



NAPA Ethical Guidelines

Background

The preparation of the ethics statement involved a unique partnership between the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology (NAPA) and the Southern California Applied Anthropology Network (SCAAN). Jean Gilbert, a SCAAN member and Chair of the NAPA Ethics Committee, worked with a local committee composed of several of her fellow SCAAN members (Claudia Fishman, Neil Tashima and Barbara Pillsbury) to create the first draft, which appeared in the December 1987 Anthropology Newsletter, pp 7-8. Membership comments were solicited at that time. The Guidelines were also sent to all of the local practitioner organizations (LPOs) for comment, and in addition were the topic of discussion in a regular SCAAN monthly meeting. The final version of the NAPA Ethical Guidelines for Practitioners was published in the November 1988 Anthropology Newsletter, pp 8-9. Gilbert thanked the membership of SCAAN and the following individuals who reviewed and commented on the draft: Fred Hess, Elvin Hatch, Barbara Frankel and Gene Anderson. The final version incorporated many of their comments.

NAPA Ethical Guidelines for Practitioners

These guidelines have been developed by the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology as a guide to the professional and ethical responsibilities that practicing anthropologists should uphold. A practicing anthropologist is a professionally trained anthropologist who is employed or retained to apply his or her specialized knowledge problem solving related to human welfare and human activities. The designation "practicing anthropologist" includes full-time practitioners who work for clients such as social service organizations, government agencies and business and industrial firms. This term also includes part-time practitioners, usually academically based anthropologists, who accept occasional assignments with such clients. The substantive work of practicing anthropologists may include applied research, program design and implementation, client advocacy and advisory roles and activities related to the communication of anthropological perspectives. These guidelines are provided with the recognition that practicing anthropologists are involved in many types of policy-related research, frequently affecting individuals and groups with diverse and sometimes conflicting interests. No code or set of guidelines can anticipate unique circumstances or direct practitioner actions in specific situations. The individual practitioner must be willing to make carefully considered ethical choices and be prepared to make clear the assumptions, facts and issues on which those choices are based. These guidelines therefore address general contexts, priorities and relationships which should be considered in ethical decision making in anthropological practice.

1. Our primary responsibility is to respect and consider the welfare and human rights of all categories of people affected by decisions, programs or research in which we take part. However, we recognize that many research and practice settings involve conflicts between benefits accruing to different parties affected by our research. It is our ethical responsibility, to the extent feasible, to bring to bear on decision making, our own or that of others, information concerning the actual or potential impacts of such activities on all whom they might affect. It is also our responsibility to assure, to the extent possible, that the views of groups so affected are made clear and given full and serious consideration by decision makers and planners, in order to preserve options and choices for affected groups.

2. To our resource persons or research subjects we owe full and timely disclosure of the objectives, methods and sponsorship of our activities. We should recognize the rights of resource persons, whether individuals or groups, to receive recognition for their contributions or to remain anonymous if they so desire or to decline participation altogether. These persons should be informed of our commitment to the principle of confidentiality throughout the design of research or other activities involving resource persons and should thoroughly investigate and understand all of the limitations on our claims of confidentiality and disclosure.

3. To our employers we owe competent, efficient, fully professional skills and techniques, timely performance of our work and communication of our findings and recommendations in understandable, non-jargonistic language.

As practicing anthropologists, we are frequently involved with employers or clients in legally contracted arrangements. It is our responsibility to carefully review contracts prior to signing and be willing to execute the terms and conditions stipulated in the contract once it has been signed.

At the outset of a relationship or contract with an employer or client, we have an obligation to determine whether or not the work we are requested to perform is consistent with our commitment to deal fairly with the rights and welfare of persons affected by our work, recognizing that different constituencies may be affected in different ways. At this time, we should also discuss with our employer or client the intended use of the data or materials to be generated by our work and clarify the extent to which information developed during our activities can be made available to the public. Issues surrounding the protection of subject confidentiality and disclosure of information or findings should be thoroughly reviewed with the potential employer or client. We will not undertake activities which compromise our ethical responsibilities.

We will carry out our work in such a manner that the employer fully understands our ethical priorities, commitments and responsibilities. When, at any time during the course of work performance, the demands of the employer require or appear to require us to violate the ethical standards of our profession, we have the responsibility to clarify the nature of the conflict between the request and our standards and to propose alternatives that are consistent with our standards. If such a conflict cannot be resolved, we should terminate the relationship.

4. In our relations with students and trainees, we will be candid, fair, nonexploitative, nondiscriminatory and committed to the student's or trainee's welfare. We recognize that such mentoring does involve an exchange in which practitioners share their knowledge and experience in return for the significant effort and contribution of the students/trainees. We should be honest and thorough in our presentation of material and should strive to improve our teaching and training techniques and our methods of evaluating the effectiveness of our instruction.

As practicing anthropologists we are frequently called upon to instruct, train or teach individuals, anthropologists and others in nonacademic settings (workshop participants, in-service trainees, continuation or certification program trainees and research teams). To such persons, we owe training that is informed, timely and relevant to their needs.

Our instruction should inform both students and trainees of the ethical responsibilities involved in the collection and use of data. To our students and trainees we owe respect for and openness to nonanthropological methods and perspectives. Student and trainee contributions to our work, including publications, should be accurately and completely attributed.

5. To our colleagues, anthropologists and others, we have a responsibility to conduct our work in a manner that facilitates their activities or that does not unjustly compromise their ability to carry out professional work.

The cross-disciplinary nature of the work of practicing anthropologists requires us to be informed and respectful of the disciplinary and professional perspectives, methodologies and ethical requirements of nonanthropological colleagues with whom we work.

We will accurately report the contribution of our colleagues to our research, practice-related activities and publications.

6. To the discipline of anthropology we have a responsibility to act in a manner that presents the discipline to the public and to other professional colleagues in a favorable light. We will point out the value of anthropological contributions to the understanding of human problems and humankind. Where appropriate

in the context of our work, we will encourage the use of anthropological approaches and recommend the participation of other anthropologists.

We will contribute to the growth of our discipline through communicating and publishing scientific and practical information about the work in which we are engaged, including, as appropriate, theory, processes, outcomes and professional techniques and methods.

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