

# **Field Manual**

## **Introduction of Field Director**

Ms. LaKeshia Harris serves as the Field Director and Assistant Professor. She is a Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) and holds an BSW and MSW degree from Stephen F. Austin State University. She has fifteen (15) years of post-graduate practice in HIV care. She has over ten years in home health and hospice care. Her expertise lies in HIV care, health care, substance abuse and mental health.

## **Integration of Field Education with Classroom**

The importance of a broad, generalist experience is stressed in the classroom and education. Field assignments for all social work majors offer varied learning experiences and require several intervention methods with diverse groups of clients. The need for breadth of learning is also reflected in the materials used in field education to plan assignments and evaluate student performance. The field placement course is taken concurrently with a field seminar in helping, which facilitates students' application of theory and research to their practice. Integrating theory and evidence-based research with generalist practice is also fostered in weekly three-hour meetings.

TC social work faculty recognize the vital role that field instructors play in students' acquisition of the core skills of practice and their abilities to think critically and apply theory and research to practice. Therefore, the Office of Field Instruction provides an extensive orientation for field instructors at the beginning of each academic year. The curriculum is reviewed, and program goals, objectives, course content, and requirements are discussed. Ongoing support and guidance from the faculty field liaison assists field instructors with their educational responsibilities. The program also provides continuing education opportunities to field instructors on topics such as fostering critical thinking, integration of theory, and evidence-based research to micro, mezzo, and macro practice as learning opportunities in the field.

The field instruction for all social work students is consistent with the program's definition of generalist practice in its choice of participating agencies, its specification of required learning experiences, and its provision of orientation and training for field instructors.

Field education is an integral part of the curriculum; it is designed to engage students in direct and indirect service activities and provide practical experience in applying and integrating the theory and skills acquired in the core curriculum in competency development.

The program's competencies must be demonstrated through in-field instruction. Under the supervision of the field instructor, students must have opportunities to engage in competency development associated with generalist social work practice, which the program has identified in its mission and goals. Field placements are made in various agencies and organizations in which students participate actively in the delivery of social services. Agencies must accept a generalist

approach to practice and allow students with opportunities to use a range of intervention strategies in working both directly with clients and indirectly on their behalf. A variety of learning experiences are expected from all students.

### **The Purpose of Field Education**

The purpose of field education (SOCW 4601- Field Instruction I & SOCW 4622- Field Instruction II) is to provide students with generalist practice opportunities to demonstrate practice behaviors requisite for a mastery of all core competencies in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and community systems in a variety of practice settings. Students also integrate theory and practice within a generalist framework in agency settings under the supervision of a BSW or MSW with two years of practice experience for a post-graduation degree.

### **Field Learning Opportunities**

Opportunities for demonstration of the practice behaviors which augment the nine competencies are developed as a result of a structured process which includes: field development by the director of field education with the agency, use of agency-specific learning plans developed by the field instructor, and student, annual training of field instructors, faculty liaisons, seminar faculty and student orientation conducted by the Field Director of Field Education.

### **Matching Field Students with Field Social Service Agencies**

The Field Director matches field settings to students' abilities and professional career interests when arranging field placements. The BSW Program only utilizes field agencies that agree to provide generalist social work experiences to students. Internships for senior students offer various opportunities to work with individuals, families, and groups in diverse agency settings. Field agencies and instructors are selected based on the criteria described below.

During the first couple of weeks of the senior field placement, the student and field instructor developed a Foundation Learning Plan at the beginning of the semester. This agreement outlines assigned tasks and learning activities directly related to each competency. The BSW faculty liaison reviews this learning plan during the initial visits to the agency. The primary purpose of this visit is to ensure that generalist practice opportunities and tasks appropriate to the context of the field agency are assigned. The field Foundation Learning Plan parallels the rating scale for evaluating student performance, confirming the appropriateness of assignments used to evaluate the student's demonstration of each competency.

### **Required Field Instruction Hours**

The BSW Program offers the senior students complete 210 total hours in SOCW 4601 (Field Instruction I) and 210 total hours in SOCW 4622 (Field Instruction II). Students spend 14 hours per week in the Field Instruction I and 14 hours in the Field Instruction II practicum.

### **Admission to Field**

BSW students must first apply for admission to the field. Students must have satisfactorily completed their required pre-requisite and co-requisite coursework (See BSW Social Work Degree Plan), advised by faculty, and received field clearance from the BSW Program Director.

Additionally, all students are interviewed by the Director of Field Education and the BSW Program Director. Input is solicited from all BSW faculty in a formal department meeting where individual student interests and educational needs are reviewed.

The Director makes placements of Field Education with input from the faculty.

Once assigned a placement, students meet with the prospective Field Instructor of the agency for an interview. If accepted, the Field Instructor must complete the student/agency contract, agency information sheet, and Field Acceptance Form, which is then returned to the field office before starting the placement.

### **Policies, Criteria, and Procedures for Selecting Field Settings**

#### *Policies:*

To be considered a field instruction site, an agency must agree to provide generalist practice experience. Social work supervision must be available to students regularly, one hour per week. The agency must also agree to evaluate and monitor the student's learning according to the nine CSWE competencies. In addition, agency field instructors must agree to maintain contact with the faculty liaison and be responsible for observing and evaluating the effectiveness of the field placement.

Our student body's selection and maintenance of quality field placements are critical in social work education and producing highly-skilled, competent professional social workers. To that end, the program has a highly structured process for selecting quality field sites. Furthermore, field placements are chosen to reflect diverse populations' lifestyles and communities.

#### *Procedures:*

#### *Affiliation Process for Field Instructors*

Individuals desiring to become Field Instructors for the BSW Program complete an Affiliation Application during the semester before that in which field instruction will take place. The applicant should supply the Director of Field Education with the following documents:

1. A completed field instructor affiliation agreement
2. Field Instructor's commitment to the Social Work ethics and competence in practice

All Field Instructors will sign a Field Contract for each student placed under his/her supervision. The Field Contract includes the following:

1. Identification of the agency/setting and the stated formal expectations for student educational experiences (including generalist preparation, consistency with the CSWE policy, and the TC program goals, objectives, and expected BSW outcomes)
2. Specification of the nature of student supervision (i.e., frequency, additional supervision, liaison visits)
3. The contractual obligations of TC, the agency, and the Field Instructor

*Criteria:*

Criteria utilized to determine the selection of agencies are as follows:

1. agree with the Texas College Affirmative Action Statement, which calls for administration without discrimination based on race, color, gender, age, creed, ethnic or national origin, spirituality, age, sexual orientation, marital status, related to employees, clientele, social work students, and/or faculty
2. the agency must be able to provide students with a variety of generalist practice opportunities with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations
3. the agency must provide opportunities for students to work with all identified populations served by the agency.
4. the agency must be able and willing to provide a variety of practice assignments to meet the educational objectives of a respective field and the student's learning needs
5. the agency must be able to provide a qualified field instructor who will be allocated sufficient time to supervise, monitor, and assess student progress
6. the agency's practice and service delivery is based on professional standards of social work practice
7. The agency must provide the opportunity for students to work with a diverse group of client systems.
8. the agency's orientation and supervision of the student are educational rather than viewed as work-related or a "job."
9. the agency must be able to provide the physical resources necessary for the
  - a. student to carry out his/her responsibilities, such as a workspace, access to a
  - b. phone, and learning resource materials
10. the agency is willing and is supportive of the field instructor's attendance at the field
  - a. orientation and training workshops
11. the agencies without a BSW must agree to permit BSW supervision of BSW students. The program, in collaboration with the agency, will assign a BSW to serve as a field instructor, and an employee in the agency will be assigned to serve as agency task supervisor and
12. The agency is willing to participate in developing, monitoring, and annually evaluating the field office and the program.

## **Placing and Monitoring Students**

*Policies:*

The Director of Field Instruction is responsible for selecting the field agencies/programs and field instructors. There are several agency field sites developed in the region to meet the learning needs of students, meet the unmet needs of rural communities, provide opportunities to work with diverse, disadvantaged, and rural populations, and provide a rich learning experience throughout the program. Agency field sites have been developed to provide instruction in different practice fields, such as mental health, medical/health, substance abuse, school social work, adult and juvenile criminal justice, political advocacy, and child welfare.

Selection of a quality field placement takes time for each student; thus, students must promptly complete the field application process. Students who fail to follow the process within the specified time frame will not be eligible for field placement for the following semester.

*Procedures:*

The application process for the BSW field program is highly structured and comprehensive. The placement process requires that students meet all specified educational and process criteria. BSW Senior students will file their final degree/ plan of study in the Program Director's office once the degree plan is approved by the Program Director and forwarded to the Field Director for clearance to field placement.

BSW faculty review and provide feedback regarding students' strengths and anticipated placement. Once students have met all criteria for field and received field clearance, BSW students will attend their respective mandatory field placement information meeting, submit field application packets to the field office, and complete the field interview process with the Director of Field and BSW Program Director. The Director of Field contacts the proposed affiliated agency to negotiate the field assignment. If the agency is interested and necessary resources are available, students will be notified of their assignment by the Field office and schedule their student/agency interview. If both parties agree to the placement, an agency/student contract is completed and submitted to the Field office; if a student is not accepted at a given agency, the Director of Field reviews concerns and assigns another placement for the student to interview.

*Criteria:*

Completing this field placement/application process ensures that students have met all pre-conditions for the field and are adequately prepared to report to the field site. The placement process assists the Director of Field Education in selecting an appropriate field assignment for each student.

***Monitoring by Field Director and or Faculty Field Liaisons***

The Field Director serves as the faculty field liaison when the student enrollment is 20. Faculty are assigned field faculty liaison roles once the Field Director has reached the maximum of 20 students in the field. Each semester, the Field Director or faculty field liaisons receive a list of students and sites. Generally, every attempt is made to keep liaisons assigned to the same sites year after year. Faculty field liaisons must complete at least one face-to-face visit each semester with each student and field instructor (and task supervisor, if appropriate) at the placement site.

Field instructors, students, or the liaisons themselves may initiate additional visits beyond the mandatory one per semester and can create telephone contacts as needed. Liaisons are also available for questions/contacts from either students or field instructors by email. Faculty field liaisons add a second layer of monitoring of student field activities. They carry out regular, planned exchanges with field instructors regarding the educational objectives of field instruction, a student's performance in the field, and developments in the field setting that may affect student learning. These exchanges occur, as noted above.

