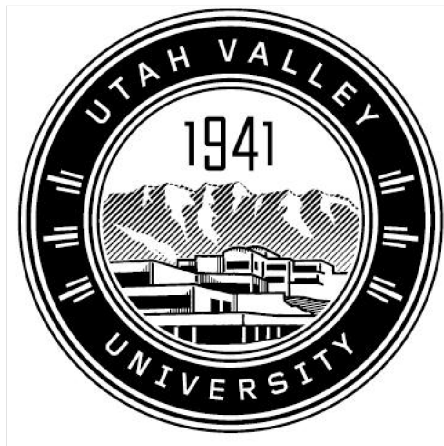


Bachelor of Social Work Handbook



Behavioral Science Department
Utah Valley University

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Last updated 6/30/2023

Introduction

Dear BSW Students:

Welcome to the BSW program at Utah Valley University! You have made an important decision to pursue a career in social work. The BSW program prepares undergraduate students in generalist social work practice, focusing toward helping those who are often the most neglected of society. Social work seeks to ennoble the disenfranchised through educating individuals who are professional, ethical, and highly skilled. Emphasis is made in the creation and expansion of knowledge, values, skills and ethics required of the BSW practitioners. You were selected to be part of the BSW program because you have demonstrated a commitment to helping vulnerable populations, promoting social justice, and a respect for individual worth. You will have many opportunities to engage in service, be steeped in scholarship, and become a skilled professional.

BSW graduates from Utah Valley University are prepared for careers in child and adult protective services, schools, mental health settings, women's shelters, nursing homes, hospitals, and other agencies that serve people in need. We, as faculty and staff, are excited that you have chosen to pursue a degree in social work and are committed to your successful completion of the program.

We are pleased to have you as a part of the social work family at UVU and wish you well in the next two years.

Melissa Hirschi, Program Director

Alan Misbach, Director of Field Education

Katelyn Peterson, BSW Faculty

Elizabeth Hendrix, BSW Faculty

Haley Todd, BSW Faculty

Program Mission Statement and Goals

Mission Statement

The Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Program at Utah Valley University is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. The program is committed to engaged student learning by combining innovative teaching, student-mentored scholarly work, and community collaboration to develop social work professionals who are proficient in generalist practice within the overarching theoretical framework of knowledge, values and skills.

The BSW Program seeks to promote a healthy community within a global context through collaborative efforts that maximize human potential and promote social and economic justice through learner-centered teaching, research and scholarship, service, and outreach.

Program Goals

1. To prepare students to be competent social work generalist practitioners with individuals, families, groups, communities, and societies. To prepare students to assist in the promotion of social and economic justice within individual, family, political, cultural, and social context. **(Integration of knowledge, values, and skills for practice).**
2. To enhance professional development within students through engaged teaching methods, service-learning activities, self-exploration and to ensure practice in behavior that is consistent with the principles, values, and ethics of the profession of social work **(Ethical practice).**
2. Motivate respect for and appreciation of human diversity **(Diversity).**
3. Prepare students to become involved in social and economic justice issues for all people, to improve their quality of life **(Social and economic justice).**
4. To prepare students to be effective consumers of research and its application to social work practice through critical thinking, self-analysis, and continuing education **(Continuous Learning).**
5. To prepare students for advanced education in social work or other graduate level learning **(Graduate Education).**

Program Eligibility

The BSW is a competitive admission program. Due to accreditation standards, a limited number of students will be accepted twice during each academic year. Students submit their applications in March or September, and those who have been accepted begin the program the following semester.

In order to be admitted to (and remain in) the BSW program, students must:

1. Be currently admitted to UVU (www.uvu.edu/apply)
2. Have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5
3. Have completed:
 - a. ENGL 1010 with C+ grade or higher (prior to admittance into the program)
 - b. ENGL 2010 or 2020 with C+ grade or higher (prior to admittance into the program)
 - c. SW 1010 with B- grade or higher (prior to admittance into the program)
 - d. PSY 1010 (prior to admittance into the program)
 - e. All general education requirements (prior to admittance into the program)

All students who meet the minimum application requirements are welcome to apply. No student will be denied admission based upon race, gender, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation, culture, creed, class, ethnicity, or national origin.

