



Southwest Baptist  
UNIVERSITY

*Social Work*

# Field Education Manual

Division of Behavioral Sciences  
1600 University Avenue  
Bolivar, MO 65613-2597  
Web: [www.sbuniv.edu/bsw](http://www.sbuniv.edu/bsw)



## Table of Contents

Letter from the Director of Field Education .....	5
BSW Faculty Information.....	6
About the Handbook.....	6
About Southwest Baptist University .....	7
Core Values of Southwest Baptist University.....	7
• Christian Distinctiveness .....	7
• Baptist Heritage.....	7
• Compassion and Care for SBU Family.....	7
• Academic Excellence.....	7
• Social and Spiritual Development .....	8
• Personal Wellness.....	8
Mission Statements .....	8
Mission of the Social Work Program .....	9
Goals of the Social Work Program .....	10
Social Work Program Competencies .....	10
University Standards.....	11
• Statement of Nondiscrimination .....	11
• Students with Disabilities.....	11
• Criminal History.....	12
• Professional Standards.....	12
• Academic Integrity.....	13
• Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act .....	13
• Glossary of Terms .....	16
Frequently Asked Questions.....	17
BSW Educational Standards .....	22
• BSW Field Education Objectives .....	22
• Core Competencies Defined .....	27
• BSW Field Education Courses .....	27
• BSW Field Education Hour Requirements.....	28
• BSW Field Admission Requirements .....	29
Student Placement Process .....	31
• Introduction to Field Placement .....	31
• Student Placement Process .....	31
• Employment-Based Placement Process .....	32
Roles and Responsibilities in Field Education .....	33
• Expectations of Field Agency .....	33
• Expectations of Field Instructor .....	35

• Expectations of Director of Field Education.....	37
• Expectations of the Student .....	39
Evaluation .....	41
• Student Evaluation by the Field Instructor .....	41
• Student Evaluation of the Field Education Experience .....	41
• Field Instructor’s Evaluation of the Field Education Program .....	41
Policy .....	43
• Statement of Confidentiality .....	43
• Use of Personal Vehicles .....	43
• Liability Insurance.....	43
• Student Schedule, Attendance, and Holidays.....	44
• Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect.....	44
• Background Checks .....	45
• Agency Conflict of Interest .....	45
• Safety Procedures.....	45
○ Home Visits .....	46
○ Threatening Behavior from Clients .....	46
○ Sexual Harassment .....	46
○ <b>EMERGENCY CONTACTS</b> .....	46
Field Problems and Resolutions.....	49
Grievance Procedures during Field Placement .....	50
Program Accreditation .....	50
Appendix A.....	50
NASW <i>Code of Ethics</i> .....	50
○ Preamble.....	51
○ Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics .....	51
○ Ethical Principles.....	53
○ Ethical Standards .....	54
Appendix B <a href="https://www.nacsw.org/">https://www.nacsw.org/</a> .....	64
NACSW’s Statement of Faith and Practice.....	64

# Letter from the Director of Field Education

To All Agency Field Instructors, Field Educators, BSW Students, and Liaison Faculty:

Welcome to the Bachelor of Social Work Program Field Education at Southwest Baptist University! I would like to say thank you for teaming up with our program! Often referred to as the “heart of social work education,” field practicum provides students with an opportunity to apply classroom knowledge to real life situations. While maintaining an educational focus, each student is challenged to develop a professional identity reflective of the values, knowledge and skills of the social work profession. Field experience is a crucial element of social work education. Under the guidance of social workers, students will develop essential competencies by applying social work knowledge, values, and skills.

Especially in a post-pandemic culture, I deeply appreciate the agencies and professionals within those agencies who choose to take on the role of teaching and mentoring students in their ambition to become professional social workers. We recognize the time, energy, and resources that such a commitment takes, and we are thankful for the opportunity to work with each of you in the education and training of competent professional social workers.

