



SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

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A NOTE FROM THE FACULTY

Welcome to Social Work!

Congratulations on your choice to prepare for membership in a profession that is rich in traditions, progressive in thought, and most important, client focused. The SWOSU Social Work Program is nationally accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.

The list of those who provided the foundation for the profession reads like a list of "who's who" – including Jane Addams, the first American woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize and Harry Hopkins, architect of the New Deal and President Franklin Roosevelt's closest advisor. Currently social work professionals are active on the international, national, state, and community levels, in diverse arenas, including: serving as members of Congress and state legislatures; administering social policy and social service organizations; working for the United Nations; helping communities rebound from disasters; providing services in medical and mental health settings; assisting individuals confront and resolve personal difficulties; providing child and adult protective services; assisting the elderly maintain independence; providing prevention services to at-risk communities, families, and individuals—the list goes on.

The Social Work Program at SWOSU is designed to facilitate your movement toward being a competent, effective, and ethical social work practitioner. You will find your coursework to be challenging. The faculty strives to support a fertile educational environment for student personal growth and professional development

During your time at SWOSU, challenge yourself; don't readily accept the givens. Push yourself and take advantage of the luxury of undergraduate education. Use the faculty expertise and take risks exploring new ideas and developing professional skills throughout your BSW program. You will be encouraged to pursue your own interests and goals as well as those of the program in order to become an active and independent learner. Make the most of your educational experience.

Again, welcome to the SWOSU Social Work Program.

Debbi McFarlin, MSW, LCSW

Chris Gregston, MSW

HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM

The first MSW faculty member at Southwestern Oklahoma State University began offering social work coursework on campus in 1977. A major was offered in Sociology (Concentration in Social Work).

In 1994 the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education approved a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program for Southwestern, and Social Work became an independent degree program. The institution in May 1995 granted the first Bachelor of Social Work degrees. In 1996 because of student interest and growing numbers of social work majors, the SWOSU administration authorized a second faculty position for the Social Work Program.

An Application for Candidacy was submitted to the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). CSWE is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation as the sole accrediting agency for social work education in the United States. In February 1998 CSWE sent official notification that the SWOSU Social Work Program had been granted candidacy status. Full accreditation was granted by CSWE in November 2001, retroactive to all SWOSU BSW graduates from 1998 on.

The Social Work Program is one of the fastest-growing programs on campus. The BSW is a practice focused degree and you will experience direct contact with the social service community. The faculty have extensive professional practice experience and will facilitate your desire to learn. Also, adjunct faculty contribute from various practice experience.

SOCIAL WORK ASSOCIATION

An integral part of the Social Work Program is the student Social Work Association (SWA), an active student led campus professional and service organization since 1994. SWA activities reflect the service ethic of the profession and students are encouraged to join. Membership is open to any student with an interest in social work, especially social work majors. Students elect officers annually, providing a number of leadership and service opportunities. Membership is a valuable resource for peer support, networking, and an important foundation for developing the professional social work identity. Faculty in letters of reference for students/graduates will recognize SWA membership and leadership.

Social Work Association activities include service projects, attending professional workshops, participating in advocacy efforts, taking field trips, inviting guest speakers, as well as informal socializing with fellow students and faculty. The Oklahoma State Legislature and the Oklahoma Department of Human Services honored the organization in 1997 for Outstanding Community Service. SWA continues its annual sponsorship of the very successful campus-wide food drive, which results in major donations to the Weatherford and Clinton food banks. SWA members are active in the Oklahoma Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. Faculty and students annually attend professional social work conferences and participate in Children's Advocacy Day

at the Oklahoma State Legislature, meeting state legislators, supporting increased support and funding for children's services statewide.

Social Work students are encouraged to participate in other campus organizations, such as student government, and to volunteer in community projects, such as Habitat for Humanity, youth mentoring, mediation, and literacy tutoring.

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL ADVISING

SWOSU students are assigned to a Social Work Program faculty advisor for academic and professional advisement when the student declares a major in social work. Advisement meetings may be arranged during posted office hours or by appointment as needed. It is recommended that students arrange advisement meetings early in the official enrollment periods to ensure availability of required classes and preferred schedules.

COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS AND FACULTY

Open and regular communication between Social Work students and faculty is invited and encouraged. Faculty maintain posted office hours each week during the school year. Telephone message service and e-mail communication is available at all times. Faculty mail is delivered through campus mail. Students are also informed via postings on the bulletin board located near Program classes and through Social Work Association announcements. Students can access the SWOSU web site for up to date information on curriculum and class schedules, and links to the Social Work Program and Social Work Association.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

Student input is significant and valuable in the evolution of the Social Work Program since it's beginning. The opportunity to be involved in program policy and curriculum development occurs in the following ways: representation on the Social Work Program Advisory Committee (the Social Work Association President is a member); representation on the Curriculum Committee (two upper level Social Work majors are members); affiliation with the student Social Work Association; and through personal informal involvement with faculty of the social work program.

