

**Plymouth State**  
UNIVERSITY

***Social Work  
Department***



**Student  
Handbook**

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(updated 11/2006)

## INTRODUCTION

Most of what you need to know about the Social Work major can be found in this handbook. We encourage you to read it and to use it as a reference and guide. (The terms Social Work Program and Social Work Department and Program Director and Department Chair are used interchangeably.)

Please note that a link to the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers has been included. Every professional social worker needs to be familiar with the Code. Also, one of the requirements for continuance in the major is professional and ethical behavior that is consistent with the Code.

If you have any questions, please contact your advisor.

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## **I. MISSION STATEMENT, PROGRAM GOALS and OBJECTIVES**

### MISSION STATEMENT

(Adopted by the faculty September 28, 1993; updated February 22, 2006)

The mission of the Social Work program at Plymouth State University is to prepare students with knowledge, skills, and values for entry-level generalist practice. Our mission is to educate students to support and enhance human well-being, understand mechanisms of oppression, discrimination, and inequality, and apply strategies of advocacy and social change to promote social and economic justice. Our purpose is also to educate students to respect human diversity in the practice of social work, develop a strengths-based approach to intervention, and advance social work practice through the development and use of research, knowledge, and skills.

The Social Work program at Plymouth State University supports and values human rights, human diversity, and self-determination. Individual and group differences based on race and ethnicity, national origin, culture, gender, sex, sexual orientation, economic status, family type, religion, age, and physical abilities, mental abilities are respected. We oppose social and economic injustice, prejudice and discrimination, and violence. The Social Work program and its curriculum are rooted in these principles.

### PROGRAM GOALS

- Goal #1: The social work program will prepare students to become competent entry-level social work practitioners in a wide range of settings, with emphasis on direct service.
- Goal #2: The social work program's curriculum will provide the foundation knowledge, skills, and values that prepare students for graduate study in social work.
- Goal #3: The social work program's faculty and students should engage in continual professional development and activity that supports and enhances the delivery of social services and the practice of social work, particularly in New Hampshire.

### PROGRAM LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students should develop the following knowledge, skills, and professional values:

1. apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice
2. apply the values and ethics of social work in professional practice
3. practice without discrimination and with respect for human diversity
4. understand forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination in the U.S. and other parts of the world and strategies of change that advance social and economic justice
5. understand and interpret the history of the social work and social welfare and its current structures and issues

6. apply the knowledge and skills of generalist practice with systems of all sizes
7. use theoretical frameworks to understand human development and behavior across the life span and interactions between people and their environments (social systems)
8. analyze the impact of social policies on clients, practitioners, and agencies and influence social policies through professional social work practice
9. evaluate research studies and apply findings to practice and, under supervision, evaluate their own practice interventions
10. communicate and collaborate with clients, colleagues, and members of the community
11. use supervision appropriate to generalist practice
12. function within the structure of organizations and service delivery systems, and, under supervision, seek necessary organizational change

## **II. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

Social Work is a specialized degree that prepares students for generalist social work practice in a wide range of settings to work with children, youth, families and adults. The curriculum has a solid foundation in the liberal arts, focusing on the biological, psychological and social sciences, as well as the knowledge, skills and values of the social work profession. In addition to entry-level practice, the degree prepares students to pursue graduate education in social work and other related fields.

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) granted initial accreditation to the program in 1995. By continuing to meet the rigorous academic standards of CSWE, the program received accreditation in 1999 for the full eight-year cycle, ending in 2007. The curriculum provides content in five basic areas of study: human behavior and the social environment, social welfare policy and services, practice theory and skills, research and field education. The field education component (450 supervised hours) provides students with a hands-on learning experience at human service agencies throughout New Hampshire. The curriculum integrates content on values and ethics, human diversity, populations-at-risk and the promotion of social and economic justice.