The policies and procedures outlined in the Field Manual will (1) provide a tool for field placements to enhance their understanding of the field process, (2) establish professional standards of conduct in field placements, and (3) recognize the importance of the effective use of Field Education as part of the Social Work Program and adherence to the policies and procedures outlined by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

As the Director of Field Education, I am committed to developing placement opportunities and experiences that promote the achievement of professional competence in the field of social work practice. There will be a broad offering of field site opportunities which will serve to reflect the mission, goals, and competencies of the BSW program. Our goal is to provide a quality field education experience to each student and Field Instructor. Please do not hesitate to contact me or your Liaison with any questions or concerns you may have.

Once again, thank you in advance for your investment in our students. I hope you find your field practicum experience both challenging and rewarding!

Sincerely,

*Neoma Sanders*

Neoma Sanders, MSW  
Director of Field Education  
Southwest Baptist University

## BSW Faculty Information

---

**Bill Hafer, MA, LCSW**

BSW Program Director  
1600 University Avenue  
Bolivar, MO 65613  
Phone: (417) 328-1740

**Neoma Sanders, MSW**

Director of Field Education  
1600 University Avenue  
Bolivar, MO 65613-2597  
Phone: 417-328-1727  
Email: [nsanders@sbuniv.edu](mailto:nsanders@sbuniv.edu)

**Lindsay Griggs, MSSA**

**Field Liaison**  
1600 University Avenue  
Bolivar, MO 65613-2597  
Phone: (440)-227-1188  
Email: [lgriggs@sbuniv.edu](mailto:lgriggs@sbuniv.edu)

## About the Handbook

---

This field manual is designed to provide information about the requirements and policies of the BSW Field Practicum. It does not constitute a contract. Please note that policies and procedures do change from time to time and therefore the SBU Social Work Program reserves the right to make such modifications as necessary. We will make every attempt to notify the student and agency of the changes prior to them occurring. The guidelines suggested in this manual should not supersede professional decision making nor become a restriction in creating a meaningful experience in your field learning.

# About Southwest Baptist University

---

Since its inception in 1878, Southwest Baptist University has built a reputation for academic excellence, a firm commitment to biblical principles and a vision for reaching out to a hurting world. Today, the Bolivar campus is home to approximately 1,105 outstanding undergraduate students and 608 graduate students. As a private, four-year Christian university, SBU offers associate's, bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in more than 45 academic disciplines including pre-professional programs, business and nursing as well as liberal arts majors.

## Core Values of Southwest Baptist University

---

In fulfilling the University's mission and vision through its strategic planning process, Southwest Baptist University is committed to upholding the following core values grounded in Scripture, guided particularly by I Corinthians 13, to *prepare servant-leaders for a global society*:

### **Christian Distinctiveness (1 Peter 2:9)**

Southwest Baptist University is Christ-centered. From its inception, and continuing today, the University is a distinctively Christian and Baptist institution supporting a Christian worldview. Led by the Spirit, following the example of Jesus Christ, the University family seeks to demonstrate commitment to love, mercy, and grace.

### **Baptist Heritage (1 Kings 8:57; 2 Timothy 1:14)**

Southwest Baptist University's academic foundations are built on historical Baptist traditions beginning with the Southwest Missouri Baptist Association and continuing today with the Missouri Baptist Convention. This heritage acknowledges God as the ultimate source of all knowledge and truth. It is committed to scholarly endeavor, under God, seeking a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility.

### **Compassion and Care for SBU Family**

Southwest Baptist University is a caring community. Scripture teaches that all individuals are worthy in the eyes of God. Therefore, we will honor and serve one another in love.

### **Academic Excellence (Romans 12:2; Colossians 3:23)**

Southwest Baptist University is an academic community. The University pursues excellence in teaching, scholarship and service. Students are prepared to meet the challenges of a global society through the integration of Christian faith, liberal arts, research, and professional studies. The University recognizes that academic excellence is achieved through continuously striving for improvement.

