

THE UNIVERSITY of  
TENNESSEE  
College of Social Work



BSSW  
Field  
Manual

September 2009

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I. OVERVIEW OF BACCALAUREATE SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE AND EDUCATION.</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II. BACCALAUREATE SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AT UT.</b>	<b>1</b>
A. History of the Program.	1
B. Program Mission.	1
C. Program Goals.	1
D. Educational Competencies.	2
E. The Social Work Curriculum.	2
<b>III. OVERVIEW OF THE FIELD PRACTICUM</b>	<b>6</b>
A. Educational Philosophy and Approach.	6
B. Structure of the Social Work Practicum.	7
<b>IV. FIELD PRACTICUM SETTINGS.</b>	<b>8</b>
A. Criteria for the Selection of Practicum Settings.	8
B. Agency Agreements.	8
C. Criteria for the Selection of Practicum Instructors.	9
D. Field Instructor Certification Training.	9
<b>V. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE FIELD PRACTICUM.</b>	<b>9</b>
A. Field Coordinator.	9
B. Faculty Field Liaison.	10
C. Field Instructor.	10
D. Task Instructor.	11
E. Student.	11
<b>VI. FIELD PRACTICUM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.</b>	<b>11</b>
A. Commitment to Cultural Diversity and Social Justice.	11
B. Placement Process.	12
C. Placement in Employee Setting.	12
D. Special Considerations in the Placement Process.	12
E. Placement Reassignment.	12
F. Professional Liability Insurance.	13

G. Students With Disabilities.....	13
H. Personal Safety Training. ....	13
I. Students Who Experience Sexual Harassment at the Field Agency.....	13
J. Professional Conduct.....	13
K. Transportation. ....	14
L. Practicum Hours.....	14
M. Grading Policy. ....	14
N. Evaluation of Student Performance in Field Practice.....	15
O. Grade Appeals Procedure. ....	15
P. Student Evaluation of Field Practice. ....	15
Q. Confidentiality.....	15
R. Field Instructor Evaluation of Field Practice.....	16
 <b>APPENDIX I – Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers.....</b>	 <b>17</b>
 <b>APPENDIX II – Field Practicum Forms</b>	

- BSSW Field Calendar
- Field Practicum Learning Plan
- Incident Report
- Personal Safety Incident Report
- Acknowledgment of Risk in the Field Practicum
- Professional Code of Conduct
- Social Work Field Placement Code of Conduct
- Social Work Field Instruction Memorandum of Agreement
- Mid-Term Evaluation
- Field Practice Evaluation Form (Juniors - Spring Semester)
- Field Practice Evaluation Form (Seniors - Fall Semester)
- Field Practice Evaluation Form (Seniors - Spring Semester)
- Student Evaluation of Field Practice
- Field Instructor Evaluation of Field Practice
- Field Practice Planning Sheet (Juniors)
- Field Practice Planning Sheet (Seniors)

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This manual can be found at  
<http://www.csw.utk.edu/students/field/manuals.html>

Appendix forms are available at  
<http://www.csw.utk.edu/students/field/bssw/forms/index.html>

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## **I. OVERVIEW OF BACCALAUREATE SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE AND EDUCATION**

Baccalaureate education in Social Work or Social Welfare has been available for more than half a century; however, before the early 1970's, these programs were seen primarily as preparation for graduate social work education and responsible citizenship. After the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) gave membership to graduates from Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) approved baccalaureate programs, the baccalaureate degree became the entry level for professional social work practice. The BSSW practitioner should be prepared as a "generalist" according to CSWE.

CSWE standards for baccalaureate programs identify a professional foundation in social work which includes knowledge, values, and skills with supervised field experience in generalist practice. Building on a liberal arts base, content is provided in the following areas: social work practice, social welfare policy and services, human behavior and social environment, and research. Baccalaureate education prepares students for generalist practice in many areas, including schools, family service agencies, health care settings, mental health centers, courts, and social welfare agencies.

## **II. BACCALAUREATE SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AT UT**

### **A. History of the Program**

Following approval of The Tennessee Higher Education Commission, the undergraduate social work program (BSSW) at The University of Tennessee was started in 1982. Initially, the program was located in the College of Arts and Sciences. Ten students were the first BSSW graduates in June 1983. Initial accreditation was granted by the Council on Social Work Education in 1983. The program was transferred to the School of Social Work in September 1985, which shortly thereafter became the College of Social Work. In 2001, the BSSW program received a reaffirmation of accredited status for the full eight-year cycle ending February 2009.

### **B. Program Mission**

The BSSW program at the University of Tennessee exists to fulfill a need for disciplined, highly educated and trained generalist social workers to help people improve their social functioning in a technologically complex, culturally diverse, and rapidly changing world without borders. There is a focus on the reciprocal relationships between persons and their environments. Social workers are doers; they are problem-solvers who are able to intervene in multiple-level systems and perform various professional roles. Their actions are guided and informed by a broad knowledge-base, code of ethics, and professional values. Social workers are educated and trained to do things right as well as to do the right thing.

The mission of the BSSW program is to develop generalist social workers who are strategic thinkers, life-long learners and opinion shapers. The knowledge-base, skills, and values necessary for generalist practice are taught in an environment that fosters professional development, critical thinking, and leadership and prepares students to take appropriate action guided by the best available scientific evidence. We are dedicated to preparing practitioners for the challenges of today's complex pluralistic world. Since the amount of knowledge doubles approximately every five years, what is taught today may soon be obsolete. Our challenge, therefore, lies in the on-going development and implementation of a curriculum that prepares and energizes students for generalist practice today and in the future.

### **C. Program Goals**

Provision of education and training that enable students to become generalist social work practitioners who:

- are committed to advancing social and economic justice and the principles, values, and ethics that guide the social work profession;
- are committed to evidence-based practice
- are grounded in systems theory and operate within a person-in-the-environment framework;
- use the problem-solving process to intervene in multiple-level client systems;
- have an understanding of human diversity, special populations, and domestic and international challenges, that informs practice interventions;

- use critical thinking, evaluative skills, and leadership skills to address the needs of a complex, changing global world; and
- are committed to continuous development of professional self.