Interested students can obtain additional information on the program's mission, admission and continuance requirements and other academic policies, by contacting the Social Work Department, accessing the Department's homepage, or referencing the Department's Student Handbook. The following is a brief summary of the program's academic policies:

**Admission Requirements** Students accepted by the University must also meet the requirements of the Department for admission. To apply, students must 1. be enrolled in or have completed SW 2200; 2. complete an application by submitting a written statement (see Appendix A); 3. participate in a personal interview with a member of the Social Work faculty.

The criteria and procedures used for admission are based on the academic and professional standards established by the Council on Social Work Education, the national accrediting body. The criteria used for assessment are: 1. intellectual qualities and academic skills; 2. commitment to

the enhancement of quality of life for individuals and families; 3. concern for issues of social justice and sensitivity to cultural diversity; 4. capacity for self-awareness and self-evaluation.

The Social Work Department encourages applications from students from diverse backgrounds including race, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin and political orientation. Students are advised to apply by their sophomore year. Applicants will receive notice regarding the decision within 14 calendar days of the interview.

#### **A. Continuation and Graduation Requirements**

Once admitted, students must meet the following continuation requirements in order to gain admission to SW 4430 Social Work Practicum or the Practicum for their Option (12 credits) and the concurrent SW 4550 Social Work Seminar (3 credits), and to graduate with a BS in Social Work:

1. a grade of C or better in the required (SW) Foundation Courses: SW2050, SW2200, SW3340, SW3350, SW3450, SW3460, SW3510, SW3520, SW3530, SW4000, SW4550
2. a minimum major grade point average of 2.5 (all courses required for the major)
3. completed portfolio statements for each of the (SW) Foundation Courses (listed in #1 above), with the exception of SW 4550 which requires a completed capstone portfolio.

Transfer credit is not granted for either the Practicum or the Social Work Seminar. Academic credit for life experience and previous work experience shall not be granted in lieu of any course required for the major.

These academic standards should be monitored by the student and his/her faculty advisor throughout the student's Social Work education. To be admitted to the Practicum and the Seminar (SW 4550), students must have completed all of the course requirements of the major, achieved an overall grade point average of 2.0 and a major grade point average of 2.5 and earned a grade of C or better in the 10 Social Work Foundation Courses (as listed above). Permission to enter the field will be granted in writing by the Program Director/Department Chair or the Field Education Director.

In addition to academic requirements, students are required to demonstrate professional and ethical behavior. Student behavior that is contrary to the ethics of the profession will be reviewed by the program to determine the student's appropriateness for continuance in the major. Behaviors that would warrant such a review are based on the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). Examples of unprofessional or unethical behavior include impropriety in personal conduct (such as dishonesty or criminal behavior); exploitive relationships (such as sexual relationships or other behaviors pursued for personal advantage), e.g., with practicum clients; and any form of illegal discrimination or discrimination contrary to Plymouth State University policy (see the NASW Code of Ethics).

#### **B. Application Procedures**

Students are advised to apply by their sophomore year. Students must:

1. Submit a completed application for the major and a prepared personal statement to the Social Work Department (see form in Appendix). Applications are typically submitted to the instructor of SW2200 – Introduction to Social Work by the end of

the course. Completion of the application process is a pre-requisite to enrollment in SW3340 – Human Behavior and the Social Environment.

2. Schedule a personal interview with the Department Chair or his/her designee.

The purpose of the interview is to inform the student about the social work profession and the requirements of the program. Students will be queried as to their reasons for choosing Social Work as a major, what they know about the profession, and what areas of practice or client populations they want to work in or with. Interviews will be scheduled after receipt of the application and personal statement. If materials submitted are insufficient for decision-making, additional information will be requested.

The program's criteria for selection and admission are a demonstration of the following:

1. Intellectual qualities and academic skills needed for education in social work;
2. Commitment to improving the quality of life for those facing a variety of individual and social problems;
3. Concern for issues of social justice and sensitivity toward groups that have experienced discrimination; and
4. capacity for self-awareness and self evaluation.