### **Social and Spiritual Development (Colossians 2:6-7)**

Southwest Baptist University encourages the social and spiritual development of the University family. Students, faculty, and staff are provided intentional opportunities to grow spiritually, intellectually, and emotionally through exposure and response to the needs of the larger community.

### **Personal Wellness**

Southwest Baptist University recognizes the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the University will offer opportunities for education and activities which promote personal wellness.

### **Statement of Faith (Adopted by the Board of Trustees in 2020)**

The University is committed to the teachings of the Holy Bible, God's inerrant Word, as articulated in the ["The Baptist Faith and Message, 2000"](#) (BFM 2000) (or current edition), as well as supplemental statements of religious convictions in the [Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy](#), the [Nashville Statement](#), and the [Danvers Statement](#), and to providing an environment where those truths are taught and demonstrated by the University's employees.

## **Mission Statements**

---

### ***Mission of Southwest Baptist University***

Southwest Baptist University is a Christ-centered, caring academic community preparing students to be servant leaders in a global society.

### ***Vision Statement***

Southwest Baptist University will be the exemplar Christian university, providing a transformative and holistic educational experience

### ***Mission of the College of Arts and Sciences***

The College of Arts & Sciences at Southwest Baptist University fosters academic excellence in a Christian community that integrates communication skills, creativity, appreciation of the arts, an understanding of cultural heritage, and scientific awareness

### ***Mission of the Division of Behavioral Sciences***

The mission of the Division of Behavioral Sciences is to prepare students to investigate and



evaluate the human experience and to develop skills of intervention, prevention, and protection accompanied by the integration of faith and discipline.

### ***Mission of the Social Work Program***

Southwest Baptist University's Social Work program values diversity and compassionate service, while promoting social justice and Christian values. The program equips students with the knowledge, values, and skills necessary to be a competent ethical generalist practitioner within the profession of social work.

## **Goals of the Social Work Program**

The social work program at Southwest Baptist University has three primary goals:

1. Equip students with the knowledge, values and skills to be competent generalist practitioners in local and global settings.
2. Inform students about compassion and respect for all humanity, based upon an understanding of God's grace, the teachings of Christ, and the Bible's instructions concerning oppressed groups, in order to promote attitudes and actions of service and advocacy.
3. Promote an atmosphere that values and encourages leadership and continued development as social work professionals through lifelong learning, professional development, research, service, and graduate education.

### **Social Work Program Competencies**

The 9 core competencies identified in the Council on Social Work Education's *Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards* have been adopted for SBU's BSW program competencies. As a faith-based institution, SBU Social Work adopted an additional competency, Integration of Faith and Social Work Practice, to instill the importance of incorporating faith into practice. The competencies are:

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Engage Diversity and difference in Practice
3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
4. Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
5. Engage in Policy Practice
6. *Engage* with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
7. *Assess* Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
8. *Intervene* with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

9. *Evaluate Practice* with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
10. *Integration of Faith and Social Work Practice.*

# University Standards

---

## **Statement of Nondiscrimination**

Applicants for admission and employment, students, parents of students, employees, sources of referral of applicants for admission and employment, and all unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with Southwest Baptist University are hereby notified that this institution does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability or marital status in employment, admission, access to, or treatment in, its programs and activities, except to the extent permitted by religious exemptions recognized by law.

Any person having inquiries concerning Southwest Baptist University's compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, section 504, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 is directed to the Director of Human Resources and Title IX Coordinator, 1600 University Avenue, Bolivar, MO, 65613, (417) 328-1512.

Any student having inquiries concerning Southwest Baptist University's compliance with regulations implementing the American with Disabilities Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is directed to the Director of Career Services and External Studies, 1600 University Avenue, Bolivar, MO, 65613, (417) 328-1689.

Any person may also contact the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, regarding the institution's compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, or the Age

## **Services for Students with Disabilities**

Southwest Baptist University is a welcoming, safe environment where all students are able to thrive, regardless of any physical or learning disabilities.

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, SBU provides equal access to educational opportunities to qualified students with physical or learning disabilities.