#### **D. Educational Competencies**

The BSSW student is prepared to become an entry level generalist practitioner who is able to serve diverse populations in a variety of practice settings. Students are able to integrate the knowledge, values, and skills of social work into their practice and become competent entry level professionals. The following competencies, influenced by the work of Baer and Frederico, Schatz, Jenkins and Sheafor; and Teare and Sheafor<sup>1</sup> define the areas of expertise of the baccalaureate professional social worker:

- Assess the relationship between people and social institutions based on gathered information, including existing research findings.
- Address both the person and the environment through an awareness of bio-psycho-social functioning of people, the theoretical understanding of the relationship between people and social systems, and an understanding of diversity and at-risk populations.
- Develop a goal-oriented plan that empowers people to address problems identified in the assessment.
- Enhance the problem-solving, coping, and developmental capacities of people in the context of their unique, diverse environments through appropriate interpersonal skills, utilization of best practice evidence, and professional use of self.
- Adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics in one's practice and extend professional knowledge through participating in professional development activities as well as by sharing one's expertise.
- Using research methods, evaluate the extent to which the goals of the change process have been met.
- Recognizing the historic mission of social work, and the importance of human diversity, use a multi-cultural perspective to respond on behalf of vulnerable populations that have experienced discrimination and limited opportunities.
- Advocate for effective and humane resource systems and work with others to change those systems that are unjust, inequitable, and unresponsive to people.
- Accurately link people to available services that provide resources and opportunities.
- Identify and analyze policies impacting service delivery systems that affect clients' well-being.
- Critically assess one's skill-level, knowledge-base, and use of self in the professional role and consult with and seek guidance and feedback in a non-defensive manner from one's supervisor.

The behavioral competencies identified in the course syllabus for each social work course and the field practice expectations are natural extensions and a further articulation of these educational outcomes.

#### **E. The Social Work Curriculum**

The social work curriculum and the requirements for the social work major are designed to achieve the primary objective of preparing students for entry level professional practice through proficiency in the eleven competency areas.

The College of Social Work follows the general education requirements. The curriculum follows the general education requirements of the University of Tennessee and the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education, the accrediting body for social work programs. Students must graduate with a minimum of 120 credit hours with 45 of those credit hours being in social work.

The social work curriculum builds on a strong liberal arts base. The humanities and the social and behavioral sciences are emphasized to help students understand human diversity and the transactions between people and their environment. The curriculum combines classroom experience and agency-based field placements. Courses provide a knowledge base in social work practice, human behavior, social welfare policy, and research.

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<sup>1</sup> Baer, B. and Frederico, R. (Eds.) (1979) Educating the baccalaureate social worker: A curriculum development resource guide, Ballinger, Cambridge, MA.

Schatz, M.S., Jenkins, L.E. & Sheafor, B.W. (1990). Milford redefined: A model of initial and advanced generalist social work. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 26(3), 217-231.

Teare, R. & Sheafor, B.W. (1995). *Practice - Sensitive social work education: An empirical analysis of social work practice and practitioners*. Alexandria, VA: Council on Social Work Education.

The curriculum, including the field practicum, is sequenced and integrated to provide students with opportunities for non-repetitive and related learning. Each course in a social work sequence builds upon another, reinforces core concepts and skills while introducing content of greater complexity. An illustration is the three course social work practice sequence. Practice I introduces generalist practice with individuals and families, while Practice II further defines generalist practice with a special focus on crisis intervention and case management with selected client populations. Practice III emphasizes generalist practice with groups and communities. Each course in this practice sequence has a skills lab that provides opportunities for students to develop and refine interpersonal skills. Another illustration is the junior year Human Behavior and the Social Environment course. The HBSE course, SW 314, builds on the identified liberal arts base and the concepts of problem solving, social systems, social work values, and diversity, which are presented in the sophomore level introductory courses, SW 200 and SW 250. The sequencing of courses also facilitates the integration of concepts presented in Child and Family Studies, Anthropology, Women's Studies and Psychology courses into the social work holistic assessment framework. Classroom assignments are seen as an integral part of the integration in that students are expected to relate both concurrent and previously learned material while demonstrating greater skills. The integration is facilitated because each course identifies a set of specific behavioral competencies which relate to the eleven identified competencies of the BSSW program. The form, Field Practicum Learning Plan, (see Appendix II) is used in both the junior and senior field practicum to organize the students' learning activities around the identified competencies.

The baccalaureate social work curriculum is outlined below and a brief description of the social work courses follows:

**Curriculum**

**Freshman**

English 101, 102. . . . .	6
Foreign Language (Intermediate Level).. . . . .	6
Psychology 110. . . . .	3
Social Work 200 or 207 – Introduction to Social Work. . . . .	3
Biology 101 and 102.. . . .	8
Communication Studies 210. . . . .	3
Mathematics 113. . . . .	3

**Sophomore**

Arts & Humanities. . . . .	6
Social Work 250 – Social Welfare.. . . .	3
Psychology 220. . . . .	3
Elective.. . . .	3
Non-US History Sequence.. . . .	6
Anthropology 130.. . . .	3
Economics 201. . . . .	4
Political Sciences 101. . . . .	3

**Junior**

Social Work 312 – Interviewing Skills/Helping Relationship in Social Work Practice. . .	3
Social Work 313 – Social Work Practice with Individuals & Families. . . . .	3
Social Work 314 or 317 – Human Behavior and the Social Environment. . . . .	3
Social Work 315 – Social Work Practice with Groups, Organizations & Communities. . .	3
Social Work 316 or 318 – Understanding Diversity in a Global Society. . . . .	3
Social Work 380 – Field Practice in Social Work I.. . . .	3
Math 115. . . . .	3
Child and Family Studies 220. . . . .	3
Electives.. . . .	6

**Senior**

Social Work 410 or 417 – Social Work Research. . . . .	3
Social Work 416 – Social Welfare Policies & Issues. . . . .	3
Social Work 460 or 467 – Integrative Seminar. . . . .	3
Social Work 480 – Field Practice in Social Work II. . . . .	6
Social Work 481 – Field Practice in Social Work III. . . . .	6
Electives. . . . .	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>120 Hours</b>

**Course Descriptions**

**200 Introduction to Social Work (3)** Emergence of the social work profession. Professional mission, knowledge, skills, and values. Practice settings, client groups, helping services, career patterns, and practice methods. Designed to assist students to consider their ability for careers in social work.

**207 Honors: Introduction to Social Work (3)** Honors course designed for students seeking advanced professional orientation and development in social work. Course focuses on the professional mission, knowledge, skills and values of the profession as well as client groups, helping services, practice skills and methods.