Decisions regarding admission will be made by the Department Chair and the Social Work faculty. Applicants will receive notice regarding the decision within fourteen (14) calendar days.

### **C. Requirements for Admission to the Social Work Practicum**

For admission to the Social Work Practicum and the Social Work Seminar, students must have:

1. Earned a minimum overall grade point average (GPA) of 2.0;
2. Earned a minimum major GPA of 2.5; and
3. Earned a grade of "C" or better in all ten Social Work (SW) foundation courses required for the major as listed above (A. Continuation Requirements, number 1).

Admission to the field is the decision of the Director of Field Education. Students may appeal the denial for entrance into the field experience by following the procedures for an appeal. Students denied admission to the field will be informed in writing of the decision, the reason(s) for the decision, and the option to appeal.

### **D. Procedures for All Appeals**

Students denied admission to the Social Work major or the Practicum may appeal the decision by sending a written request for reconsideration to the Department Chair within fourteen (14) calendar days following the decision. The student must specify the basis for the appeal. The Department Chair will discuss the appeal with Social Work faculty and the student within fourteen (14) calendar days of written notification of the appeal. Relevant materials, including the initial application and faculty advising notes, if any, will be reviewed. The decision to admit the student to the field or retain the student in the major will also be made within fourteen (14) calendar days of written notification of the appeal. Students have a right to appeal any Social Work Program academic restriction by writing to the Department Chair. The Chair, in consultation with the student's advisor and the faculty, will review all appeals. The program's decisions may be appealed to the Undergraduate Studies Office. Further appeal must be made in writing to the Academic Standards Committee.

## **E. Curriculum**

Students typically follow the Academic Catalog for the year they entered PSU, but have the option to follow any newer catalog. (See “Catalog Policy” at: [http://www.plymouth.edu/registrar/academic\\_policies.html](http://www.plymouth.edu/registrar/academic_policies.html)). The best place to find the degree requirements for your catalog year are online via the Undergraduate Studies website at: <http://www.plymouth.edu/undergrad/Curr-Guides/>. Degree requirements for the current catalog year can be found at: <http://www.plymouth.edu/main/programslist.html>.

## **III. GRADING POLICIES**

The University has adopted a letter system of grades (“A” through “F”). For additional information on this policy, please refer to the Academic Catalog. The Social Work faculty has adopted the following grading scale for course grades and grades for course assignments:

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| A | 90 – 100 |
| B | 80 – 89  |
| C | 70 – 79  |
| D | 60 – 69  |
| F | 50 – 59  |

## **IV. TRANSFER STUDENTS/TRANSFER CREDIT**

Transfer students applying for admission to Plymouth State University and students applying for transfer credit for individual courses taken at other institutions follow a two-step assessment process:

**First**, decisions regarding admission are made by the University’s Admissions Office. The Undergraduate Studies Office determines both acceptance of transfer credits and whether transfer credits are equivalent to General Education and elective courses. University policy regarding transfer of these credits can be found in the Academic Catalog. The Undergraduate Studies Office sends a list of accepted transfer courses to the Social Work Department Chair who decides if the course will be accepted as equivalent to courses required for the major.

**Second**, decisions regarding continuance in the major are made by the Social Work Program. This policy can be found in the Academic Catalog and Section II of this handbook. Decisions regarding transfer credit for courses that meet the requirements of the social work major are made by the Chair of the Social Work Department. The following program policies and procedures are followed:

- 1) A number of non-social work courses are required for the liberal arts foundation for the major. Courses that are accepted for transfer credit as General Education or elective courses will generally be granted credit for the Social Work Program. However, the initial decisions made by the Undergraduate Studies Office regarding these courses are sometimes reviewed on an individual basis by the director of the program. In some cases, additional information (such as course description, syllabi, texts, etc.) may be required by the director to further assess the course and grant equivalency credit.

