

Case Study VI. Self-Reflection

An AHIMA member shares a PowerPoint (PPT) presentation on coding for radiation oncology on a specific community on Engage. Another member copied this PPT, modifying it only with the addition of two pictures. She then added her name as creator and posted it to a Web site. Is there an ethical violation, dilemma, or concern?

In this scenario, there is an ethical concern. The second AHIMA member is placing her self-interest above other members by misrepresenting the work as her own.

1. *What was the AHIMA member's actions that resulted in an ethics violation being brought forward?*

The second member's action was the result of personal gain and was not unintentional or accidental.

2. *What AHIMA Ethical Code has been violated?*

The principles and guidelines this member possibly violated include:

Principle 2. Put service and the health and welfare of persons before self-interest and conduct oneself in the practice of the profession so as to bring honor to oneself, peers, and to the health information management profession.

Guideline 2.5. Take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work one actually performs, or to which one contributed. Honestly acknowledge the work of and the contributions made by others verbally or written, such as in publication.

3. *What is the potential harm to the organization or AHIMA as a result of the act?*

The member who originally created the PPT suffers because her work is misrepresented as the work of another. The reputation of the second member suffers because she has falsely represented the work as her own and not given credit to others. The second member has improperly elevated her self-interest above that of her peer in the profession.

4. *What is the status of the AHIMA member's training, education, and awareness of the AHIMA Code of Ethics?*

The facts indicate that both are established members with membership responsibilities.

Resolution: The better course of action would be for the second member to attempt to get the author's permission and at minimum, use the appropriate citation to give credit. Also show the name of the original author (attribution) on the PPT and then add the phrase as modified by [insert her name].