**250 Social Welfare (3)** Development, structure, and function of the social welfare institution. Analysis of social welfare programs and impact of the institution on society.

**312 Interviewing Skills and the Helping Relationship in Social Work Practice (3)** Knowledge, values, and skills for entry-level generalist practice in a variety of settings. The social work problem solving process, different size client systems, ethnic-sensitive assumptions, and the worker's regard for person-environment configuration. Concurrent skills laboratory. *Progression required. Social work majors only.*

**313 Social Work Practice with Individuals and Families (3)** In-depth study of generalist practice with individuals and families. Practice roles, value dilemmas, and working with people of diverse backgrounds. Concurrent skills laboratory. *Prereq: 312. Progression required. Social work majors only.*

**314 Human Behavior and the Social Environment (3)** Interrelatedness of biological, social, cultural, environmental, and psychological factors in human behavior. Person-in-environment over the life span with special attention to diversity, impact of racism, sexism, and other sociocultural factors. Integration of knowledge into a social work practice perspective. *Prereq: English 101 & 102. Progression or consent of instructor required.*

**315 Social Work Practice with Groups, Organizations and Communities (3)** Generalist practice with emphasis on groups, organizations and communities, including treatment theories, techniques, and issues. *Prereq: 312. Progression required. Social work majors only.*

**316 Understanding Diversity in a Global Society (3)** Exploring race, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexual orientation from a social work perspective. Students develop self-awareness of their own culture and the culture of others and acquire knowledge and understanding of the impact of oppression on groups. *Progression or consent of instructor required.*

**317 Honors: Human Behavior in the Social Environment (3)** Honors version of SW 314. Course is enriched for high-achieving students. WC. (RE) Prerequisite(s): English 101 and English 102. *Progression or consent of instructor required.*

**318 Honors: Understanding Diversity in a Global Society (3)** Honors version of Social Work 316. Course is enriched for high-achieving students. *Progression or consent of instructor required.*

**380 Field Practice in Social Work I (3)** Eight-hour-per-week supervised field experience with practice situations for developing professional skills, values, and attitudes. Concurrent seminar focuses on integration of knowledge with practice experiences. *Prereq: 312. Progression required. Social work majors only.*

**410 Social Work Research (3)** Scientific method and research strategies to evaluate one's practice and/or social service delivery. Knowledge of statistical techniques required. *Prereq: Math 115 or Psychology 385. Coreq: 480. Progression required. Social Work majors only.*

**416 Social Welfare Policies and Issues (3)** Policy formation processes, policymakers in systems, and policy-related role expectations. Emphasis on utilizing and analytical framework and social change efforts. *Progression or consent of instructor required.*

**417 Honors: Social Work Research (3)** Scientific method and research strategies to evaluate one's practice and/or social service delivery with an emphasis on development and implementation of a research project. *(RE) Prerequisite(s): Mathematics 115 or Psychology 385. (RE) Corequisite(s): 480. Registration Restriction(s): Social work majors in the honors concentration only. Progression required. Social work majors not involved in the honors concentration may register with permission of the instructor.*

**460 Integrative Seminar (3)** Social work content for entry-level professional practice and current issues influencing the profession. Includes development of a portfolio reflecting BSSW competencies and research development and presentation. *Prereq: 410 & 480. Coreq: 481. Progression required. Social Work majors only.*

**461 Child Welfare Management I: History, Programs, and Policies (3)** Study of the child welfare system examining history, policies and programs, both state and federal, pertinent to child maltreatment and juvenile justice.

**462 Child Welfare II: Skills and Practice Methods (3)** Emphasis on the special challenges, needed skills, and different strategies and interventions in the provision of culturally responsive child welfare services. *Prereq: progression or consent of instructor required.*

**467 Honors: Integrative Seminar (3)** Advanced social work content for professional practice and current issues influencing the profession. Includes development of a portfolio reflecting BSW competencies and completion of a research project. *(RE) Prerequisite(s): 417 and 480. (RE) Corequisite(s): 481. Progression required. Social work majors in the honors concentration only.*

**480-481 Field Practice in Social Work II, III (6, 6)** Sixteen-hour-per-week supervised agency field practicum for integration of theory and practice and critical examination of oneself as a professional helping person. Concurrent field seminar on the integration of knowledge with practice experiences. *480 Prereq: 380, Coreq: 410. Progression required. Social Work majors only. 481 Prereq: 410 & 480. Coreq: 460. Progression required. Social Work majors only.*

**491 International Study (1-15)** May be repeated. Maximum 15 hours. *Consent of instructor required.*

**492 Off-Campus Study (1-15)** May be repeated. Maximum 15 hours. *Consent of instructor required.*

**493 Independent Study (1-15)** May be repeated. Maximum 15 hours. *Consent of instructor required.*

### **Progression Policy**

Prior to enrolling in upper-division social work courses, students in the college must successfully complete Social Work 200 and 250 with a grade of C or better, be in good academic standing, and have fulfilled most lower-division and General Education course requirements.

Students in the college are encouraged to participate in community service and/or volunteer activities at a social service agency in advance of upper-division social work course-work. Students are advised that several field placement agencies and licensing boards require successfully passing a criminal background check.

### **BSSW Honors Concentration**

The honors concentration provides highly motivated social work majors with the opportunity to pursue advanced coursework and complete a senior research project. All declared social work majors with a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.25 are invited to participate in the honors concentration. Freshman and transfer students may enroll in honors courses with permission of the BSSW program director. To graduate with honors, social work majors must complete twelve (12) hours of honors work including at least nine (9) hours of social work honors courses. Students completing the honors concentration must take Social Work 417 and Social Work 467 and complete a senior research project. A grade of B or above must be earned in all honors courses and students must maintain an overall grade point average of 3.25. **Students completing the honors concentration will have this accomplishment reflected on their diploma, degree audit report (DARS), and on all transcripts for graduate school.** Students interested in honors at any level should consult with their academic advisor or the BSSW program director about participation in the honors concentration.

## **III. OVERVIEW OF THE FIELD PRACTICUM**

### **A. Educational Philosophy and Approach**

The field practicum for BSSW program is a sequence of courses in which the student applies theoretical knowledge within a social welfare context under the instruction and supervision of persons recognized by the college as competent practitioners. The student is in the practicum for 600 clock hours and receives fifteen credit hours for this course work. The educational competencies and policies of the field practicum are formulated by the faculty and periodically revised to reflect changing practice and developing theory and to conform to the BSSW Curriculum Policy Statement of the Council on Social Work Education.

