

National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics: Summary of Major Principles

PLEASE NOTE:

Each social work major is required to acquire a copy of the Code of Ethics to use in classes by the beginning of the junior year sequence. They are available in the UWS Bookstore and on the Internet at www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp. This is the site for the National Association of Social Workers.

As adopted by the Delegate Assembly of August 1996
The Code of Ethics took effect in January, 1997 and
updated in 2008.

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 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 an 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 set of core values.

Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics

The *NASW Code of Ethics* serves six purposes:

- The *Code* identifies core values on which social work's mission is based.

- 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.
- The *Code* is designed to help social workers identify relevant considerations when professional obligations conflict or ethical uncertainties arise.
- The *Code* provides ethical standards to which the general public can hold the social work profession accountable.
- The *Code* socializes practitioners new to the field to social work's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards.
- 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 proceeding, and abide by any NASW disciplinary rulings or sanctions based on it.

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.

VALUE: Social Justice
Ethical Principle: Social workers challenge social injustice.

VALUE: Dignity and Worth of the Person
Ethical Principle: Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.

VALUE: Importance of Human Relationships
Ethical Principle: Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.

VALUE: Integrity
Ethical Principle: Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.

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

Ethical Standards

The following ethical standards are relevant to the professional activities of all social workers. These standards concern:

Social workers' ethical responsibilities to clients,

Commitment to Clients
Self-Determination
Informed Consent
Competence
Cultural Competence and Social Diversity
Conflicts of Interest
Privacy and confidentiality: Clients
Access to Records
Sexual Relationships
Physical Contact
Sexual Harassment
Derogatory Language
Payment for Services
Clients Who Lack Decision-Making Capacity
Interruption of Services
Termination of Services

1. Social workers' ethical responsibilities to

colleagues, Respect
Confidentiality: Colleagues
Interdisciplinary Collaboration
Disputes Involving Colleagues
Consultation
Referral for Services
Sexual Relationships
Sexual Harassment
Impairment of Colleagues
Incompetence of Colleagues
Unethical conduct of Colleagues

2. Social workers' ethical responsibilities in practice

settings, Supervision and Consultation
Education and Training

Performance and Evaluation
Client Records
Billing
Client Transfer
Administration
Continuing Education and Staff Development
Commitments to Employers
Labor-Management Disputes

3. Social workers' ethical responsibilities as pr

ofessionals, Competence

Discrimination

Private conduct

Dishonesty, Fraud, and Deception

Impairment

Misrepresentation

Solicitations

Acknowledge Credit

4. Social workers' ethical responsibilities to the social work

profession, Integrity of the Profession

Evaluation and Research

5. Social workers' ethical responsibilities to the bro

ader society, Social Welfare

Public Participation

Public Emergencies

Social and Political Action

2008 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards

This material may be found at the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) website. It is the 2008 EPAS (Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards) which governs how a social work program is accredited. As such, it offers strict guidelines that each accredited program must follow in order to become and remain accredited. It covers all aspects of program functioning, from curriculum to student life.

It is an expectation of the accreditation process that you be provided with access to these standards. The website address is <http://www.cswe.org/File.aspx?id=13780> . If you have difficulty in accessing the EPAS this way, see your advisor to receive a printed copy.