Criminal conviction or pending criminal charges will not necessarily disqualify a student from admission to the BSW Program. However, past or future criminal activity or conduct may limit or inhibit a student from completing a social work internship which is required to complete the degree or render the student ineligible to receive state certification or licensure to practice social work. For more information, contact the Utah Division of Professional Licensing (DOPL) at: <http://www.dopl.utah.gov/>

Meeting the minimum requirements does not guarantee admittance. Students can contact their assigned behavioral science academic advisor to discuss what will make them most competitive as a candidate. Appointments can be scheduled by contacting Cindy Lau: 801-863-8120, cindy.lau@uvu.edu.

Students admitted to the program are those who have a combination of qualifying grades, relevant work/internship/volunteer experience, excellent recommendations from professors

and/or supervisors, and a thoughtful and concise personal statement. Students denied admission to the program may reapply.

Students accepted into the BSW program must be able to take classes on a full-time basis on campus, as courses are not guaranteed to be offered online.

How to Apply

To apply to the BSW program, please carefully read and follow the instructions below before submitting. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. Questions regarding the application process can be directed to your behavioral science academic advisor.

1. Ensure that you are eligible for the program (see “Program Eligibility” section in this handbook).
2. Fill out the application form located on the BSW Program Site:
<https://www.uvu.edu/besc/socialwork/index.php>. The application will ask for each of the following:
 - a A 2-page essay describing how you gained your interest in a social work career. Include life experiences that may have influenced this decision. Also, discuss your strengths and limitations that could impact your performance as a BSW student and future social worker. This Personal Statement should be two pages, typed, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12 pt.
 - b A 1-page resume that details your educational, professional, and volunteer experience relevant to a career in social work. Include agency, supervisor name, dates worked, and how many hours you worked per week or month.
 - c Two letters of recommendation from individuals who have recent knowledge of your qualifications and can speak about your fit for the social work profession. References from employers, supervisors, and behavioral science or other UVU faculty are appropriate. Please note that references may not be obtained from the full-time social work faculty at UVU. References from family members, personal friends, co-workers (non-supervisors), or ecclesiastical leaders are also not appropriate. When filling out your application, you will supply the email addresses of each of your references. Once you have submitted your application, your references will receive a link to fill out your letter of recommendation. Please

follow up within a few weeks with your references to determine if their references have been submitted. This is your responsibility.

- d A copy of your transcript from each higher education institution you have attended (including UVU). Transcripts from the school you are attending in the fall semester immediately before the application deadline must include the grades earned in that semester, you must request these transcripts after your grades have been posted.
- 3. The review of submitted applications will focus on academic achievement, commitment to social work ethics, a beginning understanding of the social work profession, extent of volunteer or work experience in the social work arena, professional attitude and behavior, emotional maturity, and ability to express oneself in writing.

If needed, students may be asked to complete a formal interview with the admission committee and/or submit additional documentation to support a student's readiness for admission into the BSW program. The admissions committee may seek additional information from faculty, applicant, or other formal sources.

- 4. Students are notified via email regarding their admission status approximately 4-6 weeks after the application deadline.

BSW Degree Requirements

Students admitted to the BSW program, after having their eligibility for the program confirmed, and after having completed their general education requirements prior to beginning the program, must complete the following requirements to earn the Bachelor of Social Work degree.

Please note academic credit will not be awarded for previous work or life experiences of any kind.

Descriptions for the courses below can be found in Wolverine Track or in the "Course Catalog" at: <http://www.uvu.edu/catalog/index.html>.

Prerequisite Requirements

SW 1010: Introduction to Social Work (B- or higher)	3 credits	PSY 1010	3 credits
ENGL 1010	3 credits	American Institutions	3 credits
ENGL 2010/2020 (C+ or higher)	3 credits	Fine Arts	3 credits
Quantitative Literacy	3 credits	Biological Science	3 credits
Ethics and Values	3 credits	Physical Science	3 credits
HLTH 1100/PES 1097	3 credits	Third Science	3 credits
Humanities	3 credits	Recommended: General Electives	21 credits

Students with transfer credit and/or an Associate Degree should contact the BSW Academic Advisor to verify requirement completion after your transcripts have been received and processed by UVU Transfer Services.