The educational philosophy underlying the field practicum is a blend of the idealism and pragmatism that is characteristic of the profession. Within a framework of social work values and knowledge, the student in the practicum: tests out theory; develops skills and demonstrates competencies; evaluates his/her own performance; and gains an understanding of generalist practice.

The field agency is the arena in which practice is carried out and is an essential source of learning for the student. Through interaction with agency staff, service to clients, and exposure to the programs and policies of the agency, the student learns from the agency and, in turn, contributes to its programs. The agency field instructor is a professional colleague entrusted by the college with the task of assisting the student in the application and integration of knowledge. The college is responsible for providing the field instructor with the academic resources and consultation to implement this task.

Knoxville and the surrounding counties have a wide variety of human service agencies that are potential practicum sites. The following are examples of the kinds of settings available: public welfare, homeless shelters, mental health centers, hospitals, schools, family service agencies, public housing, residential treatment centers, and a variety of geriatric service programs. Client populations are diverse in terms of race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, age, and residency in rural/urban neighborhoods. A student who is commuting from one of the surrounding counties can request a placement in the county of residence. While this is not guaranteed the field coordinator will work closely with the student to identify appropriate practicum sites.

In summary, the field practice experience provides the student with an arena to apply social work knowledge and skills in actual social work practice situations under the direct supervision of an experienced professional practitioner. The field instructor acts as a role model for the student by demonstrating social work knowledge and skills and through the use of professional behaviors that are consistent with values and ethics of the profession. This process facilitates the student's professional socialization and provides the student with an opportunity to test his/her knowledge, values, skills and commitment to the profession.

## **B. Structure of the Social Work Practicum**

The field curriculum is sequenced and integrated to provide students with opportunities for developmental and graduated learning. Each field course (practicum) builds upon another, reinforces core concepts and skills while introducing content of greater complexity. Seminar assignments play a critical role in the integration process in that students are expected to relate both concurrent and previously learned material while demonstrating greater skills. The field practicum facilitates the integration because each course identifies a set of specific behavioral competencies which relate to the eleven identified competencies of the BSSW program. The Field Practicum Learning Plan is used in all field courses to organize the student's learning activities around the identified competencies.

At the completion of the practicum, the student is expected to demonstrate progression of knowledge and skills in the following field practice areas:

- A. The organizational context of practice
  - 1. Knowledge of the agency
  - 2. Representing the agency
- B. The community context of practice
  - 1. Awareness of community needs and concerns
  - 2. Assessment of existing social policy and programs
  - 3. Knowledge and utilization of community resources
- C. The social work problem solving process
  - 1. Preparation for the client contact
- D. Relationship skills
  - 1. Clarification of role and purpose
  - 2. Interpersonal communication skills
  - 3. Information gathering and recording
  - 4. Definition of the problem
  - 5. Analysis of the information collected
  - 6. Contracting
  - 7. Termination of service
  - 8. Evaluation of the intervention
- E. The professional context of practice
  - 1. Knowledge of the profession
  - 2. Handling of work expectations
  - 3. Use of supervision
  - 4. Integration of the professional role

The field practice component of the curriculum is organized as follows:

- 1. SW 380 Junior Social Work Practicum, Spring or Summer semester, 120 total clock hours.
- 2. SW 480, 481 Senior Social Work Practicum, 16 hours per week, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Fall and Spring semester, 480 total clock hours, 240 each semester.
- 3. Junior and Senior Field Practicum Seminars, 2 hours per week, are held concurrently with the practicum, fall, spring, and summer (when offered).

The emphasis in the junior practicum is on the introduction and early development of basic social work skills in four essential practice areas: the organizational context of practice, the community context, the social work problem solving process, and the professional context of practice. Learning experiences, both observational and participation, are designed to expose students to a wide variety of social work functions. Students receive a minimum of one hour of supervision per week from an agency field instructor who holds a BSSW or a MSSW degree. In the senior practicum, the emphasis is on the continued development and refinement of basic social work practice skills in the four essential practice areas. Students receive a minimum

of one hour of supervision per week from an agency field instructor who holds a bachelor's and/or a master's degree in social work.

Field seminars, held concurrently with field practice, are designed to facilitate the integration of classroom learning with the knowledge and experience gained in agency settings. The diversity of agencies and client populations experienced by the students is shared through examination of the content and context of practice. Thus, each student's knowledge and skill base is broadened and strengthened beyond his/her own field placement. The seminar meetings provide a vehicle for students to engage in a dynamic, interactive exchange designed to facilitate the integration of classroom learning with the knowledge and experience gained in agency settings. Students share experiences related to agency diversity and client populations along with ethical and practice dilemmas encountered during field. The seminar becomes a "safe" place for students to question, share, and learn from each other. Students seem to make a noticeable leap in the spring semester of their senior year in terms of their ability to actively engage in this dynamic processing. In addition to the interactive processing, the students keep a weekly field journal that requires self-reflection and focus on self in the professional role. The seminar enhances the understanding of what it means to be a professional social worker. The seminars are conducted by faculty members (both full-time and adjunct) who also serve as field liaisons to the students' placement.

Field practice, field seminars, and course work are interrelated building blocks designed to prepare the student to be a generalist practitioner and to achieve proficiency in the eleven competencies delineated previously. The student's proficiency is evaluated by examining the student's senior portfolio which provides evidence of accomplishment in the identified competencies. It is essential for students to retain copies of classroom and field assignments, tests, and evaluations throughout their course of study. The senior portfolio is one part of the BSSW-Comprehensive Assessment (BSSW-CA) of seniors.

#### **IV. FIELD PRACTICUM SETTINGS**

The college, specifically the field coordinator, is responsible for developing and maintaining a variety of field practice settings for the baccalaureate program. The field coordinator receives feedback from faculty, students, and practitioners in the community regarding the availability and appropriateness of various field settings. Then, the field coordinator makes one or more visits to the agency to determine its appropriateness as a field setting. Information gathered from the site visit is shared informally with faculty for their feedback. Field practice settings are continuously re-evaluated as new information appears or when there is a change of circumstance in the field setting.

