



The Swedish Association of Guidance Counsellors Declaration of Ethics

The Swedish Association of Guidance Counsellors is an association working to solidify and develop the use of guidance counselling in connection with studies, professional life and careers. Guidance counselling must be based on a serious professional attitude and on sound ethical principles. The ethical guidelines are intended to provide support for those working to provide guidance as well as those who seek or require guidance. The following text gives an overview of some of the main factors in guidance that are of prime importance for the ethical guidelines.

Guidance is an activity dealing with ongoing processes and its purpose is to make it easier for individuals and groups of all ages to choose an education, a profession or a career regardless of age, as well as make a contribution to an improvement of life in general.

Many people are not where they imagine they want to be. With the realization of this, questions arise, leading to the formulation of needs, and it is the task of guidance counsellors to answer the questions and make the decisions easier by meeting with the people concerned. The concept of guidance covers a number of different activities and areas, either personal or public or connected to studies or professional life. The work of the guidance counsellor may be defined by providing a few examples of the questions and needs that may lead people to seek guidance:

- Finding information – difficulties in getting an overview, a great number of alternatives.
- Making decisions – painful choices, difficult considerations, fear of closing off an alternate possibility.
- Help on the way – check-ups, the need for conversation and support.
- Motivation – where do I go from here? How can I look ahead?
- Understanding of life and self – who am I?
- Providing an opportunity for deliberation – how do I want to live? Where do I want to go?
- Confirming choices – professional response.

The professional guidance counsellor should know about areas that concern human encounters and relations, and strive to help others achieve the aforementioned goals and needs. In spite of this, there may arise conflicts in the guidance work between diverging interests, where different needs and obligations have to be set off against each other, and the ethical guidelines are meant to aid the ethical consideration about such dilemmas.

The professional ethics of the guidance counsellor are based on the ethical values that may be found in the UN declaration of human rights, the EU resolution on guidance 9286/04 and the ILO convention on professional guidance, no. 142.

The Council of Ethics

The association has appointed a council for ethical considerations, the task of which is to develop and keep track of issues concerning the ethics of guidance counselling. The Council of Ethics may also be of assistance when dilemmas arise and offer the opportunity for support when decisions are particularly difficult.

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The Swedish Association of Guidance Counsellors Ethical Guidelines

1. Professional Ethics

- 1.1 Guidance is based on science and acquired experience. Guidance counsellors should strive to improve the quality of their activities and also to keep up with current developments in connection with theories and methods for guidance counselling.
- 1.2 Guidance counsellors must show respect for the unique and equal value of every human being, they should be in favour of justice and equal opportunities, and actively strive to oppose all kinds of discrimination.
- 1.3 Guidance counsellors should support the freely made and deliberate educational and vocational choices of each and every individual.
- 1.4 Guidance counsellors should strive for improved self-awareness and an accurate understanding of their own attitudes towards individuals and society.
- 1.5 The guidance counsellor should have knowledge of and adhere to the rules and regulations concerning confidentiality and secrecy.
- 1.6 The guidance counsellor must be aware of the limits of his/her own competence and be ready to refer the applicant to someone knowledgeable in other areas of competence when required to do so.

2. Individual Ethics

- 2.1 The guidance counsellor should focus on the individual and remain uninfluenced by other considerations.
- 2.2 The guidance counsellor should adapt the guidance efforts to the needs of the applicant.
- 2.3 The guidance counsellor should strive to provide information that is relevant, clear and objective.
- 2.4 The guidance counsellor has to provide applicants with a clear outline of the framework of a meeting and the limits of his or her own competence.
- 2.5 The guidance counsellor must deal with facts about personal matters in a way that shows respect for the integrity of the individual.
- 2.6 The guidance counsellor should strive for impartiality and a neutral attitude when selections have to be made, and also be prepared to state the motivations influencing any actions and opinions.
- 2.7 Encounters with individuals must be respectful and guided by intentions of establishing good relations.

3. Societal Ethics

- 3.1 Laws, regulations and aims have been established to control and influence the counselling work. The guidance counsellor must be aware of these and make them the foundation for his/her own efforts.
- 3.2 The guidance counsellor should strive to develop and maintain the confidence of the citizens with regard to the guidance counselling work and the professional competence connected with it.