- 2) All social work courses with a grade of C or better from social work programs accredited by the Council on Social Work Education or in Candidacy Status will be applied to the major. In order to receive transfer credit for a social work course taken at a non-accredited social work program, the course must a) be completed with a grade of C or better; and b) be reviewed and approved by the Social Work Program. Decisions regarding transfer credit for these courses are made by the program director after reviewing course descriptions, texts used for the courses, syllabi, course requirements, instructors, and/or other related information.
- 3) Transfer credit is not granted for the Social Work Practicum or the Social Work Seminar; the requirements of the practicum experience must be completed at Plymouth State University.  
(Approved by Curriculum Committee, 3/18/1994.)

## **V. LIFE and WORK EXPERIENCE**

Academic credit for life experience and previous work experience will not be given, in whole or in part, in lieu of the field practicum or any of the courses required for the major.

## **VI. ASSESSMENT and STUDENT PORTFOLIOS**

The Social Work Program prepares students for entry-level practice in the profession of social work. As an accredited professional degree program, there is an obligation to evaluate student preparation for practice. Therefore, the program is constantly engaged in assessment of its outcomes. Students, faculty, field instructors, members of the program's Advisory Board, community practitioners, graduates of the program and employers all play a role in this process.

A number of different quantitative and qualitative tools for assessing student performance and program outcomes are used. These include a student evaluation of the field practicum, an evaluation of the student's performance in the field practicum, the program's capstone portfolio, and a student exit survey. It also includes a survey of alumni/ae and a survey of employers. The student portfolio is a qualitative tool for assessment of student learning. At various intervals in the program, the student is asked to gather and choose samples of his/her work in order to document his/her learning.

The portfolios give the student the opportunity to reflect on his/her learning and to share these insights with the faculty. In turn, the faculty gains insight into what students are learning and how they learn best. It also helps the faculty assess the degree to which the program is meeting its objectives and to identify areas of strength and weakness.

Every student in the major completes a portfolio statement for each of the ten Social Work (SW) foundation courses listed in II. – Requirements, Section A. number 1. These statements are kept on file in the department and returned to the student in the Social Work Seminar to help with completion of the final student self-assessment of learning, the capstone portfolio. For additional information about the portfolio, see the Social Work Department homepage at <http://www.plymouth.edu/socwork/portfolio/>.

## VII. STUDENT PARTICIPATION in PROGRAM

PSU social work students have a range of roles, responsibilities and opportunities. These are as follows:

### A. Student Organization:

*Social Work Club* – Formed in 1990, the club is now a fully recognized and funded student organization with its own by-laws and elected student officers. Club functions include attendance at professional seminars, sponsoring guest speakers on campus, and community service activities. Through the regularly scheduled club meetings, students have a direct means of sharing their thoughts and concerns about the curriculum and program. The club also serves as the mechanism for representation by a student at social work faculty and/or advisory board meetings. A social work faculty member serves as an advisor to the club.

### B. Social Work Program Advisory Board:

The board provides an opportunity for students in the major to contribute to the program's educational policies and curriculum content. The President of the Social Work Club is a de facto member of the Social Work Program Advisory Board.

### C. Student Rights and Responsibilities:

Students in the Social Work program have the following rights and responsibilities:

- 1.) to learn in an academic environment free of discrimination based on economic status, gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, culture, sex, sexual orientation, political orientation, or physical or mental ability;
- 2.) to advocate, individually and collectively, for their needs and concerns;
- 3.) to learn in an academic environment without fear of improper disclosure of confidential information (such as academic records) or improper limitations of freedom of expression or due process of law;
- 4.) to learn in an academic environment with supportive pedagogical practices such as policies regarding class cancellation and rescheduling, returning papers and exams, and posting and keeping office hours;
- 5.) to use PSU meeting facilities in accord with University policies; and
- 6.) to receive recognition for their contributions in faculty or staff research projects or other scholarly works.

### D. PSU Student Handbook:

The PSU handbook for students is available online. It provides an overview of the services and facilities available to students at PSU.