In addition, faculty field liaisons meet with students for a 3-hour field seminar once per week, providing additional feedback regarding student performance in the field. Finally, Field Director and or faculty field liaisons receive and review monthly reports (Field Manual) detailing student activities and process recordings with field instructor comments (See Field Manual) and will also review the mid-semester and final evaluations (see Appendix B of the Field Education Manual). If the faculty field liaison has concerns regarding student performance at any time, contact is initiated with the field instructor and/or student as appropriate.

### ***Monitoring by Agency Field Instructors***

Field instructors monitor student learning and performance in a variety of ways. Early on, field instructors become familiar with the Field Education Manual and collaborate with students to create an Educational Learning Contract structured around the nine core competencies, identified behaviors, and integrated dimensions. The student and the agency field instructor are expected to collaborate on constructing the Education Learning Contract goals, objectives, tasks, and/or assignments, incorporating a wide array of generalist practice opportunities. Field instructors review students' documentation throughout the year and observe their interactions with clients and staff members. In addition, field instructors are required to meet with students for weekly supervision to discuss students' strengths and progress and any potential or noted problems in skill development, job performance, ethical considerations, and any other relevant issues. Field instructors review and initial a student's weekly hours timesheet during the weekly supervision time. In addition, timesheets are also reviewed monthly by a student's field instructor and Field Director/faculty field liaison. Finally, the field instructor completes written midterm and final evaluations with students to provide feedback and document relevant performance-related issues.

#### *Criteria:*

1. Monitor occurs the third week of the semester at the field placement site to review the Educational Learning Contract and at the mid-term (7th week) and the final (15th week) of the semester to review students' field evaluation
2. Open communication between field instructor, student, Field Director, and or faculty field liaison, and a commitment to generalist social work education
3. Field instructors or students can request additional monitoring meetings if the field instructor or student expresses concerns or issues regarding learning behaviors or professional behaviors in field placement

4. Faculty field liaison qualifications of 2 years post MSW or BSW degrees from a CSWE accreditation social work program
5. Monitoring field place occurs only in one option of the face-to-face and main campus

### ***Supporting Student Safety***

#### *Policy:*

Over the past few years, the Office of Field Education has implemented, and updated curriculum and guidelines regarding student safety in the field, referred to as The Safety Guidelines and Student Safety Checklist. The purpose of the checklist is to ensure that students and field instructors review the safety protocols at individual agencies within the first two weeks of field placement. It is required that these forms be reviewed and signed by the student, the field instructor, and the Field Director/faculty field liaison.

The Safety Guidelines and Student Safety Checklist were put into practice by the Office of Field Education to provide policy, procedures, and guidelines regarding the safety of social work students in field placements. The document was created to recognize that unsafe behaviors in clients' lives can create potential dangers for professional social workers and students. Safety issues are relevant in all communities and settings. It is required that students become familiar with the document regardless of their field placement's client population or location. An additional component of the guidelines describes the protocol should a student experience a safety issue in her or his field placement. This includes the notification protocol within the agency, the Office of Field Education, and the Social Work Program.

#### *Procedures:*

1. Discussions of the Safety Guidelines and the Student Safety Checklist occur in the New Field Instructor Orientations and Student Orientations held before students enter the field placements.
2. All students are provided copies of "Guidelines for Enhancing Safety and Minimizing Risk in the Field" (See Appendix Field Manual).
3. Students, field instructors, and agencies are trained to use the guidelines to ensure the protection of students in field settings.
4. Additional safety measures include professional liability insurance, student support services, confidentiality, health risk warning liability, and sexual harassment, which are listed below.

#### *Professional Liability Insurance*

All students must purchase professional liability insurance before enrolling in field Experience courses. Liability insurance is sold through the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). The student must become a member of NASW to apply for liability insurance. The

student is responsible for applying for membership in NASW and purchasing the liability insurance policy to cover her/his time in the field. The student must provide proof to the Office of Field Experience of liability insurance before being allowed to enroll in any Field Experience (SOCW 4320). Under no circumstances will the student be allowed to enter the field without liability insurance. Failure to do so will result in the student's termination of the course and may impact her/his systematic progression in the program.

### Special Student Services

Students who require special services should provide documentation to the TC Disability Services and Director of Field, so steps will be taken to ensure that the student interns make the proper accommodations with the agency.

### Confidentiality

Students have been informed of the use of forms and information to be shared before sharing for field placement. The information transmitted must be related to the educational enhancement of the student. The student must sign a "Release of Information" form if confidential information needs to be shared with field agency personnel. This form is supported by the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA, TC College Catalog Academic Year 2021-2023) which the College employs.

### **Student Field Orientation**

BEFORE BEGINNING THE FIELD, senior BSW students must attend a 3-hour Student Field Orientation. SOCW 4601/4622 senior students must attend a 1-hour Field Orientation. This mandatory orientation reviews content in the Field Manual, such as roles and responsibilities of the field education team (field administrators, faculty liaison, field instructors, agency task supervisors, and students), field policies, field education objectives, learning contracts, performance problems, and grounds for termination, professional and ethical conduct, and evaluation and grading procedures. The orientation will be scheduled during the first week of classes for the semester. Failure to attend this orientation will prohibit entry into field instruction and delay a student's course of study.

### **Learning Contract**

The Learning Contract specifies educational and professional objectives derived from the program and course student learning outcomes and then tailored to meet students' learning needs through specific tasks, assignments, and practice behaviors. As a structured plan, the learning contract helps facilitate the student's acquisition of educational objectives and learning needs, including plans for self-awareness and professional growth and the development of required practice behaviors and core competencies. While initiated by the student, the learning contract is the combined effort by the student and the field instructor in consultation with the faculty liaison. Both the student and the field instructor must be familiar with the educational objectives of the respective field/seminar course syllabi and competency criteria in the Student Field Performance Evaluations.



## **Field Evaluations**

The Field Director/Faculty Liaison makes three formal evaluation visits to the agency during the semester: the first visit within the first four weeks, a midterm visit, and a final visit. (SOCW 4601/ SOCW 4622 level students receive two visits in the semester). The faculty liaison conducts midterm and final evaluations. At this time, they evaluate the student's performance based on the field instructor's assessment on the *Student Performance Field Evaluation* Instrument, reviews of student's progress on Learning Contract, and student's ability to articulate and link theory and concepts to their practice experiences in the agency. The results of each of these meetings are documented and submitted to the Director of Field for final determination and assignment of a grade.

## **Field Setting Evaluation**

### *Policies:*

Ongoing field evaluation includes all participants involved in-field instruction; thus, students and faculty liaisons are asked to participate in an evaluation of the agency setting, as well.

### *Procedures:*

Field Directors/Faculty Liaisons are responsible for ongoing evaluation of the field site over the given semester. If significant problems or concerns arise specific to the agency, the Faculty Liaison informs the Field Director, at which time he/she will intervene in the situation. If the problem in the agency is not resolved, the student will be removed from the agency. The student is also asked to participate in an evaluation of the field site.

### *Criteria:*

The student completes the "Student Evaluation of BSW Field Program," which includes the program's content and the agency and field units. Data is collated and analyzed as a part of the field program evaluation. Recommendations are then made and implemented in the field program.

## **Field Liaison Contacts with Field Education Settings**

Full-time faculty are assigned as liaisons by the Director of Field. Faculty must have an MSW and two years post-MSW of practice experience. Faculty liaison responsibilities are considered a part of the total faculty workload. The number of students assigned to a faculty depends upon other workload responsibilities, the geographic location of students, and the field level. Faculty liaisons receive a workload equivalent to one three-credit course for monitoring students over a semester.

Faculty liaisons carry the overall responsibility for helping the student; field instructor, agency task supervisor, if applicable, and the agency meet educational objectives required of students in a respective field placement, as well as address any learning or performance problems that may arise with a given student

Faculty liaisons visit the agency three times during the semester: an initial visit within the first four weeks, a midterm visit, and a final evaluative visit. The focus of these visits focuses on making sure the agency-based learning and experience reflect the program's core competencies.

The Faculty Liaison, the Field Instructor, and the student participate in these evaluation visits. Other liaison responsibilities include reviewing and assigning points for each of their given students' field performance evaluations, grade recommendations to the Director of Field, and documentation of field liaison visits. Faculty liaisons also assist the field instructor with creating a developmental plan if a student is experiencing performance problems in the field.

**Educational Requirements:** BSW and/or MSW from a CSWE accredited program and two years of post-degree practice experience are required for BSW Field Instructors.

In addition to the educational and experience criteria, field instructors for the Program must demonstrate commitment to the social work profession and the mission, goals, and objectives of the Program through the following:

1. Demonstrates knowledge of the generalist and problem-solving method and willingness to teach this method
2. Demonstrates commitment to social work values and ethics
3. Demonstrates practice competencies and the potential to promote student self-awareness and professional growth and development
4. Demonstrates sensitivity to the special needs of diverse groups such as those related to gender, sexual orientation, oppression, disability, ethnic, spirituality, and racial minorities
5. Demonstrates commitment to attending field instruction training provided by the Social Work Program.

### **Non-Credential Field Instructor**

The program will assist in finding a qualified field instructor when a social services agency has been approved for placement and has met the generalist practice criteria but does not have a BSW or MSW post-graduation degree from a CSWE accredited program. The outside agency field instructor can include faculty, faculty adjuncts, or a field instructor from another agency with the agency's approval. A task supervisor can serve in the capacity of field instructor with the permission of the Field Director. The Field Director or faculty liaison will be primarily responsible for the student's learning experience and provide supervision and accountability as the credentialed field instructor. These are approved on a case-by-case basis only if the agency is found to provide generalist social work practice and has met the other criteria listed above. The task supervisor must be employed within the agency, serving in a professional social service role, and make applications with the Director of Field Instruction. This person must attend orientation and training about field education and meet with the designated field instructor and the student once per week for one hour. The assigned field instructor will introduce the various social theoretical frameworks, ethical practices, social policies, and research during these one-hour meetings. These apply to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities through the services provided by the

agency. Students are to work closely with the task supervisor, the assigned field instructor, faculty liaisons, and Field Director. The faculty liaison will evaluate students' performance during the initial visit within the first three weeks, midterm visit, and final evaluative visit. The faculty liaison ensures that the nine social work competencies are addressed through the activities outlined in the educational learning contract, and a generalist social work perspective is maintained.