##### **A. Criteria for the Selection of Practicum Settings**

The following are criteria for field agency selection:

1. The agency's philosophy and standards are consistent with the goals of social work education and the values and ethics of the social work profession.
2. The agency is able to provide a MSSW or a BSSW field instructor who has practice competence and preferably some supervisory experience.
3. The field instructor must provide the student with at least one hour of supervision weekly.
4. The field instructor is willing to work with a student and the college's field liaison in a cooperative manner to clearly identify student learning needs and develop assignments to facilitate the student's educationally directed field experience.
5. A variety of learning experiences appropriate for baccalaureate level social work students is available.
6. Field learning experiences are selected for their educational value and in accordance with the eleven competency areas.
7. The agency is able to provide the student with the necessary physical resources for the learning experience; e.g., office space and supplies, travel reimbursement, etc.

##### **B. Agency Agreements**

Formal, written agreements are used with all field placement agencies to delineate the roles and responsibilities of the college, the field agency, and the student. Essentially, the agreement indicates the college, the agency, and the student are expected to abide by the policies and procedures outlined in the field

practice manual. These agreements are kept on file in the college. (See Appendix II for a copy of the agreement form.)

### **C. Criteria for the Selection of Practicum Instructors**

The agency field instructor is a master's or bachelor's level professional social worker employed by an agency. The field coordinator is responsible for screening practicum instructors using the following criteria as guidelines:

1. The field instructor is a competent practitioner and preferably has supervisory or teaching experience.
2. The field instructor is interested in undergraduate social work education as a process and is willing to supervise a variety of students with diverse learning needs.
3. The field instructor is available in the agency while the student is in placement and is able to devote adequate time to supervision. At minimum, the student must receive one hour of supervision per week.
4. The field instructor is willing to work cooperatively with the faculty field liaison and the college to insure a successful placement experience.
5. The field instructor must be willing to complete the field instructor certification training program. This nine hour program consists of three training modules. Field instructors have three years to complete the program after assuming field instructor responsibilities.

### **D. Field Instructor Certification Training**

The field instructor is central to a successful placement experience for students and every effort is made to identify, train, and nurture qualified field instructors. In fall 1999, the college initiated a field instructor certification training program to enhance the knowledge and skills of field instructors in their role as educators. Field instructors need encouragement to begin thinking and acting like educators since they are more naturally inclined to act like practitioners and supervisors. This means emphasizing the importance of doing an educational assessment of the student's learning needs and identifying the student's learning style. It means organizing an educational plan that is congruent with field competencies and the specific individual needs of the student. Also, it is important to encourage field instructors to make assignments that address the cognitive, affective, and experiential components of the student's learning.

The certification training is a nine hour, three module program that consists of content in the following areas: orientation, adult learning and teaching strategies, and evaluating students. All modules must be completed prior to becoming certified and field instructors are given three years to complete the program. Field instructors receive contact hours for the training and are eligible for a discount on all Continuing Education Programs offered by the college. At the end of the academic year, all field instructors are invited to a luncheon in their honor., Selected field instructors are honored for their unique contribution during that academic year at the luncheon.

## **V. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE FIELD PRACTICUM**

To insure a quality field practicum, it is essential that key persons involved in the practicum understand their roles and work cooperatively. The following section delineates the roles and responsibilities of key persons.

### **A. Field Coordinator**

The field coordinator is responsible for the oversight of the practicum and its relevance and congruence with the overall BSSW curriculum. In addition, the field coordinator carries responsibility for the effective and efficient coordination of all field practicum activities involving faculty, field liaisons, students, and agencies. Specifically, the field coordinator's responsibilities are to:

1. Identify, develop, and maintain field agencies and field instructors with the concurrence of the BSSW director.
2. Assign students to placements after consultation with faculty.
3. Consult with the BSSW director regarding the assignment of faculty liaisons to field practice agencies.
4. Maintain efficient reporting systems and records of field practice activities.

5. Confer with the liaison when a student's performance is below expectations and/or when a grade of D or less is anticipated.
6. Prepare and maintain a current field practice manual and other materials which have an educational value for field instructors.
7. Develop and deliver certification training program for field instructors and other training as needed.
8. Plan and deliver personal safety training for students.
9. Initiate and respond to faculty, student, and agency suggestions for the continuous upgrading of the field practice curriculum.
10. Conduct periodic evaluations of practicum methodology and outcomes and initiate appropriate changes.
11. Assist the liaisons/seminar leaders in the development and coordination of seminar content and in the implementation of consultation activities.

## **B. Faculty Field Liaison**

The faculty field liaison is a faculty member or an adjunct faculty member who serves as liaison between the agency and the college and as consultant to the agency field instructor. While the field instructor carries the primary educational role with the student, the liaison acts as a facilitator to the field instructor and, when necessary, provides a mediating or problem-solving function in the student's field education. The field liaison is the student's field practice seminar instructor. This unique arrangement facilitates the student's integration of field and classroom learning.

The liaison's responsibilities are to:

1. Maintain ongoing contact with the field instructor via telephone and through agency visits at least twice per semester for seniors and juniors.
2. Assist the field instructor in the design of learning experiences for the student; and consult with/advise the field instructor regarding the student's special learning needs.
3. Provide the field instructor and other relevant agency personnel with current knowledge about the academic curriculum and any necessary assistance in relating it to field practice.
4. Consult with the field instructor regarding the student's semester evaluation, assign the field practice grade, and insure the written evaluation and grade are given to the college at the specified time.
5. Conduct the field practice seminar.
6. Report to the field coordinator each semester on the progress of the students and any problems encountered in the field placement.
7. Attend meetings for field instructors and participate in planning, decision-making and sharing of knowledge.
8. Contribute ideas for innovation and upgrading of field practice and for expansion into new agencies and practice fields.

## **C. Field Instructor**

The field instructor has the primary responsibility for the student's education in the field placement. The field instructor is a role model and an educator who demonstrates professional skills and behaviors and guides the student in the learning and integration of social work knowledge, values, and skills. The field instructor:

1. Selects and makes appropriate assignments that take into consideration as much as possible the student's past experience, learning patterns, career expectations, unique learning needs, and the program's educational competencies.
2. Completes, with student and liaison input, the Field Practicum Learning Plan.
3. Provides an orientation to the agency.
4. Informs relevant agency staff about the expectations of the BSSW program and the student's role in the agency.
5. Meets at least one hour each week with the student for an educationally-focused conference.
6. Contacts the field liaison if necessary and participates in regularly held semester conferences with the liaison.
7. Assesses the student's progress on a regular basis and completes all evaluation instruments in a timely manner.
8. Participates in field instructor certification training and in other opportunities for college-agency exchange.