<http://www.plymouth.edu/stulife/handbook/handbook.html>

## VIII. STUDENT SOCIAL WORK CLUB

We strongly encourage you to join the Social Work Club! The student club serves a number of functions as described above, but it is also a good way to meet other students in the program and to develop your own network of support. Students from other majors are also welcome to join. Ask your advisor who the student President is and plan to get involved.

## **IX. PROGRAM ADVISORY BOARD**

Given the size of the social work faculty, there is no committee structure within the department. However, there is an Advisory Board to the program that was established in Fall 1992. The purpose and structure are as follows:

- Purpose:** To develop and maintain ongoing ties between the social work practice community and the program/department.
- To provide opportunities for students, field instructors and social work practitioners to contribute to the program's educational policies and curriculum content.
- Composition:** 8-10 members representing students (currently enrolled and alumni/ae), field instructors, and social work practitioners from a range of fields of practice; Program Director and Field Education Director. The student who attends the meetings is either the President of the Social Work Club or someone chosen by the club President to attend.
- Structure:** Meetings held as needed, usually 2-3 times a year. All Social Work faculty are invited to attend.
- Tasks:** Board members have the opportunity to offer feedback, suggestions and recommendations to address the areas listed below, as well as others identified by the board:
- student preparation to meet community needs;
  - expectations for students in field education and ability of agencies to meet these needs;
  - anticipated changes in the curriculum and/or structure of the program; and
  - the maintenance and development of educational policies regarding student recruitment, admission, advisement, retention, and graduation.

**APPENDIX A**

Application for Continuance in the Social Work Major at Plymouth State University.

**APPLICATION FOR THE SOCIAL WORK MAJOR**

**1. PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Name

(Last, First, M.I.) \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Current Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ SSN: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**2. EDUCATION**

High School \_\_\_\_\_

Higher Education (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

# Credits Achieved \_\_\_\_\_

Other Specialized Training (Volunteer, Military, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

**3. EMPLOYMENT**

What work experiences if any have you had that relate to Social Work? Be Specific.

**4. VOLUNTEER OR COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES**

What volunteer activities or community experiences if any have you had that relate to Social Work? Be specific.

**5. NASW Code of Ethics**

I am aware that the professional practice of social work (BSW and MSW degreed practitioners) is guided by the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers. I have reviewed the Code (which can be accessed via the web at: <http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>) as part of my application for continuance in the social work major.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR PERSONAL STATEMENT**

Address the following questions in a personal statement that is typed, double-spaced and approximately two to three pages in length. Attach the statement to this application.

Your statement should be a serious reflection on your thoughts and feelings about being a Social Work major. It will be considered carefully by the Social Work faculty as part of the application and admissions process.

1. Why do you want to be a Social Work major? What personal (family and friends), academic, work, volunteer and/or community experiences influenced this decision?
2. What social problems in our society are of concern to you? Why do you think these problems exist and how can social work contribute to their alleviation?
3. What qualities, attributes, skills do you possess that could be used to solve problems?
4. What strengths do you feel you possess that will assist you in your career as a social worker? What areas of growth have you identified that you will need to address in your work as a social worker?
5. How would you describe your experiences with human diversity? What do you consider your strengths as well as areas in need of further growth in relation to working with people whose class, gender, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical ability, developmental ability, or mental health status are different from your own?
6. Please identify any significant events you have experienced in your life that could influence your practice as a social worker, or that you feel you will need to address in your work as a social worker.

## **EVALUATION OF STATEMENT**

The following factors will be considered when we review your application for continuance in the major:

1. intellectual qualities and academic skills;
2. commitment to the enhancement of quality of life for individuals and families;
3. concern for issues of social justice and sensitivity to cultural diversity; and
4. capacity for self-awareness and self-evaluation.

## **APPENDIX B**

The following was excerpted from the Council on Social Work Education's *Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards* available on their website: <http://www.cswe.org/> on November 22, 2006. You may access it directly using the above link, clicking on "Accreditation" and then on "Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards".

