Eight-Step Problem-Solving Model

1. Describe the parameters of the situation.
2. Define the potential ethical-legal issues involved.
3. Consult ethical-legal guidelines, if any, already available that might apply to the resolution of each issue. Consider the broad ethical principles as well as specific mandates involved.
4. Evaluate the rights, responsibilities, and welfare of all affected parties.
5. Generate a list of alternative decisions possible for each issue.
6. Enumerate the consequences of making each decision. Consultation with colleagues may be helpful.
7. Present any evidence that the various consequences or benefits resulting from each decision will actually occur (i.e., a risk-benefit analysis).
8. Make the decision. Consistent with ethical codes, school psychologists accept responsibility for the decision made and monitor the consequences of the course of action chosen.

(Adapted from Koocher & Keith-Spiegel, 2008)
McNamara Approach

1.0 Become aware of dilemma

2.0 Identify basis of conflict

2.1 Conflicting interests of parties
   - 2.1.1 Determine: How might each party’s interests be affected by my action?
   - 2.1.2 Determine: What is my responsibility to each party?

2.2 Competing standards
   - 2.2.1 Determine: What standards are involved? Is there a legal requirement I must consider?

2.3 Unclear standards
   - 2.3.1 Determine: What information is lacking? What do I need to know?
   - 2.3.1.1 Consult supervisor or colleague
   - 2.3.1.2 Consult written resources

3.0 Determine: What are my options for action?

3.1 What is likely impact, positive and negative, on all parties (including myself)?

3.2 Can negative impact be ameliorated? How?

3.3 Consider hierarchy of principles: respect for dignity of person; responsible caring; integrity in relationships; responsibility to society

3.4 Consider: Is this action one I would recommend to a colleague? Am I comfortable with others knowing my decision?

4.0 Decide on course of action; evaluate outcome

McNamara, 2008