PHI ALPHA HONOR SOCIETY

Southwestern Oklahoma State University began the **Mu Alpha** Chapter of Phi Alpha Honor Society in January 2004. This honor society is for social work students dedicated to excellence in scholarship and high professional standards. Requirements include a 3.0 overall GPA and a 3.25 GPA in social work courses.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS (NASW)

Social Work Program faculty are longstanding members and supporters of the professional organization National Association of Social Workers. The BSW curriculum informs students of the NASW Code of Ethics and NASW Policy Statements related to critical issues in social welfare locally and globally. Students will be introduced to NASW state and national activities, including sponsored meetings and conferences, which students will be invited to attend. Students are encouraged to join NASW during their senior year as part of their professional preparation for graduation.

SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM GOALS AND PHILOSOPHY

MISSION STATEMENT

The Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) Social Work Program offers a professional baccalaureate degree in social work (BSW).

The mission of the SWOSU Social Work Program is to produce generalist social work practitioners with skills, knowledge and values who are able to work with clients from communities characterized by under-developed social service agency systems, access to service problems and sparse resources.

The program strives to provide academic instruction and advance professional growth and development through education of competent, ethical and effective professionals for beginning social work practice. The curriculum promotes understanding and analysis of social work knowledge, values, and skills, and is built upon a broad liberal arts education. The program is designed to integrate and apply the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics as a guide for professional conduct. (See Appendix I)

The BSW education prepares students for generalist practice in direct services with a common base of knowledge, values, and skills that is transferable among a variety of settings, population groups, and problem areas.

The Social Work Program curriculum addresses the causes and consequences of inequality and injustice and builds skills necessary for interventions with at-risk and vulnerable populations.

Education for the profession promotes good citizenship and advancement of knowledge, competence in practice skills, and services that enhance quality of life for individuals and communities.

SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM GOALS

1. To produce social workers for generalist practice in areas where they are expected to manage a range of problems and opportunities.
2. To prepare social workers to provide leadership in the development of service provisions in areas where resources are non-traditional and where scarcity and distance are factors.

3. To produce social workers who are sensitive to and appreciative of cultural social environments in which services are provided and who can advocate for diverse populations within their contextual environments; and
4. To prepare social workers for advanced graduate studies. of the history, mission, and philosophy of the social work profession, the contributions of significant individuals associated with these roots, as well as the historical context of the social welfare system, its structures and issues.

SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The BSW curriculum is based upon a strong liberal arts perspective and includes the professional foundation. After successfully completing the SWOSU Social Work Program, graduates will be prepared to:

1. Utilize critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice and social work research.
2. Practice the values and ethics of social work with an appreciation and respect for diversity, showing cultural sensitivity in assessment and intervention with diverse populations.
3. Demonstrate professional use of self through application of knowledge, values and skills in the field practicum experience, and through membership in academic and professional organizations.
4. Recognize forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination, and relate this understanding to strategies of change that advance social and economic justice to populations at risk.
5. Be knowledgeable about the history of social welfare, the social work profession and the current systems, institutions and issues impacting the profession and various client populations.
6. Apply the skills of generalist social work practice with client systems of various types in the community field practicum setting.
7. Utilize knowledge of bio-psycho-social variables that influence individual development and behavior in the social environment. Emphasis is on the person-environment context of professional social work practice, and application of theoretical frameworks, such as social systems theory, to understand the interactions among and between individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities and institutions.
8. Show awareness of the impact of social welfare policies on diverse client systems, workers, agencies, communities, and institutions.
9. Utilize professional literature related to generalist social work practice and social work research to assess, plan, and evaluate their own practice interventions.

10. Demonstrate understanding of evaluative research and use of various research designs to evaluate social services, policies and programs.

11. Communicate effectively with clients from diverse populations, colleagues, and members of the community.

12. Utilize professional supervision appropriate to generalist social work practice to enhance service provision and function effectively within community social service agencies for the benefit of clients.

13. Recognize the structure of organizations and service delivery systems in both rural and urban communities, with sensitivity to interventions which may benefit at-risk and diverse client systems.

