

attention in recent years. Here we wish to highlight the need for social workers to consider seriously the ethical problems that may arise in work settings among persons with different degrees of power.

Consider how you would assess the following supervisory situations:

- Your supervisee's husband is an insurance broker. She tells you that her husband will give you a large discount on your automobile insurance. Will you avoid any ethical problems if you place your insurance with him but pay the full insurance rate?
- Your agency is employing your wife as a caseworker and assigns you to work on a team with her.
- Your supervisee has a summer home in the mountains. She invites you and your children to use it this summer while she and her husband are vacationing elsewhere.

In each of these situations, there is a potential for an ethical difficulty. Do the standards give clear answers to these problems?

OTHER CONFLICTING OBLIGATIONS

Social work supervisors are often in the position of the person "in between" with multiple pressures and obligations. Supervisors have many roles and obligations in social agencies. In addition to their primary responsibility to ensure the delivery of high-quality services, their responsibilities include committee meetings, assignments representing the agency in the community, phone calls, emergencies, and other demands on their time and energy. Exemplars 10.12, 10.13, and 10.14 illustrate several of the ethical dilemmas that can arise.

10.12

FRIEND, SELF, FAMILY, AGENCY—LOYALTY TO WHOM?

Thomas Kinane was recently promoted to supervisor, a job that pays much more than his prior position. His teenage daughter has been in therapy, and he feels lucky because the money is arriving just when the family needs it. He is responsible for the supervision of 12 workers who are on a task force to implement a new service in Gordonsville, a satellite location. He has an enormous amount of record keeping and report writing to do. Because of demands of the job on his time, both in Gordonsville and at central headquarters, he frequently has to cancel supervisory sessions with individual workers, not fulfilling his responsibilities to supervisees and clients. Yet he does not feel ready to use group supervision, which would help him to better control his time and do his job.

Thomas's situation is not unusual. He wants to succeed in his job, and has a responsibility to his employer. But he also has a responsibility to his supervisees' clients, to his family, and to his supervisees. How would you choose among these conflicting obligations? What would you choose to do?