SBU recognizes that each person has a unique situation, and each student's situation will be treated with the utmost respect and confidentiality.

## **Academic Accommodations**

To ensure that all students are able to successfully participate in SBU academics, SBU's special services coordinator will work with professors to determine suitable academic accommodations after receiving the appropriate documentation.

If you are a student with a disability and would like to request academic accommodations, contact the SBU special services coordinator as soon as possible at (417) 328-1741 or [disabilityservices@SBUniv.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@SBUniv.edu). You will also need to fill out and return a [Disclosure of Disability](#) form. All electronic forms on this page also are available in paper format by contacting the SBU special services coordinator.

Please also provide additional disability documentation from an external source, which will vary in its relevance and value depending upon the original context, evaluator credentials, the level of detail, and its comprehensiveness. Examples of suitable external documentation include:

- Medical records
- Reports and assessments created by health care providers
- School psychologists
- Teachers or the education system (documents like education and accommodation history, Individual Education Program (IEP), Summary of Performance (SOP) and teacher observations)

## **Disclosure Form**

### **Criminal History**

Students declaring a major in social work will be provided the opportunity to complete a background and criminal history, including but not limited to, the Missouri (or other states) Family Registry. Students with criminal histories will not automatically be denied admission to the BSW program. Eligibility will be considered on a case-by-case basis. However, students should be aware that a criminal background may prevent field placement or employment in certain settings. Additionally, students may not be able to obtain professional licensure. As laws vary from state to state, students are encouraged to consult individual state licensing agencies for additional information. Social work licensure information for Missouri can be obtained on the Internet by visiting: <http://www.pr.mo.gov/socialworkers.asp>

### **Professional Standards**

The following criteria are considered as professional behavior:

1. Maintaining the NASW *Code of Ethics*
2. Demonstrating behaviors, attitudes, and values consistent with professional social work practice. These qualities include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Personal integrity and emotional stability
  - b. Appropriate behavior toward peers, faculty, staff, and agency personnel and clients
  - c. Value system consistent with social work practice
  - d. Awareness of self and demonstrated interpersonal helping skills

- e. Respect and acceptance of diverse populations and sensitivity to the needs of various populations
- f. Openness to professional growth, including faculty observations of strengths and weaknesses

### **Academic Integrity**

Integrity is an important part of being a social worker. Students are expected to do their own work and all assignments submitted should completely be their own. The field office has a zero tolerance policy for academic dishonesty. A student who violates the university's academic integrity policy will, at minimum, receive a zero for the assignment, examination, or quiz. Any acts of plagiarism, including not acknowledging sources of information appropriately and in accordance with APA guidelines, or cheating may result in a student failing the course. Additionally, an academic infraction form will be filed for all violations, and the student may face additional repercussions from the university.

### **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) afford students certain rights with respect to their education records. These student rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the University receives a request for access. Students should submit to the Registrar, dean, head of the academic division, or other appropriate official written requests that identify the record(s) they wish to inspect. The University official will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. If the records are not maintained by the University official to whom the request was submitted, that official shall advise the student of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes to be inaccurate or misleading. Students may ask the University to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the University official responsible for the record, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why that part is inaccurate or misleading. If the University decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, the University will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without

consent. One exception that permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the University in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom the University has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Southwest Baptist University to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA are:

a. SBU Vice President for Administration 1600 University Ave., Bolivar, MO 65613  
Office: (417) 328-1510; Fax: (417) 328-1514

b. Roberta Rasor, SBU Registrar 1600 University Ave., Bolivar, MO 65613 Office: (417) 328-1607; Fax: (417) 328-1514; Email: [rrasor@SBUUniv.edu](mailto:rrasor@SBUUniv.edu)

5. Directory Information. The University designates the following items as Directory information: student name, address (permanent and college address), telephone number (permanent and college), email address, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, most recent previous school attended and photograph. The University may disclose any of those items without prior written consent, unless notified in writing to the contrary by the end of the first week of classes of each semester. Student directory information will be released internally to be used for University purposes only. Student directory information will not be released to third party groups for external use without prior approval by the Executive Cabinet



## ***Glossary of Terms***

**Field Director**—The Field Director is a clinical faculty member of the Social Work program and works directly with students and agencies in the internship placement process.