GENERAL EDUCATION - LIBERAL ARTS PERSPECTIVE

The SWOSU Social Work program integrates the liberal arts perspective throughout all coursework. The SWOSU General Education curriculum which students must complete prior to graduation is built upon a strong liberal arts foundation. Desired outcomes after completion of GE coursework include:

- Basic skills in communication and mathematics--these include the ability to understand the ideas of others; to communicate one's ideas through writing, speech, and symbols; to understand mathematics concepts, principles, symbols, and logic; to think logically, critically, and creatively; and to effectively use computers and other information technologies.
- Appreciation of our scientific heritage--this includes an understanding of the basic laws and concepts of science; a knowledge of the basic methodologies and phenomena of natural science; and the impact of scientific discovery and the ensuing technology on society.
- Appreciation of the fine arts--this includes knowledge of important individuals and some of their works and an appreciation of aesthetic, technical, symbolic, and historic effects of the fine arts.
- Knowledge of social and intellectual beings and their institutions--this includes studies of behavioral aspects of individuals and society; past and present world cultures; current social issues and trends; the importance of health and wellness; the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic society; an understanding of global, social, economic, political, and ecological interdependence; and an appreciation of cultural diversity.

GENERALIST PRACTICE

The Southwestern BSW Program in its Mission Statement specifies a commitment to "provide academic instruction and professional growth and development to prepare competent and effective professionals for beginning social work practice. The BSW

education prepares students for generalist practice in direct services with a common base of knowledge, values, and skills that is transferable among a variety of settings, population groups, and problem areas."

The curriculum aims to graduate social work generalists who have the abilities to:

1. Assess people's needs and the socio-environmental resources (support systems) which can meet these needs
2. Directly provide resources and services which support and enhance the capabilities of people served
3. Obtain needed formal and informal resources and services from others
4. Improve social welfare, resources, and services for those in need

The curriculum for generalist social work practice is built upon a strong liberal arts foundation. The Bachelor of Social Work professional preparation curriculum is integrated with the liberal arts base.

PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE - FOUNDATION COMPONENTS

Values

Upholds core professional values and ethics of the Social Work profession (NASW Code of Ethics)

Purpose

Assists individuals and groups to identify and resolve or minimize problems arising out of disequilibrium between themselves and their environment. Identifies potential areas of disequilibrium between individuals or groups and the environment to prevent the occurrence of disequilibrium.

Sanction

Awareness of the significant social responsibility in the practitioner's role in service delivery

Knowledge

Practice is guided by Knowledge of the following:

- Human development and behavior in the context the biological, psychological, social environment
- Dynamics of the helping relationship
- Communication and forms of personal expression
- Group process and the reciprocal influence of individuals and groups
- Meaning and social effects of cultural heritage in its various forms
- Significance and interactional processes of relationships involving individuals and groups
- Community processes and resources
- Relevant history, issues, and structure of social services
- Development of professional use of self

Method

Competence in utilizing the systematic procedures unique to social work is necessary to facilitate change within individuals and/or the social environments

BSW CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

The SWOSU Social Work Program emphasizes and adheres to the curriculum requirements established by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) for accredited social work programs throughout the nation. Required areas of content include: social work values and ethics, diversity, social and economic justice, populations-at-risk, human behavior and the social environment, social welfare policy and services, practice, research, and field practicum.

(See <http://www.cswe.org>: Council on Social Work Education [Handbook of Accreditation Standards and Procedures](#), Fifth Edition)

BSW PROGRAM COURSE SEQUENCE

It is expected that most social work majors will complete the majority of the General Education requirements and declare a minor by the end of their sophomore year. Enrollment in Introduction to Social Work is recommended during the sophomore year. Upper level professional core courses should be completed during the junior year. Application for admission to the Social Work Program takes place during spring semester of the junior year. During fall semester of the senior year, professional practice courses are completed. Only after completing that coursework will students be allowed to enroll in the senior Practicum/Seminar I & II (offered spring semester only). Students are required to complete the Senior Exit Survey prior to graduation. (See Appendix II: Major in Social Work - Suggested Course Sequence Chart)

PRACTICUM - FIELD EDUCATION

The field practicum is an integral part of the curriculum in social work education. In consultation with the Practicum Director, a supervised educational internship is arranged. The practicum provides senior students the opportunity to apply classroom learning in a community social service agency setting. Enrollment in the Senior Professional Practicum/Seminar courses requires the approval signature of the SWP Field Director. Prior to obtaining that approval, the student must meet with the Field Director to plan practicum placement. Such planning should take place during the fall semester prior to spring practicum. SWOSU students are required to complete a minimum of 420 hours in field practicum during the spring semester of their senior year. The student is expected to be in practicum site throughout the semester. Practicum/Seminar I & II are completed consecutively for a combined total of 12 credit hours ("Block Placement"). The SWOSU Practicum Field Manual, with detailed information on practicum matters, is a required text for senior students and is provided to each agency Field Instructor.

ADMISSION TO THE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

The primary purpose of the Social Work Program is to prepare students for generalist social work practice as entry-level professionals in the full range of social service settings. The professional curriculum for social work education is based on a solid liberal arts foundation. Social work is a profession that requires disciplined delivery of services, set within a conceptual framework based on scientifically tested theories. Ethical professional practice is guided by complex social, behavioral, and practice theories. Social work is an art and a science. The admissions process reflects the complex demands of the profession.

