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Assignment One
LIB 562
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Personal Code of Ethics

The following list is a set of values that I commit to hold true through my walk of life. I feel a personal obligation to adhere to these values and not falter. These values identify who I am and I have made a personal commitment to follow this code. I will reference this document and make revisions as needed to ensure I am leading the best life possible. The following list is composed in order of importance.

I will...

1. Stay true to myself by following my instinct and intuition.
2. I will hold myself accountable for the actions I take.
3. I will remain a lifelong learning and encourage others to do the same.
4. I will keep an open mind to new ideas.
5. I will respect the opinion of others.
6. I will strive for excellence.
7. I will exert every reasonable effort to keep myself and others safe.
8. I will practice reciprocity by following the Golden Rule.
9. I will be a loyal person and remain reliable to others.
10. I will follow the laws and rules set forth by the government and my community unless I feel the laws or rules are violating my ethical beliefs above.

My personal ethical code listed above has aided me in making several ethical decisions. Most recently I was faced with an ethical decision surrounding the library aide. This was a difficult decision for me because through our many hours spent working together we have become friends. In the end, I feel that I made the best decision for all parties involved and our friendship was spared.

When I began my position in May of last year, I was introduced to Louise, the library aide. She had just recently begun her position as well, having previously been an aide in an elementary classroom. She had previously worked closely with the current middle school

principal and requested a transfer to the library aide position. From September to May, Louise worked under a long-term substitute as I finished my student teaching at another school. The substitute had very little knowledge in librarianship but did her best to maintain the library, as did Louise. From May to the end of the school year I taught Louise the many duties of a library aide. Louise is currently over sixty and has been battling Parkinson's disease since she was 35. This gives her great difficulty when operating a computer and it is challenging for her to adhere book covers, spine labels, and barcodes. On days when her medicine was not helping as much I could see her frustrations and I would choose to cover the books.

Over the summer, Louise's Parkinson's medications were changed and caused her to sleepwalk. She had a very tragic accident and sleepwalked down the stairs. She broke many bones in her already frail body and was placed in a body cast. For the beginning of the school year I trained another aide in the event Louise was unable to return. Due to finances, Louise had no choice but to return to work. I was very grateful to see her again.

Since May I have made several adaptations to make Louise's job as comfortable as possible. For example, instead of typing the patron's last name when checking out a book, I gave each student a "library card" with his or her ID barcode. This eliminates the need for a lot of typing when checking out books. In addition, I have taken the responsibility of cataloging all of the books and adhering the barcodes. Louise is responsible for stamping the books, attaching the spine label, and covering all hardcover books. I help with shelving as much as time permits.

Each semester I send out overdue notices to students, and this semester I had nearly three times as many. When I looked closer at the notices, I realized that many of them were incorrect. Entire classes would have not a single book checked in. I called the other librarians in the district to get their thoughts and when it was clear it was not a computer issue, I knew I had to address it with Louise. I tactfully noted that "we need to pay a lot of attention to the screen...just in case" and despite the fact that she does 95% of the circulation, I tried to take just as much blame for the situation. After a few days of thinking on how to rectify the situation, I chose to print out a list of all the current book check outs in shelf order. As a team, we were going to shelf read and highlight any book on the list that was on the shelf. Before reaching the "B's" I discovered that this problem was still occurring, even after it was addressed to Louise. I let it slide and continued finding books on the shelf that were never properly checked in. As the weeks continued, I noticed more and more things that were disturbing me. Louise would forget her computer login

on a regular basis, and would have a difficult time keeping track of the cycle days. Every time I would address errors, Louise would get very emotional and frustrated. I didn't know what to do. I soon realized something needed to be done.

This is a very good example of where my ethical code came into play. I was torn because I knew Louise needed the job for the income, yet she was clearly suffering from something and it was affecting the library. I was spending a lot of time fixing errors and helping her with her daily routines. I was also her friend, and I did not want to see her suffer, nor did I want to see someone else in her position because I enjoyed her company.

When looking at my code of ethics, it is clear that I care about the safety of others, but I also want to remain loyal to those I care about. A few weeks ago I was putting the newspaper in its display on a day that Louise forgot. On the front page of the Local & State section was an article about an elderly couple that froze to death because they were driving and forgot where they were going. That night, I called the school counselor to explain the situation (I chose to call the counselor opposed to the school principal because Louise is friends with the Principal). Despite the safety or loyalty involved in the situation, after seeing the news article I chose to follow my instinct and inform someone of the situation. The counselor noted my concern and agreed to look further into my concerns. In addition, the counselor informed me of an option for a position transfer at the close of the school year if the behavior continued. This would allow Louise to continue work in a more suitable position. In addition, having the behavior noted made me feel better in case a pattern needed to be noted for her doctor.

This decision was difficult because it was not black and white. Several items needed to be taken into consideration. I am a very firm believer in trusting yourself and following your intuition. Despite the fact that safety and loyalty were the factors tearing me between the decision to make, I knew after seeing the article discussing a couple that lost their lives due to forgetful behavior that I should inform someone of my concerns.