# **Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards**

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## **Educational Policy**

### **1. Purposes**

#### **1.0 Purposes of the Social Work Profession**

The social work profession receives its sanction from public and private auspices and is the primary profession in the development, provision, and evaluation of social services. Professional social workers are leaders in a variety of organizational settings and service delivery systems within a global context. The profession of social work is based on the values of service, social and economic justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, and integrity and competence in practice. With these values as defining principles, the purposes of social work are:

- To enhance human well-being and alleviate poverty, oppression, and other forms of social injustice.
- To enhance the social functioning and interactions of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities by involving them in accomplishing goals, developing resources, and preventing and alleviating distress.
- To formulate and implement social policies, services, and programs that meet basic human needs and support the development of human capacities.
- To pursue policies, services, and resources through advocacy and social or political actions that promote social and economic justice.
- To develop and use research, knowledge, and skills that advance social work practice.
- To develop and apply practice in the context of diverse cultures.

#### **1.1 Purposes of Social Work Education**

The purposes of social work education are to prepare competent and effective professionals, to develop social work knowledge, and to provide leadership in the development of service delivery systems. Social work education is grounded in the profession's history, purposes, and philosophy and is based on a body of knowledge, values, and skills. Social work education enables students to integrate the knowledge, values, and skills of the social work profession for competent practice.

## **1.2 Achievement of Purposes**

Among its programs, which vary in design, structure, and objectives, social work education achieves these purposes through such means as:

- Providing curricula and teaching practices at the forefront of the new and changing knowledge base of social work and related disciplines.
- Providing curricula that build on a liberal arts perspective to promote breadth of knowledge, critical thinking, and communication skills.
- Developing knowledge.
- Developing and applying instructional and practice-relevant technology.
- Maintaining reciprocal relationships with social work practitioners, groups, organizations, and communities.
- Promoting continual professional development of students, faculty, and practitioners.
- Promoting interprofessional and interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Preparing social workers to engage in prevention activities that promote wellbeing.
- Preparing social workers to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- Preparing social workers to evaluate the processes and effectiveness of practice.
- Preparing social workers to practice without discrimination, with respect, and with knowledge and skills related to clients' age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.
- Preparing social workers to alleviate poverty, oppression, and other forms of social injustice.
- Preparing social workers to recognize the global context of social work practice.
- Preparing social workers to formulate and influence social policies and social work services in diverse political contexts.

## **2. Structure of Social Work Education**

### **2.0 Structure**

Baccalaureate and graduate social work education programs operate under the auspices of accredited colleges and universities. These educational institutions vary by auspices, emphasis, and size. With diverse strengths, missions, and resources, social work education programs share a common commitment to educate competent, ethical social workers.

The baccalaureate and master's levels of social work education are anchored in the purposes of the social work profession and promote the knowledge, values, and skills of the profession. Baccalaureate social work education programs prepare graduates for generalist professional practice. Master's social work education programs prepare graduates for advanced professional practice in an area of concentration. The baccalaureate and master's levels of educational preparation are differentiated according to (a) conceptualization and design, (b) content, (c) program objectives, and (d) depth, breadth, and specificity of knowledge and skills. Frameworks and perspectives for concentration include fields of practice, problem areas, intervention methods, and practice contexts and perspectives.

Programs develop their mission and goals within the purposes of the profession, the purposes of social work education, and their institutional context. Programs also recognize academic content and professional experiences that students bring to the educational program. A conceptual framework, built upon relevant theories and knowledge, shapes the breadth and depth of knowledge and practice skills to be acquired.

### **2.1 Program Renewal**

Social work education remains vital, relevant, and progressive by pursuing exchanges with the practice community and program stakeholders and by developing and assessing new knowledge and technology.

### **3. Program Objectives**

Social work education is grounded in the liberal arts and contains a coherent, integrated professional foundation in social work. The graduate advanced curriculum is built from the professional foundation. Graduates of baccalaureate and master's social work programs demonstrate the capacity to meet the foundation objectives and objectives unique to the program. Graduates of master's social work programs also demonstrate the capacity to meet advanced program objectives.