### **Off-Site BSW/MSW Field Instructor**

When an agency that can offer an innovative field experience for our students does not have an on-site BSW/MSW field instructor, the agency may contract with someone with a BSW/MSW degree to serve as an Off-Site BSW/MSW field instructor. This strategy aims to expand the social work profession's role in non-traditional social work settings and create workforce development and potential employment for our BSW graduates.

The Field Director must approve such an appointment. The criteria for an Off-Site BSW/MSW Instructor are listed below.

- a. Must meet criteria for field instructor.
- b. Must attend orientation and training about field education and learn how the field activities must adhere to the nine social work competencies
- c. Assumes primary responsibility for creating the Educational Learning Contract, including learning objectives and practice tasks, with the on-site preceptor and the student.
- d. Meets weekly with a student in a supervisory session to review the student's progress toward achieving learning objectives with the integration of practice realities and theoretical concepts.
- e. Meets periodically with a student and on-site preceptor to evaluate student performance and modify the Educational Learning Contract.
- f. Assumes primary responsibility for submitting to the Director of Field/faculty liaison the written evaluation and grade recommendation for the student at the end of each semester.
- g. Assumes primary responsibility for meeting with the assigned Director of Field/faculty field liaison and student during the semester to review student progress and promptly alerting the liaison of any problems or potential problems that might interfere with a successful educational outcome.

### **Field Instructor Orientation/Training**

The BSW program offers Field Instructors training each semester to ensure quality field supervision. Separate training is conducted for faculty liaisons each semester. It is the expectation of the Program that through careful preparation of field instructors, agency task supervisors, students, and faculty liaisons, students will be provided with structured, educationally directed field education.

The Director of Field conducts the Field Instructor Orientation /Training with occasional assistance from faculty, faculty liaisons, and periodically seasoned field instructors. Field Instructor Orientation/Training aims primarily to educate supervisors about the BSW Program mission and goals and impart knowledge, values, and skills needed to assist students in meeting their educational objectives in the field. In addition, it provides the opportunity for field instructors to interact and network with other BSW social workers in the rural region and get to know the program faculty and program on a more regular basis. All field instructors who are supervising students for the first time are required to attend Field Instructor Training, and all Field Instructors are expected to attend training annually. Every effort is made to support and accessible to our field instructors, agency tasks supervisors, and agency administrators.

The Field Instructor Orientation/Training familiarizes supervisors with the BSW course curriculum and field educational objectives, EPAS, roles, and responsibilities of the academic field team, field administrative policies, and stages in the beginning, middle, and termination phases of the student/supervisory relationship and the field education process, in general, principles of adequate supervision, common issues and challenges of supervision in field education, health and personal safety issues, integration of theory and practice, managing student performance problems, and evaluation and grading procedures,

### **Faculty Liaison Training**

Faculty liaison training is also provided each semester, and all liaisons require attendance. Usual training topics include the role and responsibilities of Faculty Liaisons, guidelines for agency visits, an overview of educational objectives, student and agency evaluation, travel, and required documentation and forms.

### **Field Placements in Employment Settings**

The BSW Program has established criteria for utilizing a student's work setting as a field instruction placement. The foremost concern in developing such placements is ensuring that the placement provides clear learning opportunities for generalist practice and is educationally focused rather than centered on providing agency services. The agency of employment must be capable of and willing to offer a new, different, and educationally directed learning experience for the student. It is incumbent on the agency and the student to demonstrate that the following criteria are met for a field instruction placement within one's place of employment:

1. The field instruction site affords the student learning opportunities for generalist practice as defined in the BSW Field Instruction Manual.
2. The agency must have an employee who is not the student's regular work supervisor and is willing to serve as an approved Field Instructor.

3. The proposed field instructor must hold at least a BSW degree from a CSWE accredited social work program, have two years of postgraduate experience, and be either an approved field instructor or willing to complete the application process for field instructors.
4. As outlined in this manual, the Agency must be approved as a field instruction site by the BSW Program and meet all criteria for an affiliated Field Instruction Agency.
5. The Agency must be large enough to transfer the student to a different section/unit/program other than that of the current employment and be willing to allow the student to complete the required clock hours in the new setting. Agencies may engage in creative management to afford such an opportunity to a student. An example may be that a Child Protective Services worker would be assigned to Adoption and Foster Care services or Adult Protective Services for field instruction in a different setting with different populations and different lines of supervision
6. If the student has been newly employed for less than three months, the student's place of employment may be considered a field instruction site. The agency must be an approved agency field placement site or if the agency meets the criteria for an approved agency and is willing to complete the selection/approval process.
7. The proposed field assignments/activities must provide new and different experiences for students that will contribute to new learning opportunities.
8. The agency will grant the necessary release time for students to complete field instruction activities, including Field Seminar Courses, as specified within this manual.
9. The agency will grant the necessary release time to the proposed Field Instructor to participate in field instruction training provided by the program.
10. The Field Instructor must attend Field Instructor training before the start of field instruction.
11. The student will be responsible for submitting a written document requesting placement in his/her work setting. All criteria must be established and documented in the proposal before submission and review by the program.

### **Appendix (Under Revision and Development)**



**Texas College  
Social Work Program  
2404 North Grand Ave  
Tyler, Texas 75702  
(903) 593-8311**

**APPLICATION FOR FIELD INSTRUCTION  
(SOCW4601/ SOCW4622)**

*Please type or use black ink when completing this form. Indicate the semester that you plan to enroll in senior field instruction.* \_\_\_\_\_

(Semester) (Year)

Student's Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(First) (Middle) (Last)

DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent /Family Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Current Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street or P.O. Box)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(City) (State) (Zip Code)

Permanent Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street or P.O. Box)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(City) (State) (Zip Code)

Name of Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Legal History: Have you ever been convicted of a misdemeanor or felony? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

If Yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

A. Volunteer experience related to social work:

Agency/Program	Date	Nature of Experience

---



---

B. Job experience, including summer employment:

Location	Date	Nature of Experience

C. Areas of Interest:

The following are examples of some of the problems and client groups with which professional social workers are involved. Check those categories which represent your major interests at this time in your professional education.

\*Services for special age groups, such as:

- (1) pre-school age children
- (2) school age children
- (3) adolescents
- (4) adults
- (5) aging

\*Services for communities:

- (6) rural communities;
- (7) suburban/urban communities.

\*Services related to problems/special population:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (8) child welfare      | <input type="checkbox"/> (14) mental health                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (9) family services    | <input type="checkbox"/> (15) minorities/oppressed groups     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (10) juvenile services | <input type="checkbox"/> (16) physical disabilities           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (11) school/education  | <input type="checkbox"/> (17) low income individuals/families |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (12) criminal justice  | <input type="checkbox"/> (18) developmental disabilities      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (13) health            | <input type="checkbox"/> (19) other _____                     |

D. Please prioritize your primary areas of interest as identified in List C.

1st \_\_\_\_\_ 2nd \_\_\_\_\_ 3rd \_\_\_\_\_

E. What courses have you completed (other than required social work courses) that are relevant to the areas of interest you specified in Section D?



F. Would you prefer placement in a community outside of Smith County?

Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

G. If you are placed outside of Smith County, what locality would you prefer?

\_\_\_\_\_

H. Is there a specific agency in which you desire to have your placement? Yes\_\_\_\_

No\_\_\_\_

If yes, give the name, address, and telephone number of the agency:

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Educational and career interests

*Please answer the following questions as fully as possible:*

1. What personal and professional strengths will assist you in your field instruction?
  
2. What educational and/or professional needs do you desire to address through the field instruction experience?
  
3. What are your career goals?
  
4. Provide any additional information which would be helpful in planning your field instruction (e.g., description of prior experience, etc.). If additional space is needed use an additional page.

I give my permission for the information contained in this application to be shared with social work faculty members and Field Instructors who are involved with my field instruction placement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's signature

**DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE**

---

\_\_\_\_\_ is assigned to the following field instruction site:

Agency/Program Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Field Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Liaison: \_\_\_\_\_

Field Director: \_\_\_\_\_

**AGENCY AGREEMENT FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENT**

***(To be completed by student)***

**Student's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

***(Type or print)***

I agree to work as a Junior/Senior Field Instruction student  
at \_\_\_\_\_ during the \_\_\_\_\_  
(Agency) (semester) (year)

I will work on an agreed-upon schedule to acquire 210 clock hours for the semester. I understand that I am to conduct myself as a professional social worker, and that I am to act in accordance with agency policy. I acknowledge that this Field Instruction course is one of the requirements for my undergraduate degree and is conducted under the direction of the Social Work Program at Texas College. I have been informed of the responsibilities, duties, and the type of educationally directed experience in which I am to engage while in the Field Instruction course. I understand that this field assignment is to be \_\_\_\_\_ unpaid \_\_\_\_\_ paid \_\_\_\_\_ and that I am \_\_\_\_\_ or am not \_\_\_\_\_ reimbursed by the agency for expenses such as mileage. I have registered for SOCW4601 OR SOCW4622 in order to receive credit for the Field Instruction course. I understand that the Social Work Director of Field Education or Designee has final responsibility for assigning a grade upon completion of this placement, that grade is in part based on feedback from the Field Instructor regarding my performance. The student will maintain liability insurance throughout the duration of the Field Instruction course.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\*\*\*\*\*

(To be completed by Texas College Social Work Program)

The Social Work Program

\_\_\_\_\_ accepts this contract

\_\_\_\_\_ rejects this contract

\_\_\_\_\_  
BSW Program Director or Field Director  
Social Work Program

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM  
Field Instruction Timesheet  
TEXAS COLLEGE**

**STUDENT** \_\_\_\_\_

**AGENCY NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**BSW: SOCW 4601** \_\_\_\_\_ **SOCW 4622** \_\_\_\_\_

**FIELD INSTRUCTION TIMESHEET**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME IN</b>	<b>TIME OUT</b>	<b>TIME IN</b>	<b>TIME OUT</b>	<b>TOTAL HOURS</b>
<b>MONDAY</b>						
<b>TUESDAY</b>						
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>						
<b>THURSDAY</b>						
<b>FRIDAY</b>						
<b>SATURDAY</b>						
<b>SUNDAY</b>						
					<b>TOTAL HOURS</b>	

**DATE DUE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE SUBMITTED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT SIGNATURE** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ AGENCY FIELD INSTRUCTOR or DESIGNATED SIGNER (SIGNATURE REQUIRED\*\*\*Timesheets must have original signatures; not copied. If possible field instructor/designee is asked to sign in colored ink. Time sheets should be turned in weekly.)