**Field Instruction/Supervision** – This is the supervision meeting time between the student and the Field Instructor. Supervision occurs weekly for at least one hour per week. During supervision the BSW Field Instructor incorporates classroom learning into the context of the field internship and answers the student’s questions about topics including clients, the agency, policies and social work interventions.

**Field Instructor** – The Field Instructor is typically an agency staff member who provides the equivalent of weekly supervision to the student intern. If the field instructor does not have a BSW or MSW degree and a minimum of two years post-graduate professional social work experience, the student must meet with an off-site field instructor or a Field Liaison. In limited cases, exceptions may be made in lieu of experience and *additional* supervision provided by a BSW or MSW for the student.

**Field Liaison** – The Field Liaison, when appointed, provides a link between the School of Social Work, the student and the internship agency. Field Liaisons meet jointly with the student and field instructor at least once per semester to discuss progress made toward completing internship assignments. Field Liaisons are also available to the student and the agency for problem resolution. Field Liaisons are experienced BSWs or MSWs from the community and/or faculty members. When a Field Liaison is not appointed, the Field Director, other social work faculty, or other qualified social workers appointed by the director fulfill the Field Liaison roles and responsibilities.

**Field Placement/Practicum** – This is the agency or organization in which the student learns and practices social work skills. A field practicum differs from paid employment in that the focus of the internship is on learning and applying classroom knowledge.

**Student Learning Contract**– The learning contract is the student’s learning plan. It reflects the student’s individualized goals in a field internship and outlines areas where development and growth are expected. Specific objectives, learning activities, methods of measurement and evaluation are identified.

**Off-Site Field Instructor** – This is a person with an MSW or BSW degree who is partnered with the agency that provides field instruction for the student. A student with an off-site MSW or BSW Field Instructor also has an on-site Task Supervisor.

**Task Supervisor** – This is an on-site supervisor who is involved with the student’s day-to-day tasks and provides supervision in addition to that provided by the BSW/MSW field instructor. Every intern with an off-site BSW/MSW field instructor also has an on-site task supervisor. A task supervisor must have an advanced degree or a level of experience in the field that allows for supervision of a masters level student.



**Employment Based Practicum** – An employment based practicum is field placement in a student's place of employment. Students must be assigned new duties that are educationally focused and provide an opportunity for students to develop new skills and expand their knowledge base. Specific application for this type of placement is required prior to and during the field placement process.

## ***Frequently Asked Questions***

### **General Questions about Field Education**

#### **When are students in field?**

BSW students are in field for a minimum of 10 hours per week beginning the first week of classes and ending the Friday prior to finals week. University breaks are excluded. This includes Thanksgiving week, Winter Break and Spring Break.

#### **How many total hours are required for field practicum?**

BSW students spend 450 hours in field experience over the two academic semesters, 200 hours in the fall semester and 250 in the spring semester.

#### **Do students change internship sites each semester?**

It is the expectation that students spend their entire academic year at one internship site unless arranged during the field placement process, prior to beginning field.

#### **Can students receive field credit for past work experience?**

No, students cannot receive field credit for past experience. The accreditation standards of the Council on Social Work Education state that academic credit for life experience and previous work experience shall not be given, in whole or in part, in lieu of the practicum or courses in the professional foundation areas.

### **Selecting an Practicum**

#### **How do I obtain a field placement?**

BSW students work closely with the Field Director to determine agencies with whom to interview. Students and agencies interview each other. When a match is made then agencies contact the student to offer them a practicum. Students either accept or decline the offer. If a match is not made students continue to interview.

BSW students are required to complete volunteer hours and advised to research their interests and area agencies to identify possible field placements.

