



APPENDIX # 3 Professional Relationships

Introduction

Social workers are required to maintain professional boundaries with clients to ensure that the relationship serves the needs of clients. Section 3 of the Standards of Practice sets standards for social workers to take into account for the relevant contextual issues, while ensuring that the dignity, individuality, and rights of all persons are protected. In establishing a relationship with appropriate professional boundaries, social workers must consider their place of power, with the potential for harm to others should that power be misused. Take care to not abuse the power inherent in the professional relationship. This Standard also outlines consideration for dual/multiple role relationships and sets that standard for social workers to take responsibility for ensuring that appropriate professional boundaries are maintained and that the nature of the relationship is protected.

<http://nscsw.org/practice/standards-of-practice/standard-two/>

Relevant Code of Ethics.

Value 1: Respect for the Inherent Dignity and Worth of Persons

Social work is founded on a long-standing commitment to respect the inherent dignity and individual worth of all persons. When required by law to override a client's wishes social workers take care to use minimum coercion required. Social workers recognize and respect the diversity of Canadian society, taking into account the breadth of differences that exist among individuals, families, groups, and communities. Social workers uphold the human rights of individuals and groups as expressed in The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

Value 3: Service to Humanity

The social work profession upholds service in the interests of others, consistent with social justice, as a core professional objective. In professional practice, social workers balance individual needs, and rights and freedoms with collective interests in the service of humanity. When acting in a professional capacity, social workers place professional service before personal goals or advantage, and use their power and authority in disciplined and responsible ways that serve society. The social work profession contributes to knowledge and skills that assist in the management of conflicts and the wide-ranging consequences of conflict.

Value 4: Integrity of Professional Practice

Social workers demonstrate respect for the profession's purpose, values and ethical principles relevant to their field of practice. Social workers maintain a high level of professional conduct by acting honestly and responsibly and promoting the values of the profession. Social workers strive

for impartiality in their professional practice, and refrain from imposing their personal values, views, preferences, stereotypes/assumptions on clients and seek to understand the lived experiences of those whom they serve. It is the responsibility of social workers to establish the tenor of their professional relationship with clients, and others to whom they have a professional duty, and to maintain professional boundaries. As individuals, social workers take care in their actions to not bring the reputation of the profession into disrepute. An essential element of integrity in professional practice is ethical accountability based on the CASW Code of Ethics, as amended for NSASW (1994), the CASW Code of Ethics (2005), the IFSW Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles (2004), and other relevant provincial standards and guidelines. Where conflicts or uncertainties exist with respect to these resources of ethical guidance or with respect to the interpretation or application, social workers are encouraged to seek advice, including consultation with their regulatory body.

Value 6: Competence in Professional Practice

Social workers respect a client's right to competent social work services. Social workers analyze the nature of social needs and problems, and encourage innovative, effective strategies and techniques to meet both new and existing needs and, where possible, contribute to the knowledge base of the profession. Social workers have a responsibility to maintain professional proficiency, to continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills, and to apply new knowledge in practice commensurate with their level of professional education, skill and competency, seeking consultation and supervision as appropriate.

Concepts Related to Standard

- Discuss how your power and privilege informs your professional relationship with your clients.
- Differentiate the impact of professional boundaries with voluntary and involuntary clients.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how empathy and solidarity impact professional boundaries.
- Examine areas within your practice where a conflict of interest may impact service delivery.
- Examine dual and multiple relationships within your area of service and determine where professional and personal boundaries align or conflict.
- Discuss the role of physical contact and the impact that your social location may have on the professional relationship.

Activity Examples

1. Read: Chapter #5 New Tools for Ethical Practice in an Era of Fiscal Restraints Spencer E; Massing, D & Gough, J (2017) Social Work Ethics; Progressive, Practical, and Relational Approaches; Oxford Press.
 - a. With your Mentor discuss the following questions.
 - Is there a potential for an Ethical Trespass to take place within your area of service? (Be self-reflective for this question) as yourself;
 - Carefully consider the situation on context and make choices about how to respond, based on your interpretation of the situation?
 - Next question how knowledge has been generated and determine the place of power in what is taken as knowledge. Recognize your own involvement in that production of power and knowledge?
 - What role did your own emotions play?
2. Watch the video: Brene Brown on Empathy
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw>
 - a. Reflect on your own practice... write down your thoughts and feelings on an authentic moment of empathy you held?
 - b. How does empathy challenge our traditional notions of professional boundaries
 - c. How can we assess risk while at the same time feeling empathy with our clients
 - d. What role does an understanding of oppression play in connecting empathy
Journal Entry or Blog on the role of professionalism
3. The Candidate is asked to prepare a **Journal or Blog**. It can include:
 - a. A discussion of professionalism in social work practice, be sure to address the role of social work education, values, skills and knowledge, and your own fundamental values, assumptions and beliefs.
 - b. Compare the ethical lessons learned from our history to your interpretation of professionalism. Address the question what have we learned as a profession?



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- c. Examine the role that the Code of Ethics and Standards of practice play in informing social work professionalism.
- d. Develop a statement on your understanding of how professionalism protects the public.

Resources

- 4. Brene Brown on Empathy <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw>
- 5. The importance of empathy <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UzPMMSKfKZQ>
- 6. Empathy can change the world <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aU3QfyqvHk8>
- 7. Ethical Dilemma <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLrDkX2tyJQ>
- 8. To close for comfort: Boundaries Issues in Professional Relationship <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ugS8WmWo3JU>
- 9. NSCSW Ethical Decision Making Tool <http://nscsw.org/practice/ethical-decision-making-tool/>
- 10. **Chapter #5 Wienberg, Merlinda; New Tools for Ethical Practice in an Era of Fiscal Restraints Spencer E; Massing, D & Gough, J (2017) Social Work Ethics; Progressive, Practical, and Relational Approaches; Oxford Press.**