# NASW CODE OF ETHICS

The NASW Code of Ethics is a set of standards that guide the professional conduct of social workers. The 2021 update includes language that addresses the importance of professional self-care. Moreover, revisions to Cultural Competence standard provide more explicit guidance to social workers. All social workers should review the new text and affirm their commitment to abide by the Code of Ethics. Also available in Spanish.

- The first Section, "Preamble," summarizes the social work profession's mission and core values.
- The second section, **Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics**, provides an overview of the Code's main functions and a brief guide for dealing with ethical issues or dilemmas in social work practice.
- The third section, **Ethical Principles**, presents broad ethical principles, based on social work's core values, that inform social work practice.
- The final section, **Ethical Standards**, includes specific ethical standards to guide social workers' conduct and to provide a basis for adjudication.

## Preamble

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's dual focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.

Social workers promote social justice and social change with and on behalf of clients. "Clients" is used inclusively to refer to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice. These activities may be in the form of direct practice, community organizing, supervision, consultation, administration, advocacy, social and political action, policy development and implementation, education, and research and evaluation. Social workers seek to enhance the capacity of people to address their own needs. Social workers also seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities, and other social institutions to individuals' needs and social problems.

The mission of the social work profession is rooted in a set of core values. These core values, embraced by social workers throughout the profession's history, are the foundation of social work's unique purpose and perspective:

- service
- social justice
- dignity and worth of the person
- importance of human relationships
- integrity
- competence.

This constellation of core values reflects what is unique to the social work profession. Core values, and the principles that flow from them, must be balanced within the context and complexity of the human experience.

## **Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics**

Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession has an obligation to articulate its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. The NASW Code of Ethics sets forth these values, principles, and standards to guide social workers' conduct. The Code is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve.

The NASW Code of Ethics serves six purposes:

1. The Code identifies core values on which social work's mission is based.
2. The Code summarizes broad ethical principles that reflect the profession's core values and establishes a set of specific ethical standards that should be used to guide social work practice.
3. The Code is designed to help social workers identify relevant considerations when professional obligations conflict or ethical uncertainties arise.
4. The Code provides ethical standards to which the general public can hold the social work profession accountable.
5. The Code socializes practitioners new to the field to social work's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards, and encourages all social workers to engage in self-care, ongoing education, and other activities to ensure their commitment to those same core features of the profession.
6. The Code articulates standards that the social work profession itself can use to assess whether social workers have engaged in unethical conduct. NASW has formal procedures to adjudicate ethics complaints filed against its members. \* In subscribing to this Code, social workers are required to cooperate in its implementation, participate in NASW adjudication proceedings, and abide by any NASW disciplinary rulings or sanctions based on it.

The Code offers a set of values, principles, and standards to guide decision making and conduct when ethical issues arise. It does not provide a set of rules that prescribe how social workers should act in all situations. Specific applications of the Code must take into account the context in which it is being considered and the possibility of conflicts among the Code's values, principles, and standards. Ethical responsibilities flow from all human relationships, from the personal and familial to the social and professional.

\*For information on the NASW Professional Review Process, see NASW Procedures for Professional Review.

Furthermore, the NASW Code of Ethics does not specify which values, principles, and standards are most important and ought to outweigh others in instances when they conflict. Reasonable differences of opinion can and do exist among social workers with respect to the ways in which values, ethical principles, and ethical standards should be rank ordered when they conflict. Ethical decision making in a given situation must apply the informed judgment of the individual social worker and should also consider how the issues would be judged in a peer review process where the ethical standards of the profession would be applied.

Ethical decision making is a process. In situations when conflicting obligations arise, social workers may be faced with complex ethical dilemmas that have no simple answers. Social workers should take into consideration all the values, principles, and standards in this Code that are relevant to any situation in which ethical judgment is warranted. Social workers' decisions and actions should be consistent with the spirit as well as the letter of this Code.

In addition to this Code, there are many other sources of information about ethical thinking that may be useful. Social workers should consider ethical theory and principles generally, social work theory and research, laws, regulations, agency policies, and other relevant codes of ethics, recognizing that among codes of ethics social workers should consider the NASW Code of Ethics as their primary source. Social workers also should be aware of the impact on ethical decision making of their clients' and their own personal values and cultural and religious beliefs and practices. They should be aware of any conflicts between personal and professional values and deal with them responsibly. For additional guidance social workers should consult the relevant literature on professional ethics and ethical decision making and seek appropriate consultation when faced with ethical dilemmas. This may involve consultation with an agency-based or social work organization's ethics committee, a regulatory body, knowledgeable colleagues, supervisors, or legal counsel.

Instances may arise when social workers' ethical obligations conflict with agency policies or relevant laws or regulations. When such conflicts occur, social workers must make a responsible effort to resolve the conflict in a manner that is consistent with the values, principles, and standards expressed in this Code. If a reasonable resolution of the conflict does not appear possible, social workers should seek proper consultation before making a decision. The NASW Code of Ethics is to be used by NASW and by individuals, agencies, organizations, and bodies (such as licensing and regulatory boards, professional liability insurance providers, courts of law, agency boards of directors, government agencies, and other professional groups) that choose to adopt it or use it as a frame of reference. Violation of standards in this Code does not automatically imply legal liability or violation of the law.

Such determination can only be made in the context of legal and judicial proceedings. Alleged violations of the Code would be subject to a peer review process. Such processes are generally separate from legal or administrative procedures and insulated from legal review or proceedings to allow the profession to counsel and discipline its own members.

A code of ethics cannot guarantee ethical behavior. Moreover, a code of ethics cannot resolve all ethical issues or disputes or capture the richness and complexity involved in striving to make responsible choices within a moral community. Rather, a code of ethics sets forth values, ethical principles, and ethical standards to which professionals aspire and by which their actions can be judged. Social workers' ethical behavior should result from their personal commitment to engage in ethical practice. The NASW Code of Ethics reflects the commitment of all social workers to uphold the profession's values and to act ethically. Principles and standards must be applied by individuals of good character who discern moral questions and, in good faith, seek to make reliable ethical judgments.

With growth in the use of communication technology in various aspects of social work practice, social workers need to be aware of the unique challenges that may arise in relation to the maintenance of confidentiality, informed consent, professional boundaries, professional competence, record keeping, and other ethical considerations. In general, all ethical standards in this Code of Ethics are applicable to interactions, relationships, or communications, whether they occur in person

or with the use of technology. For the purposes of this Code, “technology-assisted social work services” include any social work services that involve the use of computers, mobile or landline telephones, tablets, video technology, or other electronic or digital technologies; this includes the use of various electronic or digital platforms, such as the Internet, online social media, chat rooms, text messaging, e-mail and emerging digital applications. Technology-assisted social work services encompass all aspects of social work practice, including psychotherapy; individual, family, or group counseling; community organization; administration; advocacy; mediation; education; supervision; research; evaluation; and other social work services. Social workers should keep apprised of emerging technological developments that may be used in social work practice and how various ethical standards apply to them.

Professional self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Professional demands, challenging workplace climates, and exposure to trauma warrant that social workers maintain personal and professional health, safety, and integrity. Social work organizations, agencies, and educational institutions are encouraged to promote organizational policies, practices, and materials to support social workers’ self-care.

## Ethical Principles

The following broad ethical principles are based on social work’s core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. These principles set forth ideals to which all social workers should aspire.

### **Value:** Service

**Ethical Principle:** Social workers’ primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems

Social workers elevate service to others above self-interest. Social workers draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address social problems. Social workers are encouraged to volunteer some portion of their professional skills with no expectation of significant financial return (pro bono service).

### **Value:** Social Justice

**Ethical Principle:** Social workers challenge social injustice.

Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers’ social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

### **Value:** Dignity and Worth of the Person

**Ethical Principle:** Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.

Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers promote clients’ socially responsible self-determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients’ capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Social workers are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between clients’ interests and the broader



society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession.

**Value:** Importance of Human Relationships

**Ethical Principle:** Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.

Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process. Social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

**Value:** Integrity

**Ethical Principle:** Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.

Social workers are continually aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers should take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally. Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

**Value:** Competence

**Ethical Principle:** Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.

Social workers continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice. Social workers should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.

## Ethical Standards

The following ethical standards are relevant to the professional activities of all social workers. These standards concern (1) social workers' ethical responsibilities to clients, (2) social workers' ethical responsibilities to colleagues, (3) social workers' ethical responsibilities in practice settings, (4) social workers' ethical responsibilities as professionals, (5) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the social work profession, and (6) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the broader society. Some of the standards that follow are enforceable guidelines for professional conduct, and some are aspirational. The extent to which each standard is enforceable is a matter of professional judgment to be exercised by those responsible for reviewing alleged violations of ethical standards.

### 1. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Clients

#### 1.01 Commitment to Clients

Social workers' primary responsibility is to promote the well-being of clients. In general, clients' interests are primary. However, social workers' responsibility to the larger society or specific legal obligations may on limited occasions supersede the loyalty owed clients, and clients should be so advised. (Examples include when a social worker is required by law to report that a client has abused a child or has threatened to harm self or others.)

#### 1.02 Self-Determination

Social workers respect and promote the right of clients to self-determination and assist clients in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals. Social workers may limit clients' right to self-determination when, in the social workers' professional judgment, clients' actions or potential actions pose a serious, foreseeable, and imminent risk to themselves or others.

### **1.03 Informed Consent**

(a) Social workers should provide services to clients only in the context of a professional relationship based, when appropriate, on valid informed consent. Social workers should use clear and understandable language to inform clients of the purpose of the services, risks related to the services, limits to services because of the requirements of a third-party payer, relevant costs, reasonable alternatives, clients' right to refuse or withdraw consent, and the time frame covered by the consent. Social workers should provide clients with an opportunity to ask questions.

(b) In instances when clients are not literate or have difficulty understanding the primary language used in the practice setting, social workers should take steps to ensure clients' comprehension. This may include providing clients with a detailed verbal explanation or arranging for a qualified interpreter or translator whenever possible.

(c) In instances when clients lack the capacity to provide informed consent, social workers should protect clients' interests by seeking permission from an appropriate third party, informing clients consistent with the clients' level of understanding. In such instances social workers should seek to ensure that the third party acts in a manner consistent with clients' wishes and interests. Social workers should take reasonable steps to enhance such clients' ability to give informed consent.

(d) In instances when clients are receiving services involuntarily, social workers should provide information about the nature and extent of services and about the extent of clients' right to refuse service.