### **3.0 Foundation Program Objectives**

The professional foundation, which is essential to the practice of any social worker, includes, but is not limited to, the following program objectives. Graduates demonstrate the ability to:

1. Apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice.
2. Understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards and principles, and practice accordingly.
3. Practice without discrimination and with respect, knowledge, and skills related to clients' age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.
4. Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and apply strategies of advocacy and social change that advance social and economic justice.
5. Understand and interpret the history of the social work profession and its contemporary structures and issues.
- B6. Apply the knowledge and skills of generalist social work practice with systems of all sizes.<sup>1</sup>
- M6. Apply the knowledge and skills of a generalist social work perspective to practice with systems of all sizes.
7. Use theoretical frameworks supported by empirical evidence to understand individual development and behavior across the life span and the interactions among individuals and between individuals and families, groups, organizations, and communities.
8. Analyze, formulate, and influence social policies.
9. Evaluate research studies, apply research findings to practice, and evaluate their own practice interventions.
10. Use communication skills differentially across client populations, colleagues, and

communities.

11. Use supervision and consultation appropriate to social work practice.
12. Function within the structure of organizations and service delivery systems and seek necessary organizational change.

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† Items preceded by a B or M apply only to baccalaureate or master's programs, respectively.

### **3.1 Concentration Objectives**

Graduates of a master's social work program are advanced practitioners who apply the knowledge and skills of advanced social work practice in an area of concentration. They analyze, intervene, and evaluate in ways that are highly differentiated, discriminating, and self-critical. Graduates synthesize and apply a broad range of knowledge and skills with a high degree of autonomy and proficiency. They refine and advance the quality of their practice and that of the larger social work profession.

### **3.2 Additional Program Objectives**

A program may develop additional objectives to cover the required content in relation to its particular mission, goals, and educational level.

## **4. Foundation Curriculum Content**

All social work programs provide foundation content in the areas specified below. Content areas may be combined and delivered with a variety of instructional technologies. Content is relevant to the mission, goals, and objectives of the program and to the purposes, values, and ethics of the social work profession.

### **4.0 Values and Ethics**

Social work education programs integrate content about values and principles of ethical decision making as presented in the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics. The educational experience provides students with the opportunity to be aware of personal values; develop, demonstrate, and promote the values of the profession; and analyze ethical dilemmas and the ways in which these affect practice, services, and clients.

#### **4.1 Diversity**

Social work programs integrate content that promotes understanding, affirmation, and respect for people from diverse backgrounds. The content emphasizes the interlocking and complex nature of culture and personal identity. It ensures that social services meet the needs of groups served and are culturally relevant. Programs educate students to recognize diversity within and between groups that may influence assessment, planning, intervention, and research. Students learn how to define, design, and implement strategies for effective practice with persons from diverse backgrounds.

#### **4.2 Populations-at-Risk and Social and Economic Justice**

Social work education programs integrate content on populations-at-risk, examining the factors that contribute to and constitute being at risk. Programs educate students to identify how group membership influences access to resources, and present content on

the dynamics of such risk factors and responsive and productive strategies to redress them.

Programs integrate social and economic justice content grounded in an understanding of distributive justice, human and civil rights, and the global interconnections of oppression. Programs provide content related to implementing strategies to combat discrimination, oppression, and economic deprivation and to promote social and economic justice. Programs prepare students to advocate for nondiscriminatory social and economic systems.

### **4.3 Human Behavior and the Social Environment**

Social work education programs provide content on the reciprocal relationships between human behavior and social environments. Content includes empirically based theories and knowledge that focus on the interactions between and among individuals, groups, societies, and economic systems. It includes theories and knowledge of biological, sociological, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development across the life span; the range of social systems in which people live (individual, family, group, organizational, and community); and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being.