Discipline Core Requirements

First Semester		Second Semester	
BESC 3010: Statistics for BESC	4 credits	BESC 3020: Research Methods for BESC	3 credits
BESC 380G: Interviewing Skills	3 credits	*SW 3000: Social Practice I	3 credits
*SW 2100: Human Behavior & Social Environment I	3 credits	*SW 3400: Human Behavior & Social Environment II	3 credits
*SW 3600: Ethics & Values in Social work Practice	3 credits	*SW 3500: Social Welfare Policies & Services	3 credits
**SW Electives	3 credits	*SW 371G: Diversity Issues in Social Work Practice	3 credits

Third Semester		Last Semester	
*SW 3100: Social Work Practice II	3 credits	*SW 3200: Social Work Practice III	3 credits
*SW 4800: Integrated Seminar I	1 credit	*SW 4850: Integrated Seminar II	1 credit
*SW 481R: Field Placement	5 credits	*SW 481R: Field Placement	5 credits
**SW Electives	3 credits	**SW Electives	3 credits
**SW Electives	3 credits	**SW Electives	3 credits

*Students must be formally admitted into the BSW Program before they can register for this course

**SW Electives Options: BESC 3100, BESC 4050, SOC 4020, FAMS 3410, PSY 3400, SW 3510, SW 3750, SW 4500, SW 475R, or SW 490R.

Elective Requirements

22 credits

- Complete 22 additional credits of any courses 1000 to 4000 level.

Graduation Requirements

1. Completion of a minimum of 120 semester credits, 40 of which must be upper division.
2. Overall grade point average of 2.5 or above.
3. Residency hours -- minimum of 30 credit hours through course attendance at UVU, with at least 10 credit hours earned in the last 45 credit hours.
4. All 48 credits of the BSW Social Work core requirements must be completed with a grade of B- or higher.
5. All 15 credits of Social Work electives must be completed with a C- grade or higher.
6. Completion of one course that meets the Global/Intercultural Requirement, indicated by a course number ending in G.

See department advisor to make an academic plan, explain admission, and program requirements.

Footnotes

* Recommended for students who plan on applying to M.S.W. Advance Standing Programs.

** Students must be formally admitted into the BSW program to register for this course.

WITHDRAWAL AND READMISSION GUIDELINES

BSW Program

Utah Valley University

Approved 04/13/22

Students who have been admitted into the BSW program are expected to complete all the requirements in two consecutive years from the date they begin the course of study. However, due to unforeseen life circumstances sometimes a student might need to withdraw temporarily from the program. The following policies go into effect as soon as a student is admitted into the program.

LEAVES OF ABSENCE AND READMISSION

Only in cases of military assignment, religious service or medical hardships (e.g., problematic pregnancy, major surgery, life-threatening events, severe family circumstances, etc.), can students petition for a leave of absence. Petitions can only be submitted by students in good standing. The petition must be initiated and submitted by the student and must be accompanied by written documentation provided by an appropriate expert or authority. The petition must be submitted to the BSW Program Director by the student as soon as they can. In consultation with the BSW faculty, the petition will be reviewed, and the student will be informed of the decision regarding their petition via of their UVU email address.

Should the petition be approved, the student may not be required (based on the decision and direction from the director) to reapply to the program but must petition for readmission if they resume the course of study within two years of the beginning leave date.

Because the curriculum is sequentially designed, students returning from a leave of absence are readmitted to the semester following their last completed semester. For example, if a student most recently completed a fall semester, their next possible semester of coursework would be the next spring after successfully petitioning for readmission. Readmitted students cannot be guaranteed any prior field placement choice and will be assigned to field placements which are available and deemed appropriate by the Director of Field Education.

If a leave of absence occurs during the field experience, at the discretion of the Field Director, a student may return to complete the internship at the same setting after one semester's absence. Students who take a leave of absence from the program of two semesters or longer will be required to reapply to the field and complete the field experiences, including participating in the field fair and completing all pre-field requirements in their entirety at an appropriate time upon their return.

FAILS, DROPS OUT, OR QUESTIONABLE BEHAVIOR

A student who fails or drops out of a course, or whose behavior is questionable, will be approached immediately by the appropriate faculty about such behavior. Details of the conversation will be presented to the BSW Program Director and faculty for proper action.

