

## APPENDIX 6 Social Justice

### *Introduction*

Social workers are social justice professionals who advocate for social change in the best interest of the client and for the overall benefit of society, the environment, and the global community. Section 6 addresses standards related to the pursuit of social justice.

### *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 2: Pursuit of Social Justice**

Social workers believe in the obligation of people, individually and collectively, to provide resources, services and opportunities for the overall benefit of humanity and to afford them protection from harm. Social workers promote social fairness and the equitable distribution of resources, and act to reduce barriers and expand choice for all persons, with special regard for those who are marginalized, disadvantaged, vulnerable and/or have exceptional needs. Social workers oppose prejudice and discrimination against any person or group of persons, on any grounds, and specifically challenge views and actions that stereotype particular persons or groups.

It is recognized that social workers may encounter particular challenges in carrying out their ethical responsibilities for social justice and change for the following reasons:

- Social workers function as both helpers and controllers.
- There are conflicts between the duty of social workers to protect the interests of the people whom they serve, their employers, and societal demands for efficiency and utility.
- Resources in society are limited.

Advocacy is an important tool which social workers can use in their efforts to promote social justice. Social workers advocate for many things:

- Fair and equitable access to public services.

- Equal treatment and protection under the law and challenge injustices, especially injustices that effect the vulnerable and disadvantaged.
- The client, when services in the best interest of that client are not available or accessible.
- The elimination of all forms of discrimination and make reasonable efforts to promote conditions that respect the diversity of people.
- The elimination of poverty.
- The equitable distribution of society's resources to all persons. They bring to the attention of 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.
- Universal entitlement and access to the services and opportunities to meet basic human needs in the areas of housing, health care, child care, education and old age security.
- A clean and healthy environment and the development of sustainable environmental strategies.

### **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.

### *Concepts Related to Standard*

- Distinguish how systems connected to your area of practice support and/or impede the pursuit of social justice.
- Distinguish the need to promote fair and equitable access to services within your practice area.
- Demonstrate what social justice looks like in your area of practice.
- Formulate the role that anti-oppressive practice plays in promoting choice and opportunities for clients.
- Examine the difference between equality and equity and its role in preventing and eliminating systemic, oppression, domination exploitation and discrimination.
- Design a model for yourself that promotes critical self-reflection.
- Design a model for advocacy that will advance the rights of individuals and communities in your area or practice.

### Activity Examples

1. **Read** Chapter #9 Anti-Oppressive Social Work at the Structural Level and Selected Principles of Anti-Oppressive Social Work. Mullaly, B. (2010). Challenging oppression and confronting privilege. Ontario: Oxford University Press.

### Additional Resources

[On Being- Grace Lee Boggs a Century in the World-](#)

- a. Through a Collaborative conversation with your Mentor build on both of your understandings of the systems in which you practice. *(It is recommended that this be a group activity with multiple Mentors and Candidates).*
  - i. Within your own practice what are the common oppressions that your clients face? (i.e. Classism, Sexism, Racism...etc).
  - ii. Are the voices of those who experience these oppressions heard within your area practice? How does this or could this impact the overall service delivery?



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- iii. Within your own practice, how are decisions made? Who holds the power to make changes? What groups do they represent? Does the dominant group hold power over subordinate groups? What would a flat or horizontal organization with respect to decision making look like?
- iv. Thinking about your area of practice what are both the informal and formal groups or organizations that represent oppressed voices of the “isms” that you most commonly face in your area of practice? What is the strength of that voice, are they considered a stakeholder in your area of practice?
- v. Reflecting on the legislations, regulations and policies that guide your area of practice; Do they empower marginalized voices? Are they rooted in alleviating suffering from systemic oppression or towards transformational change of the structures? Are they embedded in social control or empowerment? Are they built to help adapt people’s behaviors to cope with the realities of an unjust system?
- vi. What legislations, regulations and policies would need to change in order to create a model for service delivery that was more aligned with anti-oppressive critical social work practice?

**2. Read:** Carroll, W. K., & Huxtable, D. (2014). Expose/oppose/propose: The Canadian centre for policy alternatives and the challenge of alternative knowledge. *Labour/Le Travail*, 74(1), 27-50.