### **4.4 Social Welfare Policy and Services**

Programs provide content about the history of social work, the history and current structures of social welfare services, and the role of policy in service delivery, social work practice, and attainment of individual and social well-being. Course content provides students with knowledge and skills to understand major policies that form the foundation of social welfare; analyze organizational, local, state, national, and international issues in social welfare policy and social service delivery; analyze and apply the results of policy research relevant to social service delivery; understand and demonstrate policy practice skills in regard to economic, political, and organizational systems, and use them to influence, formulate, and advocate for policy consistent with social work values; and identify financial, organizational, administrative, and planning processes required to deliver social services.

### **4.5 Social Work Practice**

Social work practice content is anchored in the purposes of the social work profession and focuses on strengths, capacities, and resources of client systems in relation to their broader environments. Students learn practice content that encompasses knowledge and skills to work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. This content includes engaging clients in an appropriate working relationship, identifying issues, problems, needs, resources, and assets; collecting and assessing information; and planning for service delivery. It includes using communication skills, supervision, and consultation. Practice content also includes identifying, analyzing, and implementing empirically based interventions designed to achieve client goals; applying empirical knowledge and technological advances; evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

#### **4.6 Research**

Qualitative and quantitative research content provides understanding of a scientific, analytic, and ethical approach to building knowledge for practice. The content prepares students to develop, use, and effectively communicate empirically based knowledge, including evidence-based interventions. Research knowledge is used by students to provide high-quality services; to initiate change; to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery; and to evaluate their own practice.

#### **4.7 Field Education**

Field education is an integral component of social work education anchored in the mission, goals, and educational level of the program. It occurs in settings that reinforce students' identification with the purposes, values, and ethics of the profession; fosters the integration of empirical and practice-based knowledge; and promotes the development of professional competence. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated on the basis of criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of program objectives.

### **5. Advanced Curriculum Content**

The master's curriculum prepares graduates for advanced social work practice in an area of concentration. Using a conceptual framework to identify advanced knowledge and skills, programs build an advanced curriculum from the foundation content. In the advanced curriculum, the foundation content areas (Section 4, 4.0–4.7) are addressed in greater depth, breadth, and specificity and support the program's conception of advanced practice.

## **APPENDIX C**

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics can be accessed on-line at: <http://www.naswdc.org/pubs/code/code.asp>. The following document was accessed November 27, 2006 from NASW's webpage ([www.naswdc.org](http://www.naswdc.org)).

### **Code of Ethics**

*of the National Association of Social Workers*

**Approved by the 1996 NASW Delegate Assembly and revised by the 1999 NASW Delegate Assembly**

### **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.\* 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.

\*For information on NASW adjudication procedures, see *NASW Procedures for the Adjudication of Grievances*.

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.

## 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

The following ethical standards are relevant to the professional activities of all social workers. These standards concern (1) social workers' ethical responsibilities to clients, (2) social workers' ethical responsibilities to colleagues, (3) social workers' ethical responsibilities in practice settings, (4) social workers' ethical responsibilities as professionals, (5) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the social work profession, and (6) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the broader society.

Some of the standards that follow are enforceable guidelines for professional conduct, and some are aspirational. The extent to which each standard is enforceable is a matter of professional judgment to be exercised by those responsible for reviewing alleged violations of ethical standards.

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

#### 1.01 Commitment to Clients

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

#### 1.02 Self-Determination

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

#### 1.03 Informed Consent

(a) Social workers should provide services to clients only in the context of a professional relationship based, when appropriate, on valid informed consent. Social workers should use clear and understandable language to inform clients of the purpose of the services, risks related to the services, limits to services because of the requirements of a

third-party payer, relevant costs, reasonable alternatives, clients' right to refuse or withdraw consent, and the time frame covered by the consent. Social workers should provide clients with an opportunity to ask questions.

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

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

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

(e) Social workers 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. 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 disclosure.

(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 knowledge, relevant to social work and social work ethics.

### **4.02 Discrimination**

Social workers should not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, 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.

### **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.

## **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.