WITHDRAWALS WITH APPROVAL

In extenuating circumstances that do not meet the requirements for leaves of absence, a student who has been admitted into the BSW Program and has attended at least two months of the program, may petition for official approval for immediate withdrawal from the program for extenuating circumstances which do not meet the criteria for leave of absence. If the petition is approved, the student may apply for readmission to the program within the 12 months following the date of withdrawal. If readmitted, the student must complete a full course of study required by the program. The first admission is not a guarantee of admission in the future.

WITHDRAWALS WITHOUT APPROVAL

A student who has been admitted into the program and withdraws without receiving a written approval from the BSW Program Director, will be immediately terminated from the program unless an emergency precludes the student's ability to undergo such a process. In this case, the student will not be allowed to reapply to the program unless the emergency nature of the student's unauthorized withdrawal can be documented. If the student is evaluated to meet the emergency criteria for unauthorized withdrawal, they can reapply to the program.

SEQUENCE

Students are expected to take courses in the order and timeframe as outlined. Students wishing to take courses early are under the same obligation to file a formal advanced petition and will likely not be considered unless there is legitimate hardship.

WITHDRAWAL/ LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND READMISSION PETITION

Prior to completing this form, please be sure that you have read the guidelines and procedures detailed above.

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

UVU id: _____

Semester started in BSW Program (ex. Fall 2023): _____

Last semester **completed** in BSW program: _____

Planned Return date: _____

Select the option for which you are requesting. Please orient yourself as to whether your circumstance qualifies as a leave of absence or a withdrawal. Refer to previous page for more information.

☐ Begin Leave of Absence

☐ Withdrawal with Approval

☐ Request for Readmission

Date of original Leave of Absence/Withdrawal: _____

Please provide an explanation as to why you are requesting a leave of absence, readmission, or withdrawal:

Please attach any documentation related to your request.

Student Signature: _____

Decision from BSW Program Director: ☐ Approved ☐ Denied ☐ Other

BSW Program Director Signature: _____ Date: _____

Comments from Director:

Field Practicum and Licensure

Placement in the Field Practicum

Social Work at the bachelor's level is a licensed profession in Utah. Practitioners must be able to apply professional knowledge, values, and skills ethically. Practice courses provide skill development activities for students to develop skills such as interviewing and assessment, intervention, and evaluation. During the senior year, student's complete internships during the *fall and spring* semesters. Students are assigned to social services agencies by the Field Director, with consideration of the students' interests and learning needs, and the availability of field agencies. These internships provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge and skills learned in classes to real-life situations with clients. Field Practicum students are supervised and guided by professional social workers in agencies in order to ensure that they have productive and practical educational experiences. The BSW program expects students to exemplify professional and ethical behavior in accordance with current professional social work standards. The BSW program expects all students to obey the law, to show respect for properly constituted authority, to perform contracted obligations, to maintain absolute integrity and high standards of individual honesty in academic work, and to observe a high standard of conduct within the academic and professional environment. In short, students enrolled in the program accept the obligation to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner acceptable at an institution of higher learning and within the social work profession.

Admissions to the Field Practicum

Students entering Field must be fully admitted to the Social Work Program and have completed required prerequisites with a grade of "B-" or higher in all core social work courses, and a "C-" or higher in all social work elective courses. They must have a GPA of 2.0 in the major and overall, and must have completed the application process for Field. The field experience entails completion of 450 clock hours at the field agency, weekly attendance at a seminar on campus and enrollment in related, concurrent classes. The Field Director makes field agency assignments with input from the student and field agency staff. Most students feel that their field internships are among the most valuable experiences in the program. Field experiences often help a student narrow their choices for a field of practice within social work. Field Instructors can be very helpful in assisting students with the job search process. Many students are hired by agencies in which they completed internships, or by agencies they learned of while in field.

Licensure

Most states regulate the practice of social work through certification or licensure. Persons without these credentials are prohibited by law from calling themselves social workers or practicing social work. The State of Utah licenses social workers at several levels: Social Service

Worker (SSW); Certified Social Worker (CSW); and Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). The SSW requires a bachelors degree, and with a BSW from an accredited (or from a program in candidacy) you may sit for the exam upon graduation, rather than having to wait for a year and fulfill the supervision requirements. The CSW and LCSW both require an MSW from an accredited program (or from a program in candidacy). For more information go to:
http://www.dopl.utah.gov/licensing/forms/applications/074_social_work.pdf