9. Contributes knowledge and suggestions to the college for up-dating the program.

#### **D. Task Instructor**

The term, "task instructor" is used to indicate an agency staff member who assumes certain responsibilities for the student's field education as delegated and monitored by the field instructor. The task instructor does not replace the field instructor but needs to be well informed of the program's educational competencies and understand his/her role in the student's learning. The field instructor and the college provide the task instructor with the necessary resources to accomplish the educational task. The field instructor helps the student integrate the task instructor's contribution into the overall educational experience.

#### **E. Student**

The student is an adult learner with a commitment to and investment in preparation for a career in the profession of social work. In particular, the student is expected to:

1. Participate with the field instructor in examining the educational competencies and the learning assignments for the field practicum. These learning assignments are listed on the Field Practicum Learning Plan.
2. Prepare for weekly conferences with the field instructor by: developing a written agenda; submitting written recordings and/or audio or video tapes in advance; taking the initiative in raising questions for discussion; and demonstrating the application of theoretical knowledge to practice.
3. Participate actively in agency staff meetings, if possible, given personal and agency schedules.
4. Engage actively in the evaluation process, seeking ongoing feedback from the field instructor and participating in the semester formal evaluation.
5. Bring to the field instructor any problems or dissatisfaction with the field experience and engage constructively in finding solutions, if possible. If the problems cannot be resolved, the student should contact the field liaison.
6. Use the Social Work Code of Ethics as a guide in all agency activities.
7. Treat all agency information about clients in a confidential manner.
8. Abide by agency procedures regarding practice activities, dress codes, working hours, snow days, and attendance.
9. Report absences to the field instructor in advance and make arrangements with the field instructor to make up any lost hours as soon as can be arranged.
10. Provide transportation to and from the field practice agency. Students with cars must have a current, valid driver's license and car insurance.
11. Pay for professional liability insurance before the field placement starting date.
12. Participate actively in all field practicum seminars.
13. Keep a copy of all relevant field practice and seminar assignments for the senior portfolio.
14. Pay practice fee which is part of the course credits each semester (\$200 per semester).

## **VI. FIELD PRACTICUM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **A. Commitment to Cultural Diversity and Social Justice**

It is important for students to be culturally sensitive and respectful of differences among people. Field offers students the opportunity to recognize their own biases, prejudices, or ignorance regarding diverse groups. Sometimes these feelings are not apparent until students have encounters with persons who are different. This presents an opportunity for self-examination and correction. These values are clearly stated in the NASW Code of Ethics and the Council on Social Work Education's Curriculum Policy Statement for BSSW Degree Programs in Social Work Education, The University of Tennessee College of Social Work faculty, staff, and students shall:

1. "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 (or ancestry), color, sex (gender), sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion (creed), mental or physical disability, or socio-economic status" (NASW Code of Ethics, 6.04(d)).

2. Practice within the defining principles of “service, social and economic justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships and integrity and competence” (CSWE, 1.0).
3. “...Enhance human well-being and alleviate poverty, oppression, and other forms of social injustice” (CSWE, 1.0).
4. “...Develop and apply practice in the context of diverse cultures” (CSWE, 1.0). To this end, the BSSW curricula shall provide content and learning experiences to prepare 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 (and)...to alleviate poverty, oppression, and other forms of social injustice (CSWE, 1.2).

#### **B. Placement Process**

The field coordinator provides an overview of available placements to the junior class near the end of fall semester and to the upcoming senior class during spring semester. Students are given the Field Practice Planning Sheet to complete after these meetings and they are asked to list three preferred field sites. The field coordinator analyzes the planning sheet information and meets with a select faculty committee to determine placement assignments. The field coordinator meets individually with each student to specifically plan for the upcoming placement.

The field coordinator makes the initial contact with the agency followed by the student arranging a pre-placement interview with the assigned agency. This allows the student and the field instructor to assess the potential for a match. If one party is dissatisfied with the arrangement, the field coordinator arranges an interview with another agency. Mutual agreement in the placement must be achieved before the placement is finalized. Placement assignments and seminar information are then mailed to students a few weeks before the semester begins.

#### **C. Placement in Employee Setting**

Some students may be working in social service agencies and request a field practicum in their place of employment. The BSSW faculty do not encourage this. However, if a student wants to pursue this option the following conditions have to be met:

1. The field practicum must be in an entirely different program than where the student is employed.
2. The student’s work supervisor can not be the field instructor.
3. The student must secure a letter from the agency indicating the agency’s support of this plan along with a delineation of work hours and field hours. This letter needs to be from the student’s current work supervisor or from an appropriate administrative staff person such as a program supervisor or executive director.
4. Field practice time can not be counted as work time or work time as field time.
5. Only one of the student’s two placements can be in the student’s place of employment.
6. The field coordinator and BSSW program director must approve of the written plan.

#### **D. Special Considerations in the Placement Process**

Some agencies will require students to undergo additional screening or require certain medical protection if the student desires placement. Agencies, especially those dealing with young children, may require a police check; other agencies may require a drug screen. Some agencies who have vulnerable clients with specific health problems may require a TB test or hepatitis vaccine. Information about hepatitis vaccine and TB tests can be found in the Acknowledgment of Risk in the Field Practicum form. (See Appendix II-) Students are alerted to the possibility of police checks in junior field orientation and they are asked, “Have you ever been convicted of a crime other than a minor traffic violation?” on the Junior and Senior Placement Planning Forms. Students are provided with information on health risks in field practice during personal safety training.

#### **E. Placement Reassignment**

In a small number of cases it is necessary to terminate the student’s original placement. The student, the field liaison and the field instructor need to thoroughly discuss the issues in consultation with the field coordinator. The field coordinator will make a recommendation to the BSSW program director regarding the original placement or reassignment. Students initiating a request for reassignment need to submit a written statement to the field coordinator delineating the reasons that reassignment is necessary.

## **F. Professional Liability Insurance**

Students in field practice can be sued for malpractice. Therefore, participation in a group plan for professional liability insurance is required by the University of all students enrolled in field practice courses. The malpractice fee is paid each year before beginning the practicum experience. The cost of this insurance varies according to the charges made by the University's insurance carrier. An effort is made to obtain the most economical coverage possible. The fee will be included on the VOLXpress Statement. Students are not allowed to begin field practice without paying this fee. This policy provides \$1,000,000 per claim and \$5,000,000 per annual aggregate per student.

