic or racial groups, or LGBTQ folks. This could be a label that you tend to put on certain people or an attitude toward those who live with mental health issues or substance use disorders. This could be a bias against a cultural attitude such as *machismo* or in favor of a particular cultural practice such as having a stay-at-home parent. Or many more.

*Describe in one to two sentences a bias that you have identified in yourself in the box below.*

2. **Identify three reasons that you believe you have developed this bias.**  
For example: Your beliefs may be rooted in your family upbringing, in your religious teachings, in a lack of exposure or education, in the cultural attitudes of our society, in an experience you had, in something you read or watched, etc.

*Describe each reason in two to four sentences in the box below.*

- a.
- b.
- c.

3. **Identify how this bias might become problematic in social work practice if it was not addressed.**  
For example: A bias against all abortion might prevent you from supporting a client in understanding her options when faced with an unplanned pregnancy or unviable fetus. A fear based in a lack of understanding of a particular religion, such as Islam, may prevent you from providing helpful options to a Muslim client. A bias against using a skilled nursing facility could put an older adult in danger if the care they need is beyond the capacity of the family you are serving.

*Describe a scenario in which the bias could become an issue in two or three sentences in the box below.*

4. **Describe the importance of providing non-judgmental services as a social worker.**  
Why is it essential that we examine our own prejudicial attitudes and embrace each client’s individuality?

*Use the box below to write at least one paragraph on this topic.*

| Description                                                                                                              | Highly Developed                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Identify bias:</b> Identify a bias you have that you are likely to encounter in social work practice.                 | One to two sentences about identifying biases is written. This bias is likely to be problematic in social work practice. The presented idea is clear and easy to understand. |
| <b>Reasons for Bias:</b> Identify three reasons that you believe you have developed this bias.                           | Three well-explained reasons the bias may have developed are written.                                                                                                        |
| <b>Why Problematic:</b> Identify how this bias might become problematic in social work practice if it was not addressed. | A clear explanation of the possible harms to the client that biases can cause is identified.                                                                                 |
| <b>Non-judgmental services:</b> Describe the importance of providing non-judgmental services.                            | A robust and clear argument of the essentiality of examining prejudices and how this can honor clients individually is expressed.                                            |

## Reflecting on Biases Worksheet Rubric

# Confidentiality and SUD Clients

## A Quick Review of 42 CFR Part 2

- Even the fact of treatment is protected
- Written consent is required to share records
- Records can't be used to investigate or prosecute the patient without their consent or a court order
- The records requirements are for anybody that receive them

"Confidentiality protections help address concerns that discrimination and fear of prosecution deter people from entering treatment for SUD"

(U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2026, para. 2)

|                               | NASW Code of Ethics (2021)                                                                                      | NAADAC Code of Ethics (2025)                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| How it frames confidentiality | Protect confidential information "except for compelling professional reasons" (1.07[c])                         | "Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity are foundational to addiction treatment and recovery support," and protecting them is a "primary obligation" (II-1)                                                      |
| Federal law                   | Does not mention 42 CFR Part 2                                                                                  | Records and releases must meet HIPAA and 42 CFR Part 2 (II-2, II-20)                                                                                                                                             |
| Consent to disclose           | "Valid consent" from the client or a legally authorized person (1.07[b])                                        | Written consent; verbal authorization is not enough, except in emergencies (II-5)                                                                                                                                |
| Danger to self or others      | May disclose to prevent "serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm," sharing the least amount necessary (1.07[c]) | Only for "clear and imminent danger" or a medical emergency, and only to emergency personnel directly involved (II-8)                                                                                            |
| Telling the client            | Inform clients before disclosing, "when feasible and to the extent possible" (1.07[d])                          | Every release carries the federal regulations and a statement prohibiting re-release; the professional keeps a list of to whom and why records were released, available to the client on written request (II-19) |