(e) Social workers should discuss with clients the social workers' policies concerning the use of technology in the provision of professional services.

(f) Social workers who use technology to provide social work services should obtain informed consent from the individuals using these services during the initial screening or interview and prior to initiating services. Social workers should assess clients' capacity to provide informed consent and, when using technology to communicate, verify the identity and location of clients.

(g) Social workers who use technology to provide social work services should assess the clients' suitability and capacity for electronic and remote services. Social workers should consider the clients' intellectual, emotional, and physical ability to use technology to receive services and the clients' ability to understand the potential benefits, risks, and limitations of such services. If clients do not wish to use services provided through technology, social workers should help them identify alternate methods of service.

(h) Social workers should obtain clients' informed consent before making audio or video recordings of clients or permitting observation of service provision by a third party.

(i) Social workers should obtain client consent before conducting an electronic search on the client. Exceptions may arise when the search is for purposes of protecting the client or other people from serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm, or for other compelling professional reasons.

#### **1.04 Competence**

(a) Social workers should provide services and represent themselves as competent only within the boundaries of their education, training, license, certification, consultation received, supervised experience, or other relevant professional experience.

(b) Social workers should provide services in substantive areas or use intervention techniques or approaches that are new to them only after engaging in appropriate study, training, consultation, and supervision from people who are competent in those interventions or techniques.

(c) When generally recognized standards do not exist with respect to an emerging area of practice, social workers should exercise careful judgment and take responsible steps (including appropriate education, research, training, consultation, and supervision) to ensure the competence of their work and to protect clients from harm.

(d) Social workers who use technology in the provision of social work services should ensure that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to provide such services in a competent manner. This includes an understanding of the special communication challenges when using technology and the ability to implement strategies to address these challenges.

(e) Social workers who use technology in providing social work services should comply with the laws governing technology and social work practice in the jurisdiction in which they are regulated and located and, as applicable, in the jurisdiction in which the client is located.

#### **1.05 Cultural Awareness and Social Diversity**

(a) Social workers should understand culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures.

(b) Social workers should have a knowledge base of their clients' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients' cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups.

(c) Social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical ability.

(d) Social workers who provide electronic social work services should be aware of cultural and socioeconomic differences among clients and how they may use electronic technology. Social workers should assess cultural, environmental, economic, mental or physical ability, linguistic, and other issues that may affect the delivery or use of these services.

### **1.06 Conflicts of Interest**

(a) Social workers should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment. Social workers should inform clients when a real or potential conflict of interest arises and take reasonable steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes the clients' interests primary and protects clients' interests to the greatest extent possible. In some cases, protecting clients' interests may require termination of the professional relationship with proper referral of the client.

(b) Social workers should not take unfair advantage of any professional relationship or exploit others to further their personal, religious, political, or business interests.

(c) Social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships with clients or former clients in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. In instances when dual or multiple relationships are unavoidable, social workers should take steps to protect clients and are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. (Dual or multiple relationships occur when social workers relate to clients in more than one relationship, whether professional, social, or business. Dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively.)

(d) When social workers provide services to two or more people who have a relationship with each other (for example, couples, family members), social workers should clarify with all parties which individuals will be considered clients and the nature of social workers' professional obligations to the various individuals who are receiving services. Social workers who anticipate a conflict of interest among the individuals receiving services or who anticipate having to perform in potentially conflicting roles (for example, when a social worker is asked to testify in a child custody dispute or divorce proceedings involving clients) should clarify their role with the parties involved and take appropriate action to minimize any conflict of interest.

(e) Social workers should avoid communication with clients using technology (such as social networking sites, online chat, e-mail, text messages, telephone, and video) for personal or non-work-related purposes.

(f) Social workers should be aware that posting personal information on professional Web sites or other media might cause boundary confusion, inappropriate dual relationships, or harm to clients.

(g) Social workers should be aware that personal affiliations may increase the likelihood that clients may discover the social worker's presence on Web sites, social media, and other forms of

technology. Social workers should be aware that involvement in electronic communication with groups based on race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, mental or physical ability, religion, immigration status, and other personal affiliations may affect their ability to work effectively with particular clients.

(h) Social workers should avoid accepting requests from or engaging in personal relationships with clients on social networking sites or other electronic media to prevent boundary confusion, inappropriate dual relationships, or harm to clients.

### **1.07 Privacy and Confidentiality**

(a) Social workers should respect clients' right to privacy. Social workers should not solicit private information from or about clients except for compelling professional reasons. Once private information is shared, standards of confidentiality apply.

(b) Social workers may disclose confidential information when appropriate with valid consent from a client or a person legally authorized to consent on behalf of a client.

(c) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional service, except for compelling professional reasons. The general expectation that social workers will keep information confidential does not apply when disclosure is necessary to prevent serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to a client or others. In all instances, social workers should disclose the least amount of confidential information necessary to achieve the desired purpose; only information that is directly relevant to the purpose for which the disclosure is made should be revealed.

(d) Social workers should inform clients, to the extent possible, about the disclosure of confidential information and the potential consequences, when feasible before the disclosure is made. This applies whether social workers disclose confidential information on the basis of a legal requirement or client consent.

(e) Social workers should discuss with clients and other interested parties the nature of confidentiality and limitations of clients' right to confidentiality. Social workers should review with clients circumstances where confidential information may be requested and where disclosure of confidential information may be legally required. This discussion should occur as soon as possible in the social worker-client relationship and as needed throughout the course of the relationship.

(f) When social workers provide counseling services to families, couples, or groups, social workers should seek agreement among the parties involved concerning each individual's right to confidentiality and obligation to preserve the confidentiality of information shared by others. This agreement should include consideration of whether confidential information may be exchanged in person or electronically, among clients or with others outside of formal counseling sessions. Social workers should inform participants in family, couples, or group counseling that social workers cannot guarantee that all participants will honor such agreements.

(g) Social workers should inform clients involved in family, couples, marital, or group counseling of the social worker's, employer's, and agency's policy concerning the social worker's disclosure of confidential information among the parties involved in the counseling.

(h) Social workers should not disclose confidential information to third-party payers unless clients have authorized such disclosure.

(i) Social workers should not discuss confidential information, electronically or in person, in any setting unless privacy can be ensured. Social workers should not discuss confidential information in public or semi-public areas such as hallways, waiting rooms, elevators, and restaurants.

(j) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients during legal proceedings to the extent permitted by law. When a court of law or other legally authorized body orders social workers to disclose confidential or privileged information without a client's consent and such disclosure could cause harm to the client, social workers should request that the court withdraw the order or limit the order as narrowly as possible or maintain the records under seal, unavailable for public inspection.

(k) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients when responding to requests from members of the media.

(l) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients' written and electronic records and other sensitive information. Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients' records are stored in a secure location and that clients' records are not available to others who are not authorized to have access.

(m) Social workers should take reasonable steps to protect the confidentiality of electronic communications, including information provided to clients or third parties. Social workers should use applicable safeguards (such as encryption, firewalls, and passwords) when using electronic communications such as e-mail, online posts, online chat sessions, mobile communication, and text messages.

(n) Social workers should develop and disclose policies and procedures for notifying clients of any breach of confidential information in a timely manner.

(o) In the event of unauthorized access to client records or information, including any unauthorized access to the social worker's electronic communication or storage systems, social workers should inform clients of such disclosures, consistent with applicable laws and professional standards.

(p) Social workers should develop and inform clients about their policies, consistent with prevailing social work ethical standards, on the use of electronic technology, including Internet-based search engines, to gather information about clients.

- (q) Social workers should avoid searching or gathering client information electronically unless there are compelling professional reasons, and when appropriate, with the client's informed consent.
- (r) Social workers should avoid posting any identifying or confidential information about clients on professional websites or other forms of social media.
- (s) Social workers should transfer or dispose of clients' records in a manner that protects clients' confidentiality and is consistent with applicable laws governing records and social work licensure.
- (t) Social workers should take reasonable precautions to protect client confidentiality in the event of the social worker's termination of practice, incapacitation, or death.
- (u) Social workers should not disclose identifying information when discussing clients for teaching or training purposes unless the client has consented to disclosure of confidential information.
- (v) Social workers should not disclose identifying information when discussing clients with consultants unless the client has consented to disclosure of confidential information or there is a compelling need for such disclosure.
- (w) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of deceased clients consistent with the preceding standards.

### **1.08 Access to Records**

- (a) Social workers should provide clients with reasonable access to records concerning the clients. Social workers who are concerned that clients' access to their records could cause serious misunderstanding or harm to the client should provide assistance in interpreting the records and consultation with the client regarding the records. Social workers should limit clients' access to their records, or portions of their records, only in exceptional circumstances when there is compelling evidence that such access would cause serious harm to the client. Both clients' requests and the rationale for withholding some or all of the record should be documented in clients' files.
- (b) Social workers should develop and inform clients about their policies, consistent with prevailing social work ethical standards, on the use of technology to provide clients with access to their records.
- (c) When providing clients with access to their records, social workers should take steps to protect the confidentiality of other individuals identified or discussed in such records.

### **1.09 Sexual Relationships**

(a) Social workers should under no circumstances engage in sexual activities, inappropriate sexual communications through the use of technology or in person, or sexual contact with current clients, whether such contact is consensual or forced.

(b) Social workers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with clients' relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a close personal relationship when there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. Sexual activity or sexual contact with clients' relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a personal relationship has the potential to be harmful to the client and may make it difficult for the social worker and client to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Social workers--not their clients, their clients' relatives, or other individuals with whom the client maintains a personal relationship--assume the full burden for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

(c) Social workers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with former clients because of the potential for harm to the client. If social workers engage in conduct contrary to this prohibition or claim that an exception to this prohibition is warranted because of extraordinary circumstances, it is social workers--not their clients--who assume the full burden of demonstrating that the former client has not been exploited, coerced, or manipulated, intentionally or unintentionally.

(d) Social workers should not provide clinical services to individuals with whom they have had a prior sexual relationship. Providing clinical services to a former sexual partner has the potential to be harmful to the individual and is likely to make it difficult for the social worker and individual to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

### **1.10 Physical Contact**

Social workers should not engage in physical contact with clients when there is a possibility of psychological harm to the client as a result of the contact (such as cradling or caressing clients). Social workers who engage in appropriate physical contact with clients are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern such physical contact.