## **G. Students With Disabilities**

Any student in need of course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability must contact the Office of Disability Services at 2227 Dunford Hall at (865) 974-6087. This will ensure that you are properly registered for services. Disability Services will notify each of your professors, including the field coordinator, of your specific needs. It would be helpful for students to contact the field coordinator to clarify your specific needs.

## **H. Personal Safety Training**

All students must participate in the personal safety training provided as they begin their junior field experience. The training includes content on: anger management skills, infectious disease control, sexual harassment and practical advice to minimize risks to safety at the agency, in the community, and when making home visits. If students are involved in an incident that jeopardizes their personal safety, they are asked to complete The Personal Safety Incident Report Form. (See Appendix II) Before students begin field practice, they sign the document, Acknowledgment of Risk in the Field Practicum. (See Appendix II)

## **I. Students Who Experience Sexual Harassment at the Field Agency**

Sexual Harassment of students is a violation of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits sex discrimination in education. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when grades of educational progress are made contingent upon submission to such conduct, or when the conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the individual's academic performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

Students should follow the following procedure if they have experienced sexual harassment in their field agency.

1. The student should contact the field coordinator as soon as possible to report this situation and to receive advice on how to proceed.
2. The Personal Safety Incident Report Form, located in the appendix of the Field Manual, needs to be completed.
3. The most important consideration is the student's safety. That will be discussed with the field coordinator/faculty liaison and an immediate "safety plan" will be designed if that is necessary.
4. The field coordinator will notify the field liaison and they will work with the field instructor and/or the agency to further assess the situation and decide on an intervention strategy.
5. A copy of the agency's sexual harassment policy is needed and will be requested by the field coordinator.
6. The field coordinator and/or the field liaison may confer with Office of Equity and Diversity and/or the BSSW Program Director regarding the situation and the intervention strategy.
7. The future of the student's placement at the agency will be determined after a thorough assessment of the situation. The student may choose or be advised not to return until the assessment has been completed.
8. If needed, referrals to appropriate resources will be made to help the student cope with the situation.

## **J. Professional Conduct**

Students must conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner toward clients, fellow students, and the faculty. Because membership in a profession implies an encompassing set of values, professional conduct is expected at all times, on-campus and off-campus. The college subscribes to the NASW Code of Ethics (see Appendix I) which is discussed in the classroom and in field placements and found at the college's

website [www.csw.utk.edu](http://www.csw.utk.edu). Any act that would constitute unethical practice or a violation of law, whether committed in college-related activities or not, is grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program. Any incident of professional misconduct which is committed during field practice will be written up by the student's field instructor on the Incident Report Form (see Appendix II). The college's policy statement relating to professional conduct issues can be found in the BSSW Student Handbook. Given these expectations, students are asked to sign the document, Social Work Field Placement Code of Conduct when they submit their Junior Placement Planning form. The Social Work Field Placement Code of Conduct form is reviewed in Social Work 200, Introduction to Social Work and it is discussed in advising conferences with the faculty advisor (See Appendix II).

In addition, the field instructor should use the Incident Report form to document other problematic behaviors of the student. It is normal for students to make mistakes because field is a learning situation. However, when the student repeatedly fails to respond to the field instructor's feedback, the field instructor should document on the Incident Report what has been happening. For example, it is a problem when a student is frequently absent or tardy and fails to inform the field instructor or when the student fails to schedule time to make up the missed field hours. The Incident Report form is a helpful supervisory tool and should be used when appropriate. The field instructor is strongly encouraged to check with the field liaison or the field coordinator if there are questions regarding when to use this form.

#### **K. Transportation**

All students must provide their own transportation to and from the agency. If transportation is a problem, this should be noted on the Field Practice Planning Sheet. Students who drive their own vehicles must have a current, valid driver's license and car insurance. Many agencies will pay mileage for travel required to perform agency work. Ask your field instructor about mileage reimbursement if you are required to travel on the job.

#### **L. Practicum Hours**

Juniors are in field placement for a total of **120** clock hours. Placement days are typically Monday and Wednesday afternoons. Seniors are in field placement for a total of **480** clock hours. Placement days are typically Mondays and Wednesdays. If the student wishes to take advantage of opportunities outside of the assigned placement time, these arrangements must be made with the field instructor and any absences must be made up through arrangement with the field instructor. Students are not expected to be in field practice on university holidays or when classes are not held.

#### **M. Grading Policy**

Field courses must be completed with a **C** or better, and may not be repeated. The field practice grade is determined by the field practice liaison after consideration of the student's performance in field (60%) and in the field seminar (40%). The grade is based primarily (60%) on the student's performance in the agency. The field instructor should notify the liaison immediately if there is any indication that the student's performance is below satisfactory. Undergraduate grades are as follows:

A (4.0)	100–96	B- (2.7)	80–78	C- (1.7)	69-65
A- (3.7)	95-91	C+ (2.3)	77–74	D (1.0)	64-60
B+ (3.3)	90–86	C (2.0)	73–70	F (0.0)	59 and below
B (3.0)	85–81			"I"	Incomplete

Under extraordinary circumstances and at the discretion of the field liaison/seminar leader, the grade of incomplete (**I**) may be assigned to a student whose work is satisfactory but who has not completed the field practicum experience. The terms for removal of the **I**, including the time limit for removal of the **I**, will be delineated in a written contract that will be signed by the student, field liaison, and the field instructor. A copy of the signed contract will be given to the student and the original contract will be placed in the student's file. A student receiving an incomplete (**I**) in any social work course must remove the incomplete before enrollment in subsequent field practice.

#### **N. Evaluation of Student Performance in Field Practice**

An evaluation of each student's progress in field practice is required at mid-semester and at the end of each semester. The evaluation, completed by the field instructor, is read and signed by the student. Signing the evaluation only means the student has read the evaluation. The student has the right to submit a written statement to the college outlining the areas of disagreement with the evaluation.

The evaluation is a joint appraisal by the field instructor and student of the student's progress in meeting the educational competencies during the period covered. The student's participation in the evaluation process stimulates the student to evaluate critically his/her own performance and to recognize areas of strength and weakness. The completed evaluation is given to the field liaison. The evaluation is placed in the student's file after it has been reviewed and signed.