Student Rights and Responsibilities

According to University policy, “a student subject to suspension or dismissal (from the University or the BSW program) may petition the Academic Standards Committee for a exception to the Academic Standards Policy. To do so, he/she must submit a written appeal to the Standards Coordinator. In this petition, the student may request that he/she be granted a hearing before the Academic Standards Committee. The petition should set forth the extenuating circumstances that would warrant the granting of a waiver of the student's suspension, or dismissal status. Evidence should be presented which would indicate that the student has carefully considered and re-assessed educational objectives and has eliminated those factors which led to suspension, or dismissal status. If a student is dissatisfied with the decision of the Academic Standards Committee, the student has the right to present a written appeal to the Vice President for Student Services, within two weeks following notification of the committee's decision.”

General Rights

A student, while properly enrolled at the institution, will have the right to the following institution services, treatment, and information:

1. Free and open discussion, inquiry and expression, subject to constitutional limitations regarding time, place, and manner.
2. Protection against the institution's improper disclosure of students' records, work, views, beliefs, and political associations.
3. Procedural safeguard and personal privacy with respect to testing for drugs and infectious diseases (e.g. AIDS).
4. Timely and understandable information and respectful treatment regarding policies, refunds, lab fees, course fees, library fines, lab breakages and liability, etc.
5. Freedom from a discriminatory and offensive campus environment that may cause emotional stress or a hostile or offensive campus environment directed toward another person.
6. Freedom from sexual harassment.
7. Full protection under the Constitution for freedom of the press, including the Constitutional limitations on prior restraint and censorship.

8. Due process of law is seen as essential to the proper enforcement of institution rules.
9. Security for his/her person, papers, and personal effects against unreasonable searches and seizures.
10. Freedom to form and to operate an organized student association within the guidelines prescribed by the institution.
11. Access to the institution's Ombudsman for consultation in matters of personal and school issues and concerns.
12. Student representation through student government on institutional committees, councils, commissions, and other formally constituted bodies that make general policy and procedure decisions directly affecting students or that govern student activities and conduct.
13. Access to all student government sponsored activities.
14. Accurate information in advertising, recruitment, and orientation efforts.

General Responsibilities

A student assumes responsibility for conducting themselves appropriately. Categories of misconduct that are not considered responsible behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Failure to respect the right of every person to be secure from fear, threats, intimidation, harassment, hazing and/or physical harm caused by the activities of groups or individuals.
2. Sexual assault, harassment, or any other unwelcome verbal or physical sexual activity, including the support or assistance of such activities.
3. Unauthorized seizure or occupation of any institutional building or facility.
4. Obstruction, disruption or interference with teaching, disciplinary proceedings, institution sponsored activities and services or events.
5. Use or possession of any weapon, explosive device, or fireworks on a person or storage of such on institutional property without prior written approval from the Chief of Campus Police.

6. Unlawful use, possession, distribution, sale, manufacture, or possession for purposes of distribution or sale of any controlled substance or illegal drug on any property or in any building owned, leased or rented by the institution or at any activity sponsored by the institution.
7. Initiation or circulation of any false report, warning or threat of fire, bombs or explosives on institutional premises or during institution-sponsored events.
8. Violation of the Utah Indoor Clean Air Act and/or the institution smoking policy (institution Policy 158 Tobacco).
9. Sale, possession, manufacture, distribution or consumption of alcoholic beverages on institution properties.
10. Unauthorized possession, forging, altering, misusing or mutilating of institutional documents, records, educational materials, identification, (e.g., personal ID, parking decal, etc.) or other institution property.
11. Violation of city ordinances and/or state statutes regarding gambling.
12. Delivery of false information to institutional personnel.
13. Theft or malicious destruction, damage or misuse of institution property or private property of another person on the institution campus or when engaged in activities sponsored or supervised by the institution off campus.
14. Intentionally or recklessly destroying, defacing, vandalizing, damaging or misusing the property, equipment, materials, services, or data of the institution.
15. Unauthorized possession or use of a key to any institution, facility, or equipment.
16. Obscenity and lewd conduct as defined by institution policy, city ordinances, and/or state statutes.
17. Failure to adhere to all laws and regulations governing the duplication and use of copyrighted materials including printed and audio materials, video, film, and/or computer software.
18. Unauthorized use or charges to any institution telephone for long distance calls. Institution telephones are for business use only.