### **1.11 Sexual Harassment**

Social workers should not sexually harass clients. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances; sexual solicitation; requests for sexual favors; and other verbal, written, electronic, or physical contact of a sexual nature.

### **1.12 Derogatory Language**

Social workers should not use derogatory language in their written, verbal, or electronic communications to or about clients. Social workers should use accurate and respectful language in all communications to and about clients.

### **1.13 Payment for Services**



- (a) When setting fees, social workers should ensure that the fees are fair, reasonable, and commensurate with the services performed. Consideration should be given to clients' ability to pay.
- (b) Social workers should avoid accepting goods or services from clients as payment for professional services. Bartering arrangements, particularly involving services, create the potential for conflicts of interest, exploitation, and inappropriate boundaries in social workers' relationships with clients. Social workers should explore and may participate in bartering only in very limited circumstances when it can be demonstrated that such arrangements are an accepted practice among professionals in the local community, considered to be essential for the provision of services, negotiated without coercion, and entered into at the client's initiative and with the client's informed consent. Social workers who accept goods or services from clients as payment for professional services assume the full burden of demonstrating that this arrangement will not be detrimental to the client or the professional relationship.
- (c) Social workers should not solicit a private fee or other remuneration for providing services to clients who are entitled to such available services through the social workers' employer or agency.

#### **1.14 Clients Who Lack Decision-Making Capacity**

When social workers act on behalf of clients who lack the capacity to make informed decisions, social workers should take reasonable steps to safeguard the interests and rights of those clients.

#### **1.15 Interruption of Services**

Social workers should make reasonable efforts to ensure continuity of services in the event that services are interrupted by factors such as unavailability, disruptions in electronic communication, relocation, illness, mental or physical ability, or death.

#### **1.16 Referral for Services**

- (a) Social workers should refer clients to other professionals when the other professionals' specialized knowledge or expertise is needed to serve clients fully or when social workers believe that they are not being effective or making reasonable progress with clients and that other services are required.
- (b) Social workers who refer clients to other professionals should take appropriate steps to facilitate an orderly transfer of responsibility. Social workers who refer clients to other professionals should disclose, with clients' consent, all pertinent information to the new service providers.

(c) Social workers are prohibited from giving or receiving payment for a referral when no professional service is provided by the referring social worker.

### **1.17 Termination of Services**

(a) Social workers should terminate services to clients and professional relationships with them when such services and relationships are no longer required or no longer serve the clients' needs or interests.

(b) Social workers should take reasonable steps to avoid abandoning clients who are still in need of services. Social workers should withdraw services precipitously only under unusual circumstances, giving careful consideration to all factors in the situation and taking care to minimize possible adverse effects. Social workers should assist in making appropriate arrangements for continuation of services when necessary.

(c) Social workers in fee-for-service settings may terminate services to clients who are not paying an overdue balance if the financial contractual arrangements have been made clear to the client, if the client does not pose an imminent danger to self or others, and if the clinical and other consequences of the current nonpayment have been addressed and discussed with the client.

(d) Social workers should not terminate services to pursue a social, financial, or sexual relationship with a client.

(e) Social workers who anticipate the termination or interruption of services to clients should notify clients promptly and seek the transfer, referral, or continuation of services in relation to the clients' needs and preferences.

(f) Social workers who are leaving an employment setting should inform clients of appropriate options for the continuation of services and of the benefits and risks of the options.

## **2. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues**

### **2.01 Respect**

(a) Social workers should treat colleagues with respect and should represent accurately and fairly the qualifications, views, and obligations of colleagues.

(b) Social workers should avoid unwarranted negative criticism of colleagues in verbal, written, and electronic communications with clients or with other professionals. Unwarranted negative criticism may include demeaning comments that refer to colleagues' level of competence or to individuals' attributes such as race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical ability.

(c) Social workers should cooperate with social work colleagues and with colleagues of other professions when such cooperation serves the well-being of clients.

## **2.02 Confidentiality**

Social workers should respect confidential information shared by colleagues in the course of their professional relationships and transactions. Social workers should ensure that such colleagues understand social workers' obligation to respect confidentiality and any exceptions related to it.

## **2.03 Interdisciplinary Collaboration**

(a) Social workers who are members of an interdisciplinary team should participate in and contribute to decisions that affect the well-being of clients by drawing on the perspectives, values, and experiences of the social work profession. Professional and ethical obligations of the interdisciplinary team as a whole and of its individual members should be clearly established.

(b) Social workers for whom a team decision raises ethical concerns should attempt to resolve the disagreement through appropriate channels. If the disagreement cannot be resolved, social workers should pursue other avenues to address their concerns consistent with client well-being.

## **2.04 Disputes Involving Colleagues**

(a) Social workers should not take advantage of a dispute between a colleague and an employer to obtain a position or otherwise advance the social workers' own interests.

(b) Social workers should not exploit clients in disputes with colleagues or engage clients in any inappropriate discussion of conflicts between social workers and their colleagues.

## **2.05 Consultation**

(a) Social workers should seek the advice and counsel of colleagues whenever such consultation is in the best interests of clients.

(b) Social workers should keep themselves informed about colleagues' areas of expertise and competencies. Social workers should seek consultation only from colleagues who have demonstrated knowledge, expertise, and competence related to the subject of the consultation.

(c) When consulting with colleagues about clients, social workers should disclose the least amount of information necessary to achieve the purposes of the consultation.

## **2.06 Sexual Relationships**

(a) Social workers who function as supervisors or educators should not engage in sexual activities or contact (including verbal, written, electronic, or physical contact) with supervisees, students, trainees, or other colleagues over whom they exercise professional authority.

(b) Social workers should avoid engaging in sexual relationships with colleagues when there is potential for a conflict of interest. Social workers who become involved in, or anticipate becoming involved in, a sexual relationship with a colleague have a duty to transfer professional responsibilities, when necessary, to avoid a conflict of interest.

### **2.07 Sexual Harassment**

Social workers should not sexually harass supervisees, students, trainees, or colleagues. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances; sexual solicitation; requests for sexual favors; and other verbal, written, electronic, or physical contact of a sexual nature.

### **2.08 Impairment of Colleagues**

(a) Social workers who have direct knowledge of a social work colleague's impairment that is due to personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties and that interferes with practice effectiveness should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.

(b) Social workers who believe that a social work colleague's impairment interferes with practice effectiveness and that the colleague has not taken adequate steps to address the impairment should take action through appropriate channels established by employers, agencies, NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, and other professional organizations.

### **2.09 Incompetence of Colleagues**

(a) Social workers who have direct knowledge of a social work colleague's incompetence should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.

(b) Social workers who believe that a social work colleague is incompetent and has not taken adequate steps to address the incompetence should take action through appropriate channels established by employers, agencies, NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, and other professional organizations.

### **2.10 Unethical Conduct of Colleagues**

(a) Social workers should take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, expose, and correct the unethical conduct of colleagues, including unethical conduct using technology.

(b) Social workers should be knowledgeable about established policies and procedures for handling concerns about colleagues' unethical behavior. Social workers should be familiar with national, state, and local procedures for handling ethics complaints. These include policies and

procedures created by NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, employers, agencies, and other professional organizations.

(c) Social workers who believe that a colleague has acted unethically should seek resolution by discussing their concerns with the colleague when feasible and when such discussion is likely to be productive.

(d) When necessary, social workers who believe that a colleague has acted unethically should take action through appropriate formal channels (such as contacting a state licensing board or regulatory body, the NASW National Ethics Committee, or other professional ethics committees).

(e) Social workers should defend and assist colleagues who are unjustly charged with unethical conduct.

### **3. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities in Practice Settings**

#### **3.01 Supervision and Consultation**

(a) Social workers who provide supervision or consultation (whether in-person or remotely) should have the necessary knowledge and skill to supervise or consult appropriately and should do so only within their areas of knowledge and competence.

(b) Social workers who provide supervision or consultation are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

(c) Social workers should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with supervisees in which there is a risk of exploitation of or potential harm to the supervisee, including dual relationships that may arise while using social networking sites or other electronic media.

(d) Social workers who provide supervision should evaluate supervisees' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.

#### **3.02 Education and Training**

(a) Social workers who function as educators, field instructors for students, or trainers should provide instruction only within their areas of knowledge and competence and should provide instruction based on the most current information and knowledge available in the profession.

(b) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should evaluate students' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.

(c) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients are routinely informed when services are being provided by students.

(d) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with students in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the student, including dual relationships that may arise while using social networking sites or other electronic media. Social work educators and field instructors are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

### **3.03 Performance Evaluation**

Social workers who have responsibility for evaluating the performance of others should fulfill such responsibility in a fair and considerate manner and on the basis of clearly stated criteria.

### **3.04 Client Records**

(a) Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that documentation in electronic and paper records is accurate and reflects the services provided.

(b) Social workers should include sufficient and timely documentation in records to facilitate the delivery of services and to ensure continuity of services provided to clients in the future.

(c) Social workers' documentation should protect clients' privacy to the extent that is possible and appropriate and should include only information that is directly relevant to the delivery of services.

(d) Social workers should store records following the termination of services to ensure reasonable future access. Records should be maintained for the number of years required by relevant laws, agency policies, and contracts.

### **3.05 Billing**

Social workers should establish and maintain billing practices that accurately reflect the nature and extent of services provided and that identify who provided the service in the practice setting.

### **3.06 Client Transfer**

(a) When an individual who is receiving services from another agency or colleague contacts a social worker for services, the social worker should carefully consider the client's needs before agreeing to provide services. To minimize possible confusion and conflict, social workers should discuss with potential clients the nature of the clients' current relationship with other service providers and the implications, including possible benefits or risks, of entering into a relationship with a new service provider.

(b) If a new client has been served by another agency or colleague, social workers should discuss with the client whether consultation with the previous service provider is in the client's best interest.

### **3.07 Administration**

- (a) Social work administrators should advocate within and outside their agencies for adequate resources to meet clients' needs.
- (b) Social workers should advocate for resource allocation procedures that are open and fair. When not all clients' needs can be met, an allocation procedure should be developed that is nondiscriminatory and based on appropriate and consistently applied principles.
- (c) Social workers who are administrators should take reasonable steps to ensure that adequate agency or organizational resources are available to provide appropriate staff supervision.
- (d) Social work administrators should take reasonable steps to ensure that the working environment for which they are responsible is consistent with and encourages compliance with the NASW Code of Ethics. Social work administrators should take reasonable steps to eliminate any conditions in their organizations that violate, interfere with, or discourage compliance with the Code.

