

Editorial: Moving Forward

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About 8 ½ -9 years ago, Steve Marson came to me with a proposal. The idea was to publish an online, open access journal on social work values and ethics. Steve and Jerry Finn had already put together an impressive editorial board, and they were looking for someone to help get this new journal off the ground. Would I be interested?

To me, values and ethics are the foundations of social work. In my other publication, *The New Social Worker*, I had already made a commitment to cover this important area in every issue.

Yes, I was very interested in this new ethics journal that Steve and Jerry were proposing. And yes, I would agree to be its publisher.

The journal was to be published twice a year, with two articles in each issue. It would be available online, free of charge, with open access to all. Steve and Jerry were concerned about whether there would be enough submissions to fill the “two articles per issue” mission. As it turned out, they had nothing to worry about.

The first edition of the *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics* was published in Fall 2004. That edition had two full-length articles, one forum article, and two book reviews. The journal has grown by leaps and bounds. This edition (Fall 2012) includes seven full-length articles and four book reviews. We now have 11,267 subscribers (as of October 9, 2012). The journal’s most-read article, “Professional Boundaries in Dual Relationships,” published in Fall 2005, has been accessed 72,471 times.

It is clear to me that this journal fills an important niche in the social work field, and it has been my privilege to be involved in its development and growth over the years since its humble beginnings.

It is bittersweet for me to turn the reins over to the very capable hands of the staff of the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB). I have a strong commitment to social work ethics, and the connections I have made with the people involved in this journal—the volunteer editors and board members—are very near and dear to me. But alas, the journal has grown so much—it is a much bigger project than I initially took on, and other projects are demanding more of my time, as well.

So, over the past year, ASWB staff stepped up to take on some of the editorial duties of the journal. Starting with the next edition (Spring 2013), ASWB will be the publisher of the journal. To me, this is a logical transition, because ASWB is committed to protection of the public through its services to social work licensing boards. Licensing is designed to determine whether a social worker is minimally competent to practice the profession of social work. Competence and ethics go hand in hand. How can a social worker practice competently without understanding critical consciousness, non-sexual dual relationships, and professional boundaries—just a few of the critical issues explored in this edition of the journal?

I am looking forward to seeing where *the Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics* goes from here.

My expectation is that it will continue to grow, to enhance social workers' and social work students' knowledge about the crucial issues and dilemmas they face every day, to provide a venue for researchers to publish in this important area, and to fill an important and necessary niche in the social work literature.

Finally, I would like to thank the many readers of the journal and the researchers who have contributed their work for their roles in the growth of the journal during its first eight years. I encourage you, readers, to continue to use this valuable resource, whether as a reader, a contributor, a student, an educator, or a practitioner.