19. Unauthorized off-campus fund raising activities on behalf of the institution. All fundraising must have prior written approval from the institution's Development Office.
20. Intent to defraud the institution in any financial matter including, but not limited to:
 - a. Non-redemption of personal checks refused by a bank;
 - b. Sale/resale of supplies, books, or equipment in violation of institution agreements;
 - c. Falsifying institution financial records; and/or
 - d. Non-payment of tuition and fees as set forth by institution regulations.
 - e. Failure to conduct oneself in a way that does not endanger the health and well-being of other students and institution personnel.
 - f. Unauthorized commercial ventures or enterprises on institution property.
 - g. Bringing animals on campus, except for those serving the disabled or those used for educational purposes.
 - h. Allowing children in institution classrooms or laboratories (unless they are an integral part of instruction) or leaving children unattended in hallways and restrooms or at institution-sponsored events and functions.

Students are encouraged to report violations of this policy to an appropriate institutional office.

If a student is deemed to have violated professional and ethical standards of conduct, they may be dismissed from the program. Consistent with University policy, programs are given decision making power to dismiss students from their respective programs.

For a complete description of University Policy on Students' Rights and Responsibilities go to:

<https://www.uvu.edu/studentconduct/students.html>

NASW Code of Ethics

Code of Ethics ***of the National Association of Social Workers***

Approved by the 1996 NASW Delegate Assembly and revised
by the 2021 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 dual 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, and encourages all social workers to engage in self-care, ongoing education, and other activities to ensure their commitment to those same core features of the profession.
6. The Code articulates standards that the social work profession itself can use to assess whether social workers have engaged in unethical conduct. NASW has formal procedures to adjudicate ethics complaints filed against its members.* In subscribing to this Code, social workers are required to cooperate in its implementation, participate in NASW adjudication proceedings, and abide by any NASW disciplinary rulings or sanctions based on it.

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 consider 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.

* For information on the NASW Professional Review Process, see NASW Procedures for Professional Review.

Furthermore, 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 exist among social workers regarding how values, ethical principles, and ethical standards should be ranked 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. In situations when conflicting obligations arise, social workers may be faced with complex ethical dilemmas that have no simple answers. Social workers should consider all the values, principles, and standards in this Code relevant to any

situation in which ethical judgment is warranted. Social workers' decisions and actions should be consistent with the spirit and 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, 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 deciding. 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 a 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 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.

With growth in the use of communication technology in various aspects of social work practice, social workers need to be aware of the unique challenges that may arise in relation to the

maintenance of confidentiality, informed consent, professional boundaries, professional competence, record keeping, and other ethical considerations. In general, all ethical standards in this Code of Ethics are applicable to interactions, relationships, or communications, whether they occur in person or with the use of technology. For the purposes of this Code, “technology-assisted social work services” include any social work services that involve the use of computers, mobile or landline telephones, tablets, video technology, or other electronic or digital technologies; this includes the use of various electronic or digital platforms, such as the Internet, online social media, chat rooms, text messaging, e-mail and emerging digital applications. Technology-assisted social work services encompass all aspects of social work practice, including psychotherapy; individual, family, or group counseling; community organization; administration; advocacy; mediation; education; supervision; research; evaluation; and other social work services. Social workers should keep apprised of emerging technological developments that may be used in social work practice and how various ethical standards apply to them.

Professional self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Professional demands, challenging workplace climates, and exposure to trauma warrant that social workers maintain personal and professional health, safety, and integrity. Social work organizations, agencies, and educational institutions are encouraged to promote organizational policies, practices, and materials to support social workers’ self-care.

Ethical Principles

The following broad ethical principles are based on social work’s core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. These principles set forth ideals to which all social workers should aspire.

Value: Service

Ethical Principle: Social workers’ primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems

Social workers elevate service to others above self-interest. Social workers draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address social problems. Social workers are encouraged to volunteer some portion of their professional skills with no expectation of significant financial return (pro bono service).

Value: Social Justice

Ethical Principle: Social workers challenge social injustice.

Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers’ social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

Value: Dignity and Worth of the Person

Ethical Principle: Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.

Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers promote clients' socially responsible self-determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients' capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Social workers are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to 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 crucial 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 should take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally. 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.

Contact Us

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