A student must apply for admission to the Social Work Program, ideally during second semester, junior year. Admission forms may be obtained from the Social Work faculty. A student is permitted to take Social Work professional practice and practicum courses only after being admitted to the program. Life or work experience will not be considered for academic credit. Admission to the Social Work Program is by approval of the Admission and Retention Committee. A student, to be approved, must meet the following requirements:

1. Complete appropriate admission forms (including admission statement) and submit them to the Social Work Program office. Applicants must include an up-to-date transcript. A student will pay a fee to obtain required criminal background check.
2. Provide evidence of adequate reading, writing, and verbal communication skills as demonstrated by appropriate coursework.
3. Successful completion of at least 45 semester hours toward university degree (including the 21 hours of coursework specified in requirements 4, 5 & 6 below)
4. Complete the following General Education courses with a minimum grade of C in each course: ENGL 1113 & ENGL 1213
5. Complete: MATH 1143 or ALG 1513, HIST 1063, BIOL 1004.
6. Complete: SOCWK 2503 Introduction to Social Work with a minimum grade of C.
7. Evidence of personal traits that suggest potential for working professionally and effectively in the social services environment.
8. Three letters of recommendation.
9. A minimum cumulative grade-point average of 2.50.
10. Successful admission interview with the Social Work Program Admission and Retention Committee. The Admission and Retention Committee interview will be scheduled only after all of the above requirements have been met.
11. An OSBI criminal background check and sex offender registry check is required prior to admission application. The student is responsible to obtain and pay for their own background check. An original copy of the OSBI form is required in your application packet along with the OSBI response. The school may request that you furnish certified copies of court documents. The OSBI records are sometimes incomplete and require further documents.

Serious criminal conduct, an existing pattern of criminal conduct or criminal felony convictions will be taken into account when deciding the candidate's admission status. The presence of an OSBI record does not preclude admission to the Social Work Program. The criminal history records are reviewed as they relate to the content and nature of the curriculum and the safety and security of clients and the public. Students must consider their backgrounds and their potential to work with any given population in deciding on a career field. It is the student's responsibility to discuss with the faculty any areas of concern that they believe may prevent them from working in the social work profession. The student should do this before proceeding with their admission application. The school reserves the right to request other information as necessary.

If the student has been a resident of Oklahoma for less than one year, he/she is required to obtain a criminal history review and sex offender registry report from their last state of residency. International students are subject to the same criminal history

review. It may be necessary to contact the designated embassy or utilize a commercial investigative service to comply with this requirement.

The applicant will receive written notification of admission status subsequent to the admission interview. Notification of a student who is not selected for admission to the SWP will include explanation in order to benefit the student. The student has the option to reapply during another term or seek another major in the university.

Exceptions to Social Work Department Policies

Exceptions to SWOSU Social Work Department policies may be requested by submitting a written request to the Social Work faculty. For students who do not meet the admission requirements, the course prerequisites, or other stated conditions may appeal the decisions in writing. If a student is making an appeal, their request should state why they believe their case is exceptional and should receive additional consideration. In each case, the request will be reviewed and a decision will be made based on the merits of the case. Exceptions to existing policies must have approval from majority of the Social Work Program faculty. Students will be notified in writing of any faculty decisions made under this exception policy.

* Acknowledgement to Northeastern Oklahoma State University, Social Work Program Handbook for Exception Policy Rule, 2004.

TEACHING/LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to attend and actively participate in all scheduled class sessions and to remain current in reading assignments. Coursework is designed to maximize group discussion, which requires regular attendance and full participation on the part of all students. Completion of assigned readings is essential to maximum participation and integration of class discussions. Attendance is obviously a major factor in the class responsibility component of the semester grade. However, mere physical presence is not all that is expected. Students who are not attending to the class lecture or audiovisual presentation will not be considered to be participating.

Professional use of self is evidenced in interpersonal communications, preparation, attention, and appropriate participation in class discussions and exercises. Elements of generalist social work practice knowledge, values, skills and emphasis on the NASW Code of Ethics (see Appendix I) and the BSW Student Standards Policy (see following pages), including a professional demeanor, are expected criteria for all students in peer, instructor and practicum interactions. Should these expectations not be met, Social Work Program (SWP) and university policy will apply.