### **3.08 Continuing Education and Staff Development**

Social work administrators and supervisors should take reasonable steps to provide or arrange for continuing education and staff development for all staff for whom they are responsible. Continuing education and staff development should address current knowledge and emerging developments related to social work practice and ethics.

### **3.09 Commitments to Employers**

- (a) Social workers generally should adhere to commitments made to employers and employing organizations.
- (b) Social workers should work to improve employing agencies' policies and procedures and the efficiency and effectiveness of their services.
- (c) Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that employers are aware of social workers' ethical obligations as set forth in the NASW Code of Ethics and of the implications of those obligations for social work practice.
- (d) Social workers should not allow an employing organization's policies, procedures, regulations, or administrative orders to interfere with their ethical practice of social work. Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that their employing organizations' practices are consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics.

- (e) Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate discrimination in the employing organization's work assignments and in its employment policies and practices.
- (f) Social workers should accept employment or arrange student field placements only in organizations that exercise fair personnel practices.
- (g) Social workers should be diligent stewards of the resources of their employing organizations, wisely conserving funds where appropriate and never misappropriating funds or using them for unintended purposes.

### **3.10 Labor-Management Disputes**

- (a) Social workers may engage in organized action, including the formation of and participation in labor unions, to improve services to clients and working conditions.
- (b) The actions of social workers who are involved in labor-management disputes, job actions, or labor strikes should be guided by the profession's values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. Reasonable differences of opinion exist among social workers concerning their primary obligation as professionals during an actual or threatened labor strike or job action. Social workers should carefully examine relevant issues and their possible impact on clients before deciding on a course of action.

## **4. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities as Professionals**

### **4.01 Competence**

- (a) Social workers should accept responsibility or employment only on the basis of existing competence or the intention to acquire the necessary competence.
- (b) Social workers should strive to become and remain proficient in professional practice and the performance of professional functions. Social workers should critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work. Social workers should routinely review the professional literature and participate in continuing education relevant to social work practice and social work ethics.
- (c) Social workers should base practice on recognized knowledge, including empirically based knowledge, relevant to social work and social work ethics.

### **4.02 Discrimination**

Social workers should not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical ability.



#### **4.03 Private Conduct**

Social workers should not permit their private conduct to interfere with their ability to fulfill their professional responsibilities.

#### **4.04 Dishonesty, Fraud, and Deception**

Social workers should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, or deception.

#### **4.05 Impairment**

(a) Social workers should not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere with their professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility.

(b) Social workers whose personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties interfere with their professional judgment and performance should immediately seek consultation and take appropriate remedial action by seeking professional help, making adjustments in workload, terminating practice, or taking any other steps necessary to protect clients and others.

#### **4.06 Misrepresentation**

(a) Social workers should make clear distinctions between statements made and actions engaged in as a private individual and as a representative of the social work profession, a professional social work organization, or the social worker's employing agency.

(b) Social workers who speak on behalf of professional social work organizations should accurately represent the official and authorized positions of the organizations.

(c) Social workers should ensure that their representations to clients, agencies, and the public of professional qualifications, credentials, education, competence, affiliations, services provided, or results to be achieved are accurate. Social workers should claim only those relevant professional credentials they actually possess and take steps to correct any inaccuracies or misrepresentations of their credentials by others.

#### **4.07 Solicitations**

(a) Social workers should not engage in uninvited solicitation of potential clients who, because of their circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence, manipulation, or coercion.

(b) Social workers should not engage in solicitation of testimonial endorsements (including solicitation of consent to use a client's prior statement as a testimonial endorsement) from current

clients or from other people who, because of their particular circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence.

#### **4.08 Acknowledging Credit**

(a) Social workers should take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work they have actually performed and to which they have contributed.

(b) Social workers should honestly acknowledge the work of and the contributions made by others.

### **5. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to the Social Work Profession**

#### **5.01 Integrity of the Profession**

(a) Social workers should work toward the maintenance and promotion of high standards of practice.

(b) Social workers should uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, and mission of the profession. Social workers should protect, enhance, and improve the integrity of the profession through appropriate study and research, active discussion, and responsible criticism of the profession.

(c) Social workers should contribute time and professional expertise to activities that promote respect for the value, integrity, and competence of the social work profession. These activities may include teaching, research, consultation, service, legislative testimony, presentations in the community, and participation in their professional organizations.

(d) Social workers should contribute to the knowledge base of social work and share with colleagues their knowledge related to practice, research, and ethics. Social workers should seek to contribute to the profession's literature and to share their knowledge at professional meetings and conferences.

(e) Social workers should act to prevent the unauthorized and unqualified practice of social work.

#### **5.02 Evaluation and Research**

(a) Social workers should monitor and evaluate policies, the implementation of programs, and practice interventions.

(b) Social workers should promote and facilitate evaluation and research to contribute to the development of knowledge.

(c) Social workers should critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work and fully use evaluation and research evidence in their professional practice.

(d) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should carefully consider possible consequences and should follow guidelines developed for the protection of evaluation and research participants. Appropriate institutional review boards should be consulted.

(e) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should obtain voluntary and written informed consent from participants, when appropriate, without any implied or actual deprivation or penalty for refusal to participate; without undue inducement to participate; and with due regard for participants' well-being, privacy, and dignity. Informed consent should include information about the nature, extent, and duration of the participation requested and disclosure of the risks and benefits of participation in the research.

(f) When using electronic technology to facilitate evaluation or research, social workers should ensure that participants provide informed consent for the use of such technology. Social workers should assess whether participants are able to use the technology and, when appropriate, offer reasonable alternatives to participate in the evaluation or research.

(g) When evaluation or research participants are incapable of giving informed consent, social workers should provide an appropriate explanation to the participants, obtain the participants' assent to the extent they are able, and obtain written consent from an appropriate proxy.

(h) Social workers should never design or conduct evaluation or research that does not use consent procedures, such as certain forms of naturalistic observation and archival research, unless rigorous and responsible review of the research has found it to be justified because of its prospective scientific, educational, or applied value and unless equally effective alternative procedures that do not involve waiver of consent are not feasible.

(i) Social workers should inform participants of their right to withdraw from evaluation and research at any time without penalty.

(j) Social workers should take appropriate steps to ensure that participants in evaluation and research have access to appropriate supportive services.

(k) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should protect participants from unwarranted physical or mental distress, harm, danger, or deprivation.

(l) Social workers engaged in the evaluation of services should discuss collected information only for professional purposes and only with people professionally concerned with this information.

(m) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should ensure the anonymity or confidentiality of participants and of the data obtained from them. Social workers should inform participants of any limits of confidentiality, the measures that will be taken to ensure confidentiality, and when any records containing research data will be destroyed.

(n) Social workers who report evaluation and research results should protect participants' confidentiality by omitting identifying information unless proper consent has been obtained authorizing disclosure.

(o) Social workers should report evaluation and research findings accurately. They should not fabricate or falsify results and should take steps to correct any errors later found in published data using standard publication methods.

(p) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest and dual relationships with participants, should inform participants when a real or potential conflict of interest arises, and should take steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes participants' interests primary.

(q) Social workers should educate themselves, their students, and their colleagues about responsible research practices.

## **6. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to the Broader Society**

### **6.01 Social Welfare**

Social workers should promote the general welfare of society, from local to global levels, and the development of people, their communities, and their environments. Social workers should advocate for living conditions conducive to the fulfillment of basic human needs and should promote social, economic, political, and cultural values and institutions that are compatible with the realization of social justice.

### **6.02 Public Participation**

Social workers should facilitate informed participation by the public in shaping social policies and institutions.

### **6.03 Public Emergencies**

Social workers should provide appropriate professional services in public emergencies to the greatest extent possible.

### **6.04 Social and Political Action**

(a) Social workers should engage in social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment, services, and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully. Social workers should be aware of the impact of the political arena on practice and should advocate for changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions in order to meet basic human needs and promote social justice.

(b) Social workers should act to expand choice and opportunity for all people, with special regard for vulnerable, disadvantaged, oppressed, and exploited people and groups.

(c) Social workers should promote conditions that encourage respect for cultural and social diversity within the United States and globally. Social workers should promote policies and practices that demonstrate respect for difference, support the expansion of cultural knowledge and resources, advocate for programs and institutions that demonstrate cultural competence, and promote policies that safeguard the rights of and confirm equity and social justice for all people.

(d) Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group, or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical ability.

*Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles*

**International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW)**

**International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW)**

**1. Preface**

---

Ethical awareness is a fundamental part of the professional practice of social workers. Their ability and commitment to act ethically is an essential aspect of the quality of the service offered to those who use social work services. The purpose of the work of IASSW and IFSW on ethics is to promote ethical debate and reflection in the member organizations, among the providers of social work in member countries, as well as in the schools of social work and among social work students. Some ethical challenges and problems facing social workers are specific to particular countries; others are common. By staying at the level of general principles, the joint IASSW and IFSW statement aims to encourage social workers across the world to reflect on the challenges and dilemmas that face them and make ethically informed decisions about how to act in each particular case. Some of these problem areas include:

The fact that the loyalty of social workers is often in the middle of conflicting interests.

The fact that social workers function as both helpers and controllers.

The conflicts between the duties of social workers to protect the interests of the people. With whom they work and societal demands for efficiency and utility.

The fact that resources in society are limited.

This document takes as its starting point the definition of social work adopted separately by the IFSW and IASSW at their respective General Meetings in Montreal, Canada in July 2000 and then agreed jointly in Copenhagen in May 2001 (section 2). This definition stresses principles of human rights and social justice. The next section (3) makes reference to the various declarations and conventions on human rights that are relevant to social work, followed by a statement of general ethical principles under the two broad headings of human rights and dignity and social justice (section 4). The final section introduces some basic guidance on ethical conduct in social work, which it is expected will be elaborated by the ethical guidance and in various codes and guidelines of the member organizations of IFSW and IASSW.

## **2. Definition of Social Work**

---

The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilizing theories of human behavior and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work.