**Can I complete my internship in my place of employment?**

Students interested in an employment based practicum must submit a 'Employment Based Placement' form to the Director of Field Education. Submitting the required form does not guarantee approval of the request. The internship must provide the student with experiences that are distinctly different from the student's regular job responsibilities.

**Can students create their own internships?**

The field education program is always interested in identifying new internship agencies and welcomes suggestions from students. All internship sites must meet the requirements for learning opportunities and supervision and must be approved by the field education program prior to a student beginning the internship.

**How does an agency become an approved internship site?**

Agencies become approved internship sites through a written agreement with the field education program. This agreement can be initiated by an agency, a student or the School of Social Work. This generates a site visit from the Field Director during which learning opportunities, supervision requirements, non-discrimination policies and other matters are discussed.

**What if an agency does not have a BSW/MSW on site?**

Agencies without an on-site BSW/MSW can host practicum students only if the agency identifies an off-site individual with a BSW/MSW to provide the field instruction. It is optimal for the off-site BSW/MSW to be familiar with the agency's mission and work.

**What determines a student's tasks and learning opportunities in an internship?**

Each student, in conjunction with the field instructor, completes a Student Learning Contract. The learning contract addresses all of the tasks, learning objectives and competencies for the internship.

**When and why should students contact their assigned Field Liaison?**

Field Liaisons contact students and Field Instructors during the first three weeks of the internship to set up a schedule for site visits. Throughout the year, students should contact their Field Liaison if they have questions or concerns about work load, field instruction/supervision, learning contract, field evaluations or the integration of classroom assignments and the field internship. When a Field Liaison is not designated, the Social Work Field Director will fulfill the role of Field Liaison.

**When and why should Field Instructors contact their assigned Field Liaison or Field Director?**

Throughout the year, field instructors should contact their field liaison if they have questions or concerns about their students, learning contract, field evaluations, or the integration of classroom assignments and the field placement.

**What is the difference between a Field Instructor and Field Liaison?**

A **Field Instructor** is an agency staff member who provides weekly supervision to the student intern. The Field Instructor must have a BSW/MSW degree and a minimum of two years post-graduate professional social work experience.

A **Field Liaison** provides a link between the School of Social Work, the student and the internship agency. Field Liaisons meet jointly with the student and Field Instructor at least once per semester to discuss progress made toward completing internship assignments. Field Liaisons are also available to the student and the agency for problem resolution. Field Liaisons are experienced MSWs from the community and/or faculty members.

**What are supervision requirements for an internship?**

All students must be supervised by a BSW or MSW who has at least 2 years of post-graduate professional social work experience. BSW students receive at least 1 hour of supervision per week. A small number of students receive weekly supervision from an on-site task supervisor and weekly supervision from an off-site BSW or MSW supervisor.

**What happens if problems arise during an internship?**

Problems that arise during an internship are first addressed between the field instructor and the student. The field liaison is available for problem resolution as needed. If problems cannot be resolved between the student, the field liaison and the field instructor, a performance contract should be developed to identify areas of concern and a method to address the concern. A time frame to complete the performance contract should also be determined. Detailed information to address problems during an internship may be found in the **Field Problems and Resolutions** section of the field manual.

**Can students request to change internships during the year?**

Students are not permitted to request a change of field placement during the academic year. Detailed information can be found in the **Field Problems and Resolutions** section of the field manual.

**Are students required to have background checks prior to beginning their internships?**

Background checks are required by some agencies before a student is accepted for, and/or allowed to begin an internship. If an agency requires any type of background check and/or medical testing, the agency should notify the intern of these requirements during the interview process. Conducting background checks is the responsibility of the agency. If an agency is not able to pay for these additional requirements, payment is the responsibility of the student.

Background checks are conducted by the SBU School of Social Work to assist in appropriate placement of the student. Background checks are not made available to third parties.

## **Scheduling**

### **Can a practicum take place during evening and weekend hours?**

Students need to be at their field agency during normal business hours and during times when their field supervisor is available. These conditions do not usually allow students to do their entire internship during evening or weekend hours although it might be possible to complete some hours during these times.