BSW STUDENT STANDARDS POLICY*

The BSW degree is a professional degree and students are expected to maintain professional standards. In addition to the NASW Code of Ethics, the BSW Student Standards Policy serves as a guide to those standards. The Social Work Program (SWP) faculty is responsible for determining whether students demonstrate the required level of achievement -- classroom, field, professional, and ethical behaviors -- appropriate to interact with colleagues, faculty, field instructors, administrators, staff, and clients. This

policy is applied to students' enrollment in the BSW program at any point in time, from admission to program entry, program entry to candidacy, and candidacy to graduation. The justifications for non-retention include, but are not limited to the BSW Student Standards Policy. Each admitted student is required to read and complete the Student Standards Policy Contract for the student's file.

1.0 STUDENT STANDARDS

In order to meet its responsibilities to provide quality professional social work education and to ensure that its graduates are able to function in a broad array of professional activities, SWP faculty evaluates the academic performance of students in six general areas: professional readiness, professional commitment, scholastic performance, attendance and punctuality, professional behavior, and ethical conduct.

- A. Professional Readiness:** Generally accepted standards of personal integrity, health and emotional stability, communication skills, interpersonal skills and self-awareness
1. Personal Integrity: Is open to learning and is honest with oneself and colleagues.
 2. Health and Emotional Stability: Uses thoughtful judgment in professional situations. Seeks and effectively uses help, and responsibly addresses one's own health and emotional problems that may interfere with scholastic and professional performance.
 3. Communication Skills: Communicates responsibly, sensitively and with respect toward colleagues, faculty, field instructors, administrators, staff, and clients.
 4. Interpersonal Skills: Expresses ideas and feelings which can be heard and understood by others. Demonstrates willingness and an ability to listen to others.
 5. Self Awareness: Exhibits knowledge of how one's values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and past experiences affect thinking, behavior and relationships. Accurately assesses one's own strengths, limitations, and suitability for professional practice on an ongoing basis. Shows an appropriate level of self-awareness and of how one is perceived by others. Reflects on one's own limitations as they relate to professional capacities. Is willing to examine and change behavior that interferes with work with clients and other professionals.

* Acknowledgement and appreciation: BSW Student Standards Policy is adapted from the *Student Handbook*, University of Houston School of Social Work, 2002. Used by permission.

B. Professional Commitment: Commitment to the essential values of social work and the pursuit of promoting social, economic and political justice.

C. Scholastic Performance:

1. Students are expected to demonstrate and maintain a professional standard of writing in all courses, do one's own work, give credit for the ideas of others, and provide proper citation of source materials.

2. Students are required to maintain a cumulative and a social work grade point average (GPA) of 2.50.
3. A student with a GPA below 2.50 will be allowed to continue enrollment only with the written recommendation of the faculty adviser and approval from the SWP Director. Permission to continue will be granted only if there is evidence that the GPA will improve to 2.50 or above in the subsequent semester.
4. Students are required to maintain satisfactory performance in all practicum courses, receiving no less than a grade of B in either practicum course. A student will be allowed to repeat the practicum course only with the written recommendation of the faculty adviser and approval from the SWP Director.

Academic Dishonesty Prohibited. Academic dishonesty "is an act of fraud or deception by which the individual(s) gains or attempts to gain benefit from the" university, Social Work Program, "or its constituents (faculty, students, administration, field instruction)." (University of Michigan School of Social Work *Student Guide 2003-2004*) Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following acts or attempted acts:

- Lying about the performance of academic work; obtaining a copy of an examination before it is available officially, or learning an examination question before it is available officially;
- Lying about circumstances presented as an excuse from examinations or other academic work;
- Submitting the work one has done for one class or project to another class or project without obtaining the informed permission of the second instructor (University of Michigan School of Social Work *Student Guide 2003-2004*);
- Stealing, as theft of tests or grade books, from faculty offices or elsewhere;
- Using "crib notes," as unauthorized use of notes or the like to aid in answering questions during an examination;
- Securing another to take a test in the student's place; both the student taking the test for another and the student registered in the course are at fault;
- Implicitly or explicitly representing as one's own work that which is the work of another without acknowledging the source (plagiarism);
- Changing or attempting to change answers or grades on a test that has been returned to a student in an attempt to claim instructor error;
- Giving or receiving unauthorized aid during an examination, such as trading examinations, whispering answers, and passing notes;
- Cheating, or attempting to cheat, in an examination, as copying from another's paper;

- Using or attempting to use another's laboratory, research, or results or products as one's own, whether with or without the permission of the owner;
- Falsifying results in laboratory experiments;
- Mutilating or stealing library materials; mis-shelving materials with the intent to reduce accessibility to other students;
- A student's failing to report to the instructor or department chair an incident which the student believes to be a violation of the academic honesty policy;
- Misrepresenting academic records or achievements as they pertain to course prerequisites or co-requisites for the purpose of enrolling or remaining in a course for which one is not eligible.
- Any other conduct which a reasonable person in the same or similar circumstances would recognize as dishonest or improper in an academic setting.