## **3. International Conventions**

---

International human rights declarations and conventions form common standards of achievement, and recognize rights that are accepted by the global community. Documents particularly relevant to social work practice and action are:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- The International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights
- The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (ILO convention 169)

## **4. Principles**

---

### **4.1. Human Rights and Human Dignity**

Social work is based on respect for the inherent worth and dignity of all people, and the rights that follow from this. Social workers should uphold and defend each person's physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual integrity and well-being. This means:

1. Respecting the right to self-determination - Social workers should respect and promote people's right to make their own choices and decisions, irrespective of their values and life choices, provided this does not threaten the rights and legitimate interests of others.
2. Promoting the right to participation - Social workers should promote the full involvement and participation of people using their services in ways that enable them to be empowered in all aspects of decisions and actions affecting their lives.
3. Treating each person as a whole - Social workers should be concerned with the whole person, within the family, community, societal and natural environments, and should seek to recognize all aspects of a person's life.
4. Identifying and developing strengths - Social workers should focus on the strengths of all individuals, groups and communities and thus promote their empowerment.

#### **4.2. Social Justice**

Social workers have a responsibility to promote social justice, in relation to society generally, and in relation to the people with whom they work. This means:

1. Challenging negative discrimination\* - Social workers have a responsibility to challenge negative discrimination on the basis of characteristics such as ability, age, culture, gender or sex, marital status, socio-economic status, political opinions, skin color, racial or other physical characteristics, sexual orientation, or spiritual beliefs.

*\*In some countries the term "discrimination" would be used instead of "negative discrimination". The word negative is used here because in some countries the term "positive discrimination" is also used. Positive discrimination is also known as "affirmative action". Positive discrimination or affirmative action means positive steps taken to redress the effects of historical discrimination against the groups named in clause 4.2.1 above.*

2. Recognizing diversity - Social workers should recognize and respect the ethnic and cultural diversity of the societies in which they practice, taking account of individual, family, group and community differences.
3. Distributing resources equitably - Social workers should ensure that resources at their disposal are distributed fairly, according to need.
4. Challenging unjust policies and practices - Social workers have a duty to bring to the attention of their employers, policy makers, politicians and the general public situations where resources are inadequate or where distribution of resources, policies and practices are oppressive, unfair or harmful.



5. Working in solidarity - Social workers have an obligation to challenge social conditions that contribute to social exclusion, stigmatization or subjugation, and to work towards an inclusive society.

## **5. Professional conduct**

---

It is the responsibility of the national organizations in membership of IFSW and IASSW to develop and regularly update their own codes of ethics or ethical guidelines, to be consistent with the IFSW/ IASSW statement. It is also the responsibility of national organizations to inform social workers and schools of social work about these codes or guidelines. Social workers should act in accordance with the ethical code or guidelines current in their country. These will generally include more detailed guidance in ethical practice specific to the national context. The following general guidelines on professional conduct apply:

1. Social workers are expected to develop and maintain the required skills and competence to do their job.
2. Social workers should not allow their skills to be used for inhumane purposes, such as torture or terrorism.
3. Social workers should act with integrity. This includes not abusing the relationship of trust with the people using their services, recognizing the boundaries between personal and professional life, and not abusing their position for personal benefit or gain.
4. Social workers should act in relation to the people using their services with compassion, empathy and care.
5. Social workers should not subordinate the needs or interests of people who use their services to their own needs or interests.
6. Social workers have a duty to take necessary steps to care for themselves professionally and personally in the workplace and in society, in order to ensure that they are able to provide appropriate services.
7. Social workers should maintain confidentiality regarding information about people who use their services. Exceptions to this may only be justified on the basis of a greater ethical requirement (such as the preservation of life).
8. Social workers need to acknowledge that they are accountable for their actions to the users of their services, the people they work with, their colleagues, their employers, and the professional association and to the law, and that these accountabilities may conflict.

9. Social workers should be willing to collaborate with the schools of social work in order to support social work students to get practical training of good quality and up to date practical knowledge
10. Social workers should foster and engage in ethical debate with their colleagues and employers and take responsibility for making ethically informed decisions.
11. Social workers should be prepared to state the reasons for their decisions based on ethical considerations, and be accountable for their choices and actions.
12. Social workers should work to create conditions in employing agencies and in their countries where the principles of this statement and those of their own national code (if applicable) are discussed, evaluated and upheld.

The document "Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles" was approved at the General Meetings of the International Federation of Social Workers and the International Association of Schools of Social Work in Adelaide, Australia, October 2004

Copyright © 2004 International Federation of Social Workers and International Association of Schools of Social Work, PO Box 6875, CH-3001 Bern, Switzerland

### **NABSW Code of Ethics**

In America today, no Black person, except the selfish or irrational, can claim neutrality in the quest for Black liberation, nor fail to consider the implications of the events taking place in our society. Given the necessity for committing ourselves to the struggle for freedom, we as Black Americans practicing in the field of social welfare set forth this statement of ideals and guiding principles:

If a sense of community awareness is a pre-condition to humanitarian acts, then we as Black social workers must use our knowledge of the Black community, our commitments to its self-determination, and our helping skills for the benefit of Black people as we marshal our expertise to improve the quality of life for Black people. Our activities will be guided by our Black consciousness, our determination to protect the security of the Black community, and to serve as advocates to relieve suffering of Black people by any means necessary.

Therefore, as Black social workers we commit ourselves collectively to the interests of our Black brethren and as individuals subscribe to the following statements:

I regard as my primary obligation the welfare of the Black individual, Black family, and Black community and will engage in action for improving social conditions.

I give precedence to this mission over my personal interests.

I adopt the concept of a Black extended family and embrace all Black people as my

brothers and sisters, making no distinction between their destiny and my own.

I hold myself responsible for the quality and extent of service I perform and the quality and extent of service performed by the agency or organization in which I am employed, as it relates to the Black Community.

I accept the responsibility to protect the Black community against unethical and hypocritical practice by any individuals or organizations engaged in social welfare activities.

I stand ready to supplement my paid or professional advocacy with voluntary service in the Black public interest.

I will consciously use my skills and my whole being as an instrument for social change with particular attention directed to the establishment of Black social institutions.

### **Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners**

#### **781.401. Code of Ethics**

(A) A social worker must observe and comply with the Code of Ethics set forth in this subchapter. Any violation of the Code of Ethics or standards of practice will constitute unethical conduct or conduct that discredits or tends to discredit the profession of Social Work and is grounds for disciplinary action.

(1) A social worker shall not refuse to do or refuse to perform any act or service for which the person is licensed solely on the basis of a client's age, gender, race, color, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or political affiliation.

(2) A social worker shall truthfully report or present her or his services, professional credentials, and qualifications to clients or potential clients.

(3) A social worker shall only offer those services that are within his or her professional competency.

(4) A social worker shall strive to maintain and improve her or his professional knowledge, skills, and abilities.

(5) A social worker shall base all services on an assessment, evaluation, or diagnosis of the client.

(6) A social worker shall provide the client with a clear description of services,

schedules, fees, and billing at the initiation of services.

(7) A social worker shall safeguard the client's rights to confidentiality within the limits of the law.

(8) A social worker shall be responsible for setting and maintaining professional boundaries.

(9) A social worker shall not have sexual contact with a client or a person who has been a client.

(10) A social worker shall refrain from providing service while impaired due to the social worker's physical or mental health or the use of medication, drugs, or alcohol.

(11) A social worker shall evaluate a client's progress on a continuing basis to guide service delivery and will make use of supervision and consultation as indicated by the client's needs.

(12) A social worker shall refer a client for those services that the social worker is unable to meet and terminate service to a client when continued services are no longer in the client's best interest.

(13) A social worker shall not exploit his or her position of trust with a client or former client.

(B) The grounds of disciplinary action of a social worker shall be based on the Code of Ethics or standards of practice in effect at the time of the violation.

# Applying for a License

Effective November 1, 2020, the Behavioral Health Executive Council (BHEC or the Council) launched a collaboration with the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) to improve access to the licensing exam.

Prior to this change, prospective examinees were required to:

1. Apply to BHEC for approval to sit for the exam
2. Apply with ASWB to take the exam
3. Apply with BHEC after exam passage to receive the license

The collaboration with ASWB eliminates the approval step. Now, rather than requesting approval from BHEC, prospective examinees apply directly to ASWB.

1. Apply with ASWB to take the exam
2. Apply with BHEC after exam passage to receive the license

## **Breakdown of the New Process:**

### **Current Social Work Students**

In the last semester of your social work program, you can apply for the exam with ASWB by visiting their website and initiating the application process. Visit our "[ASWB Licensure Examinations](#)" page for details.

Once you have passed the exam **and** graduated from your social work program you are eligible to apply online for the license. **DO NOT APPLY FOR THE LICENSE PRIOR TO GRADUATION AND EXAM PASSAGE.**

To apply for the license, you will access our online licensing system. This system allows the user to apply for the license and upload any required first-person documentation. A user-guide for applying online can be found here: <https://www.bhec.texas.gov/how-to-user-guides/index.html>

**New LBSW or LMSW (never held a social work license before)**

**BEFORE** accessing the Online Licensing System you must have already graduated from your social work program and have passed the ASWB examination. For information on scheduling the ASWB exam, please visit our "[ASWB Licensure Examinations](#)" page.

If you have already passed the exam **AND** graduated from your Social Work program, you will need to have the following document(s) completed and scanned into your device to be uploaded and attached to your electronic application.

Jurisprudence Examination Completion Certificate – You must take the Jurisprudence Exam prior to submitting your application for licensure. Please note, the exam must be completed no earlier than six months prior to submission of your application. Upon completion of the exam, you will be issued the certificate.

Additional Documents that must come in from 3<sup>rd</sup> Parties (cannot be uploaded with app):

**National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) self-query report** – Please request a self-query from the NPDB. This will be mailed to you by the NPDB. You will need to mail us the **unopened** self-query. Information on NPDB self-query is found [here](#).

**Fingerprinting** – Upon submission of your online application you will be sent a confirmation email. This email will include a link to the information on getting fingerprinted. The fingerprinting is done electronically and locations all over the country. There is a fee paid to the fingerprint facility. Typically, it takes approximately 15 minutes to complete the process of getting fingerprinted.

**Official Transcripts** – The Council requires submission of official transcripts. These cannot be uploaded with your application. Instead, they must be received by the Council directly from the awarding institution, a transcript or credential delivery service, or a credentials bank that utilizes primary source verification. The board prefers electronic submission but will accept hardcopy transcripts.

Electronic transcripts should be emailed to: [transcripts@bhec.texas.gov](mailto:transcripts@bhec.texas.gov)

Hardcopy transcripts should be mailed to:

BHEC SW Transcripts

333 Guadalupe St., Ste. 3-900

Austin, TX 78701