#### **O. Grade Appeals Procedure**

A student who wishes to appeal his/her grade in field must use the following procedure. The first level of appeal is within the college. The student meets with the field liaison who assigned the grade to discuss the rationale for the grade. If the student feels the field liaison inaccurately assessed his/her work but is still unwilling to change the grade, then the student needs to arrange a meeting with the BSSW program director. If the dispute is still unresolved, the student makes an appointment with the dean of the college to discuss the issue.

The Undergraduate Council hears appeals concerning grades only after grievances have been duly processed, without resolution, through appropriate procedures at the department and college levels. The Council does not review grievances concerning allegations of misconduct or academic dishonesty. Procedures for consideration of such matters are published in *Hilltopics* under "Student Rights and Responsibilities." In the appeals process, the Undergraduate Council has authority to (1) deny the appeal, (2) grant the appeal and request the instructor change the grade, or (3) assign a grade of "pass" for the course.

##### **Composition of the Appeals Committee**

Members of the Appeals Committee are appointed by the chairperson of the Undergraduate Council. The committee consists of at least five members, one of whom is named chairperson.

##### **Grounds for Appeal**

Students may appeal grades on the basis of one or more of four allowable grounds:

1. A clearly unfair decision (such as lack of consideration of circumstances clearly beyond the control of the student, e.g., a death in the family, illness or accident);
2. Unacceptable instruction/evaluation procedures (such as deviation from stated policies on grading criteria, incompletes, late paper, examinations, or class attendance).
3. Inability of instructor to deal with course responsibilities; or
4. An exam setting which makes concentration extremely difficult.

The appeals procedure is outlined in the *BSSW Student Handbook*. See the *Handbook* for detailed information.

#### **P. Student Evaluation of Field Practice**

At the conclusion of the field placement, students are asked to evaluate their placement experience. Using the form Student Evaluation of Field Practice(See Appendix II), students are encouraged to comment on various aspects of their field practicum and make recommendations for change. The completed forms are returned to the field secretary. The field coordinator compiles a written summary of all student perceptions which is then shared in aggregate form with all field instructors.

#### **Q. Confidentiality**

Students should not discuss clients or their problems outside the agency. If the student uses client-related material in class or in a portfolio, the agency's permission must be secured and the information must be carefully disguised so the identity of the client and others is protected.

**R. Field Instructor Evaluation of Field Practice**

At the conclusion of field placement, field instructors are asked to evaluate their experience with the college and social work students. The completed forms are returned to the field liaison and compiled in a written summary of field instructor perceptions which is then shared with the BSSW program director.

**NASW Code of Ethics**  
**Approved by the 1996 NASW Delegate Assembly;**  
**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.<sup>2</sup> In subscribing to this Code, social workers are required to cooperate in its implementation, participate in NASW adjudication proceedings, and abide by any NASW disciplinary rulings or sanctions based on it.

The Code offers a set of values, principles, and standards to guide decision making and conduct when ethical issues arise. It does not provide a set of rules that prescribe how social workers should act in all situations. Specific applications of the Code must take into account the context in which it is being considered and the possibility of conflicts among the Code's values, principles, and standards. Ethical responsibilities flow from all human relationships, from the personal and familial to the social and professional.

Further, the NASW Code of Ethics does not specify which values, principles, and standards are most important and ought to outweigh others in instances when they conflict. Reasonable differences of opinion can and do exist among social workers with respect to the ways in which values, ethical principles, and ethical standards should be rank ordered when they conflict. Ethical decision making in a given situation must apply the informed judgment of the individual social worker and should also consider how the issues would be judged in a peer review process where the ethical standards of the profession would be applied.

Ethical decision making is a process. There are many instances in social work where simple answers are not available to resolve complex ethical issues. Social workers should take into consideration all the values, principles, and standards in this Code that are relevant to any situation in which ethical judgment is warranted. Social workers' decisions and actions should be consistent with the spirit as well as the letter of this Code.

In addition to this Code, there are many other sources of information about ethical thinking that may be useful. Social workers should consider ethical theory and principles generally, social work theory and research, laws, regulations, agency policies, and other relevant codes of ethics, recognizing that among codes of ethics social workers should consider the NASW Code of Ethics as their primary source. Social workers also should be aware of the impact on ethical decision making of their clients' and their own personal values and cultural and religious beliefs and practices. They should be aware of any conflicts between personal and professional values and deal with them responsibly. For additional guidance social workers should consult the relevant literature on professional ethics and ethical decision making and seek appropriate consultation when faced with ethical dilemmas. This may involve consultation with an agency-based or social work organization's ethics committee, a regulatory body, knowledgeable colleagues, supervisors, or legal counsel.

Instances may arise when social workers' ethical obligations conflict with agency policies or relevant laws or regulations. When such conflicts occur, social workers must make a responsible effort to resolve the conflict in a manner that is consistent with the values, principles, and standards expressed in this Code. If a reasonable resolution of the conflict does not appear possible, social workers should seek proper consultation before making a decision.

The NASW Code of Ethics is to be used by NASW and by individuals, agencies, organizations, and bodies (such as licensing and regulatory boards, professional liability insurance providers, courts of law, agency boards of directors, government agencies, and other professional groups) that choose to adopt it or use it as a frame of reference. Violation of standards in this Code does not automatically imply legal liability or violation of the law. Such determination can only be made in the context of legal and judicial proceedings. Alleged violations of the Code would be subject to a peer review process. Such processes are generally separate from legal or administrative procedures and insulated from legal review or proceedings to allow the profession to counsel and discipline its own members.

A code of ethics cannot guarantee ethical behavior. Moreover, a code of ethics cannot resolve all ethical issues or disputes or capture the richness and complexity involved in striving to make responsible choices within a moral community. Rather, a code of ethics sets forth values, ethical principles, and ethical standards to which professionals aspire and by which their actions can be judged. Social workers' ethical behavior should result from their personal commitment to engage in ethical practice. The NASW Code of Ethics reflects the commitment of all social workers to uphold the profession's values and to act ethically. Principles and standards must be applied by individuals of good character who discern moral questions and, in good faith, seek to make reliable ethical judgments.

## **Ethical Principles**

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<sup>2</sup> For information on NASW adjudication procedures, see NASW Procedures for the Adjudication of Grievances.

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.