D. Attendance and Punctuality:

It is the expectation of the SWP that all classes in courses leading to the granting of the professional degree will be attended and that students will be punctual. This expectation is a reflection of the student's responsibility to the social work profession and to the clients whom social workers will serve. Chronic absenteeism and unexcused absences impair effective learning and discharge of responsibilities, constituting a basis for non-retention.

E. Professional Behavior:

1. Exhibits behaviors that are in compliance with program policies, institutional policies, and professional ethical standards, in classroom, field, and community, recognizing the strengths that exist in all students and cultures.
2. Shows appearance and demeanor that are appropriate to the roles and settings encountered during the educational experiences.
3. Shows potential for responsible and accountable behavior in classroom, field, and community by knowing and practicing within the scope of social work ethics, respecting others, being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, observing deadlines, completing tasks on time, and keeping appointments or making alternate arrangements.
4. Works effectively with others, regardless of level of authority or academic position.
5. Advocates for him/herself in a constructive manner and first uses established channels for conflict resolution.
6. Shows a willingness to acknowledge constructive feedback or supervision, as well as uses such feedback to enhance professional development.
7. The following violate professional and BSW Student Standards:
Assaultive or threatening behavior directed at clients, colleagues, instructors, or others;

Behavior damaging to clients, including but not limited to hostility, disparaging remarks, violations of client confidentiality, ridicule of clients, and related behaviors;

Persistent ineffectiveness in work with clients, does not demonstrate appropriate levels of effective performance, and/or gives insufficient evidence of progress;

Emotional immaturity, personal prejudice, resistance to learning, inability to complete assigned tasks, or a persistent incapacity for mastering and performing the necessary skills for interpersonal helping.

F. Ethical Conduct:

1. Adheres to the NASW Code of Ethics and the SWOSU BSW Student Standards Policy.
2. Demonstrates appreciation for the value of diversity. Works with and relates to others who are different from oneself, regardless of the student's own personal, religious, and/or cultural values. Provides service to all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person's age, class, race, religious beliefs, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and/or value system.
3. Comprehends other individuals' way of life and differing values. Uses empathic communication and support of the client as a basis for a productive professional relationship.
4. Shows respect for the rights of others. Commits to the clients' and human rights to freedom of choice and self-determination.
5. Maintains the professional standard of confidentiality as it relates to: human service, classroom and research activities, and field placement.
6. Demonstrates consistent honesty and integrity by being truthful about one's own background, experiences, and qualifications.
7. Demonstrates clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. Refrains from sexually harassing others, making verbal or physical threats, being involved in sexual relationships with clients, abusing others in physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual ways, or participating in dual relationships where conflicts of interest may exist.
8. Evaluates clients and their situations in a systematic, factual way. Refrains from imposing personal biases during interactions with others.

SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM ACTION PLAN

1. When a faculty member faculty advisor has a serious concern regarding a student's professional readiness, professional commitment, scholastic performance, attendance and punctuality, professional behavior, and/or ethical conduct, s/he should inform the student's faculty advisor. Jointly, the faculty advisor and the faculty member evaluate whether the concern is amenable to an in-person discussion with the student, the faculty advisor, and the faculty member expressing the concern. If not, an Action Plan may be initiated or if concern may warrant, recommendation may be made for non-retention.

2. An Action Plan is developed in a mandated joint meeting with the student, the faculty advisor, and the faculty member expressing the concern to discuss and document the plan. Once signed, the Action Plan is to be filed in the SWP Director's office and in the student's file. The student receives a copy.
3. The Action Plan will specify student responsibilities that identify desired outcome and a time frame is set out with a designated completion date. As the Action Plan is individualized, student responsibilities will vary accordingly. For continued good standing in the Social Work Program, the student must sign and successfully complete the Action Plan. Not doing so may result in non-retention.
4. A review will be scheduled at least every semester or according to the schedule set in the Action Plan. The student and the faculty members involved in initiation of the plan attend the review. The review is a constructive feedback process that is documented as a part of the original plan.
5. Should the student fail to meet the specified outcomes and time frame identified and agreed to in the Action Plan, the faculty member and the faculty advisor may make a recommendation to the Director for student non-retention. The Director will notify the student, the faculty member, and the faculty advisor of his /her decision, with explanation, in writing.

Initial Review Date: _____
Filing Date: _____

Southwestern Oklahoma State University Social Work Program

ACTION PLAN

Student Name: _____

Student I.D.#: _____

Identified Concern:
Date *Concern*

Plan of Actions, Expected Outcomes and Target Dates:

Expected Date for Plan Completion _____

Student signature & date _____

Faculty advisor's signature & date _____

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The above student has successfully completed the Action Plan.