- a. Through a Discussion with your Mentor, distinguish how the systems connected to your area of practice support and/or impede the pursuit of social justice,
  - i. Focus on a particular area in your area of practice that you believe needs to change (i.e –access to transportation, food security, safe affordable housing...etc).
  - ii. Who is impacted by this issue? Currently are there policies or practices within your area of practice that are leading to greater social justice for these people around this issue? Or do the policies and practices impede social justice?

**3. Watch the video Social Justice is in Fashion:**

- a. Focus on a particular area in your area of practice that you believe you can use the concept of social justice to reduce oppression.
- b. Give an example of how you could use the concept of social justice in your area of practice.



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- c. Discuss with your supervisor the influence you may have had while using the concept of social justice in your area of practice.
  - i. What is the dominant narrative that has informed these practice or policies (i.e. poor people need to pull themselves up by their boot straps)? What alternative knowledge might be helpful to expose the dominant narrative around it?
  - ii. Who are the core groups that can help build and inform that alternative knowledge?
  - iii. Who else has a stake in the issue and can help challenge it? What role could the NSCSW play in challenging these policies or practices?
  - iv. What actions and what power do these groups have to influence and/or oppose these practices and policies? What power do you have as a social worker? What role are you willing and able to play to challenge these practices?
  - v. Who do you specifically need to influence (i.e. supervisors, management, Deputy Ministers, Municipal or County Councilors, MLA's, MP's, Ministers..etc).
  - vi. What would be the proposal for change, what specially would you need to change in order to impact greater social sense of social justice?
4. Read: Beautiful Trouble- Spectrum of Allies.
  - a. Using your discussion around from Activity 2 complete a Spectrum of Allies analysis
  - b. Discuss Analysis with your mentor;
5. Read: Rukus Society Campaign Strategy.
  - a. Write a blog or journal entry depicting how you would advocate for change around the issue your identified in Activity #2.
  - b. Be sure to address;



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- Your Folks (base): Who is impacted by this issue? –or- Who is the core group you are organizing?
  - Your Friends (allies): Who else has a stake in the issue and can help you win your advocacy?
  - Force (tactics): What actions can we take with you and your communities power as to create change?
  - The Man (target): Who specifically can give you what you want?
  - The Goods (demand/goal): What do you want the target to do/give you?
- c. What will you need to investigate/gather information: What alternative facts are needed to win support and prevent misunderstandings.
- d. How might you educate and campaign participants and supporters d about the issues, and spread the word to the public?
- e. How would you build and Increase motivation and personal commitment for the struggle ahead?
- f. How would meet with opponents and put the case to them?
- g. What tactics would you used to resist the unjust system? Some of these may be legal strategies while others may be outside of the law, such as the use of civil disobedience.
- h. How would you create new relationships with opponent that reflects the new power reality? King referred to this stage as “reconciliation” – not losing relationships because of nonviolent action but building stronger, more respectful relationships.
- i. Discuss your Journal or Blog with your Mentor

## Resources

1. Social Justice Is In Fashion: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-meicgKjwA>
2. Four feet up: [https://www.nfb.ca/film/four\\_feet\\_up/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/four_feet_up/)
3. The invisible nation [https://www.nfb.ca/film/invisible\\_nation/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/invisible_nation/)
4. Me and the Mosque [https://www.nfb.ca/film/me\\_and\\_mosque/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/me_and_mosque/)



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5. Speak It! From the Heart of Black Nova Scotia  
[https://www.nfb.ca/film/speak\\_it\\_from\\_heart\\_of\\_black\\_nova\\_scotia/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/speak_it_from_heart_of_black_nova_scotia/)
6. [Chapter #9 Anti-Oppressive Social Work at the Structural Level and Selected Principles of Anti-Oppressive Social Work: Mullaly, B. \(2010\). Challenging oppression and confronting privilege. Ontario: Oxford University Press.](#)
7. [On Being- Grace Lee Boggs a Century in the World-](#)
8. [Carroll, W. K., & Huxtable, D. \(2014\). Expose/oppose/propose: The Canadian centre for policy alternatives and the challenge of alternative knowledge. \*Labour/Le Travail\*, 74\(1\), 27-50.](#)