Faculty signature & date \_\_\_\_\_

Student signature & date \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty advisor's signature & date \_\_\_\_\_

*Please return this form to the Social Work Program Director's office*

Southwestern Oklahoma State University Social Work Program  
**BSW STUDENT STANDARDS POLICY CONTRACT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have received and read the Southwestern Oklahoma State University Social Work Program BSW Student Standards Policy, and agree to be bound by the provisions therein. I understand that my enrollment in the BSW program is contingent upon my signing and submitting this contract.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name (PRINT OR TYPE) \_\_\_\_\_

Student LD. Number \_\_\_\_\_

Street or Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

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

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*This contract is one of the admission forms to be completed and signed when applying for admission to the Social Work Program.*

## **PROGRESSION AND RETENTION REQUIREMENTS**

Retention is required for continued enrollment in the Social Work Program. Students are retained in the SWOSU BSW Program provided maintenance of at least the standards that permitted admission, acceptable academic achievement, satisfactory practicum performance, and professional conduct. Records for currently enrolled SWP students will be reviewed at least once per semester through registrar reports and advisement.

Non-retention (revocation of SWP admission and ineligibility for continued enrollment in the SWP) may result from the following\*:

1. Semester grade point average below 2.50 for two consecutive semesters.
2. Cumulative or social work grade point average (GPA) below 2.50.
3. Noncompliance with expectations in the SWP *Student Handbook*.
4. Violation of the University Code of Student Conduct. (See SWOSU catalog)
5. Non-compliance with the BSW Student Standards Policy
6. Non-compliance with the NASW Code of Ethics.
7. Refusal to participate if Action Plan is recommended by SWP.
8. If an Action Plan has been put in place, not meeting specified outcomes.
9. Unsatisfactory progress in mastering practice proficiencies
10. Noncompliance with practicum expectations; inability to participate in assigned practicum experiences;
11. History of unsatisfactory evaluations from practicum supervisors.
12. Achieving less than a B in each practicum course.

A student may be considered for SWP non-retention on recommendation by a faculty member, field instructor or a participating practicum agency. Serious criminal conduct or criminal convictions may be taken into account. The recommendation is made to the Social Work Program Director. All faculty familiar with the student's performance must be consulted prior to this action being taken. A formal vote of the faculty is required to initiate such a process. Referral is made to the SWP Admission and Retention Committee. The student is notified in writing of the committee decision, with explanation in order to benefit the student.

Following a non-retention decision, the academic advisor is available to assist the student in exploring alternative educational and career options. Following non-retention the student has the option to reapply to the SWP during a subsequent term or seek another major in the university.

\*The student may continue to attend SWOSU in accordance with university policy. (See SWOSU *Catalog* and SWOSU *Student Handbook*.)

## **ADMISSION AND RETENTION COMMITTEE**

The Admission and Retention Committee will be composed of:

- a) two faculty (social work faculty) to evaluate academic eligibility.
- b) one social work faculty and two Advisory Committee members for admission

- interviews of students determined to be academically qualified.
- c) three members of the Admission and Retention Committee will be involved in determining whether non-retention is warranted.

Advisory Committee members have agreed to serve in the interview segment of the admission procedure. University policy regarding confidentiality restricts access to student academic records, therefore academic qualifications will be evaluated by faculty.

### **APPEAL / GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

The Social Work Program emphasizes that open communication is important between faculty and students in order to promote the educational process. Most problems can be resolved through open communication rather than through the formal grievance procedure. Students therefore are encouraged to talk first with the individual faculty member involved. If the matter remains unresolved, the Program Director will then be consulted. If there is still no resolution, the student may appeal to the SWP Admission and Retention Committee. The student may appeal the Committee's decision and the University grievance process will be followed (see *SWOSU Student Handbook*). Students have the right of appeal of non-retention and the written Action Plan through the identified grievance procedures of the Social Work Program and Southwestern Oklahoma State University.

### **STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION**

It is the policy of the Southwestern Oklahoma State University Social Work Program that decisions shall be based on merit, qualifications, and competence. Practices shall not be influenced or affected by virtue of a student's, applicant's or employee's race, color, ethnic or national origin, creed, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, marital status, political orientation, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law. In addition, it is the policy of the University and the Program to provide an environment that is free of unlawful harassment of any kind.

### **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STATEMENT**

Southwestern in compliance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 402 of the Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, Americans with Disabilities Act and other Federal laws and regulations does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, gender, age, religion, disability, political affiliation or status as a veteran in any of its policies, practices, or procedures. This includes but is not limited to admissions, employment, financial aid, and educational services.

### **DISABILITY SUPPORT**

Any student member of a class who feels that s/he has a disability and is need of special academic accommodations is requested to advise the instructor of such disability during or prior to the first scheduled class period. The Dean of Students, Room 214 Stafford Center, is responsible for coordination of services/accommodations for students

with special needs. The instructor will work with the student to provide reasonable opportunity to perform in this class when need has been established by the Dean of Students.

## **TRANSFER POLICY**

Transfer students from other accredited colleges and universities may transfer to Southwestern under the conditions and requirements outlined in the Southwestern Oklahoma State University Undergraduate Catalog, under the section on Undergraduate Admissions.

After admission to Southwestern, all of the individual student's higher education transcripts will be reviewed by the Registrar's Office in order to determine the equivalency of completed coursework in regard to satisfying SWOSU graduation requirements. Equivalency to course requirements for the Social Work major are reviewed by the Social Work advisor at the time of initial enrollment. The student may be asked for additional documentation such as the syllabus, text, and official university catalog for the purpose of determining equivalency. Social Work Program faculty and the SWOSU Registrar will consult and jointly make a determination on any coursework to be counted toward satisfying requirements for the BSW degree.

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## APPENDIX I

### NASW Code of Ethics

<http://www.naswdc.org/>

#### Overview

The National Association of Social Workers is the largest organization of professional social workers with 155,000 members. It promotes, develops and protects the practice of social work and social workers. NASW also seeks to enhance the well-being of individuals, families, and communities through its work and through its advocacy. A professional social worker has a degree in social work and meets state legal requirements. Professional social workers practice in many settings including family service agencies, child welfare, community mental health centers, private practice, schools, hospitals, employee assistance programs, and public and private agencies. Professional social workers are the nation's largest group of mental health services providers.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is located at 750 First Street, NE, Suite 700, Washington DC 20002-4241. Telephone is 202/408-8600, FAX 202/336-8311 and TTD 202/408-8396.

The *NASW Code of Ethics* is intended to serve as a guide to the everyday professional conduct of social workers. This *Code* includes four sections. 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.

If you believe a social work member of NASW is in violation of this Code of Ethics, one of your options is to file a complaint with NASW. Contact [your state Chapter](#) for instructions.

#### Table of Contents

- [Preamble](#)
- [Purpose](#)
- [Ethical Principles](#)
- Ethical Standards
  - [to Clients](#)
  - [to Colleagues](#)
  - [in Practice Settings](#)
  - [as Professionals](#)
  - [to the Profession](#)
  - [to the Broader Society](#)

#### 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 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.
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.<sup>1</sup> 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.

Further, 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. There are many instances in social work where simple answers are not available to resolve complex ethical issues. 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.

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<sup>1</sup> For information on NASW adjudication procedures, see *NASW Procedures for the Adjudication of Grievances*.

### **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 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**

### **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 who provide services via electronic media (such as computer, telephone, radio, and television) should inform recipients of the limitations and risks associated with such services.

(f) Social workers should obtain clients' informed consent before audiotaping or videotaping clients or permitting observation of services to clients by a third party.

#### **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.

#### **1.05 Cultural Competence 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, age, marital status, political belief, religion, and mental or physical disability.

#### **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.

### **1.07 Privacy and Confidentiality**

(a) Social workers should respect clients' right to privacy. Social workers should not solicit private information from clients unless it is essential to providing services or conducting social work evaluation or research. 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 other identifiable person or when laws or regulations require disclosure without a client's consent. 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. 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

(i) Social workers should not discuss confidential information in any setting unless privacy can be ensured. Social workers should not discuss confidential information in public or semipublic 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 precautions to ensure and maintain the confidentiality of information transmitted to other parties through the use of computers, electronic mail, facsimile machines, telephones and telephone answering machines, and other electronic or computer technology. Disclosure of identifying information should be avoided whenever possible.
- (n) Social workers should transfer or dispose of clients' records in a manner that protects clients' confidentiality and is consistent with state statutes governing records and social work licensure.
- (o) Social workers should take reasonable precautions to protect client confidentiality in the event of the social worker's termination of practice, incapacitation, or death.
- (p) 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.
- (q) 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.
- (r) 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) 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 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 or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

### **1.12 Derogatory Language**

Social workers should not use derogatory language in their written or verbal 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, relocation, illness, disability, or death.

### **1.16 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 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, age, marital status, political belief, religion, and mental or physical disability.

(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 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 additional service is 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.

## **2.07 Sexual Relationships**

(a) Social workers who function as supervisors or educators should not engage in sexual activities or 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.

## **2.08 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 or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

## **2.09 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.

## **.2.10 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.

## **2.11 Unethical Conduct of Colleagues**

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

(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, an NASW committee on inquiry, 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 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.
- (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. 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 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 state statutes or relevant 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

#### **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, age, marital status, political belief, religion, or mental or physical disability.

#### **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.

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### **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 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.

(g) 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.

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

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

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

(k) 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.

(l) 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.

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

(n) 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.

(o) 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.

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

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## **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, age, marital status, political belief, religion, or mental or physical disability.