### **Can students work while attending the BSW program?**

Many students work while attending the BSW program. It is recommended that full-time BSW students work no more than 20 hours per week.

### **What are the policies regarding University holidays, sick days and vacation days during field placement?**

BSW students cannot accrue field hours when the University is closed and/or identified field supports are not available to the student. Students needing to take additional time off during their practicum, or wishing to make up time missed for illness or vacation, must discuss their requests with their Field Instructor and their Field Liaison/Field Director.

## **Transportation**

### **Does a student need a car for an internship?**

Many field placements require that students have reliable transportation to carry out assignments such as home visits, outreach and community work. In addition, many practicums are located in rural areas that are underserved by public transportation. The need for reliable transportation is discussed beginning with application to the Social Work Program and during the field placement process. While the Social Work Program will work closely with each student to address individual needs, this does not guarantee field placement with a specific agency or within a specific geographic location. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to fulfill the expectations of their field placement and discuss any limitations and concerns with their Field Instructor. These areas of concern should be discussed in the interview process.

### **Can students drive clients?**

Students shall not use their personal vehicles for transportation of field agency clients. Students **may** accompany agency personnel to observe routine agency responsibilities and the BSW program recognizes there may be exceptions to this rule due to agency expectations on practicum students.

See more details under **Policy Issues**.

## **Attendance**

Students are expected to schedule and attend all field days as if it were their job. This includes arriving to work on time and calling with unforeseen scheduling problems, such as an illness. Students should schedule all doctor and personal appointments outside of scheduled field times.

### **COVID-19 Guidelines**

Students are expected to adhere to the BEARCAT BLUEPRINT and all agency policies re: COVID. If masks are not required, students are encouraged to wear masks regardless. The COVID vaccine is recommended for all students, especially those working with vulnerable populations such as a skilled nursing facility.

### **What if a student contracts COVID-19?**

Students are expected to stay home if they have symptoms of or they test positive for COVID. Again, following agency policy and procedure is expected.

# BSW Educational Standards

---

## ***BSW Field Education Objectives***

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has established Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) on social work curriculum. The intent of this policy is to support academic excellence by establishing standards for professional competence. The purpose of the policy outline on curriculum content is to encourage students to develop the knowledge, values, and skills needed to be successful generalist practitioners upon graduation. CSWE believes field education is a crucial component in social work curriculum and in the 2015 EPAS Educational Policy 2.2 states that:

Signature pedagogies are elements of instruction and of socialization that teach future practitioners the fundamental dimensions of professional work in their discipline – to think, to perform, and to act ethically and with integrity. Field education is the signature pedagogy for social work. The intent of field education is to integrate the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum-classroom and field-are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the Social Work Competencies. Field education may integrate forms of technology as a component of the program.

## ***Core Competencies Defined***

CSWE has outlined nine core competencies that are necessary in social work education. Below is an outline of the nine core competencies and examples of types of behaviors the students may exhibit in field education. These competencies are necessary to shape students' futures and continue the social work profession's promotion of human and community well-being. The nine core competencies include: ethical and professional behavior; engaging diversity and difference in practice; advancing human rights and social, economic and environmental justice; engaging in practice-informed research; engaging in policy practice; and engaging, assessing, intervening and evaluating practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Upon successfully completing BSW field education, students will be able to demonstrate these nine core competencies.

### **Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas.

Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession's history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers:

- make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
- use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

### **Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice**

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power. Social workers:

- apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
- present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and
- apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice**

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social

justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected. Social workers:

- apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and
- engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.

#### **Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice**

Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice. Social workers:

- use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;
- apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and
- use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

#### **Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice**

Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. They are also knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation. Social workers:

- Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;
- assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;
- apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

#### **Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and



interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness.

Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate. Social workers:

- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and value the importance of inter-professional collaboration in this process. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment and decision-making. Social workers:

- collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;
- develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and
- select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers value the importance of inter-professional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, inter-professional, and inter-organizational collaboration. Social workers:

- critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;
- use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;
- negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and
- facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

### **Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness. Social workers:

- select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;
- critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and
- apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels

## ***BSW Field Education Courses***

Students in the BSW program engage in two practicum courses for developing competencies in generalist practice. While field varies in populations and concentrations, the courses are designed to focus on a strengths-based model and person-in-environment approach, with particular attention on how human behavior grows and develops as a part of the planned change process. As outlined below, students will enroll in SWK 4256: BSW Seminar and Practicum I in the fall and SWK 4266: BSW Seminar and Practicum II in the spring of their senior year.

**SWK 4253 BSW Seminar and Practicum I – 3 hours (Fall)** This is the first of two seminar and practicum courses designed to assist students to discuss and evaluate their field work experiences. The course will facilitate and reinforce the application of social work values, ethics, knowledge, and skills in field settings. Students will complete 200 hours in their field placement as part of this course. Prerequisite: Admission to BSW program and completion of SWK 3113, SWK 3123, SWK 3133 with a minimum of a “C” in each course. Additionally, students must be released through the Student Field Readiness Tool to enter field. This process is under the direction of both the Director of Field Education and Director of the Social Work Program.

**SWK 4269 BSW Seminar and Practicum II – 9 hours (Spring)** This is the second of two seminar and practicum courses designed to assist students to discuss and evaluate their field work experiences. The course will facilitate and reinforce the application of social work values, ethics, knowledge, and skills in field settings. Students will complete 250 hours in their field placement as part of this course. Prerequisite: Admission to BSW program and completion of SWK 3113, SWK 3123, SWK 3133, SWK4113 with a minimum of a “C” in each course.

## ***BSW Field Education Hour Requirements***

Full time students will meet the expectations of the practicum requirement by completing 500 hours in a field placement. The first semester students will complete 150 hours in their field placements. The second semester students will complete 350 hours in their field placements. Students must complete these hours over the entire fall and spring semester. Students are not allowed to leave their placements early, even if they have completed the required number of hours. Student discretion can be used if they feel they would like to complete more than 500 hours in their field placements over the two semesters. However, students will be dismissed from the field education component if the 500 hour minimum over two semesters is not met. No exceptions will be made to not completing the expected practicum hours. However, in unusual circumstances, including, but not limited to, an illness or accident, the student must send a written request to the Director of Field Education outlining reasons for needing more time to complete practicum hours. Prior to submitting the request, the student must seek permission from his/her field instructor to make changes in the agreed upon hours. A date of approval by the Field Instructor must be included in the student letter. These requests will be reviewed by the Director of Field Education and the BSW Program Director and a letter will be sent to the student in response to the request within one week. If approval is granted, a time frame for completing field hours will be provided in the letter from the Director of Field Education and the BSW Program Director. If the student does not adhere to the plan provided, the student will automatically be dismissed from his/her field placement.

## ***BSW Field Admission Requirements***

The following requirements must be met prior to students beginning field placement:

1. Obtain a GPA of at least a 2.5 in all social work courses completed at the time of field placement.
2. Completion of SWK 2233, SWK 3013, SWK 3043, SWK 3063, SWK 3073, SWK 3113, SWK 3123 and SWK 3133. Must have a “C” or better in all prerequisite courses and in SWK 3113, SWK 3123, and SWK 3133.
3. Has exhibited acceptable performance according to established academic, community, and professional social work standards in BSW program.
4. Completion of any probationary conditions outlined in the initial acceptance letter.
5. Adheres to all deadlines provided by the BSW Field Director related to the completion of field paperwork.
6. Work with the BSW Field Director on appropriate options for field placement and obtain approval from the BSW Field Director prior to accepting a field site.

## ***Criminal History and Field Placement***

As previously stated in the BSW Handbook, students with criminal histories will not automatically be denied admission to the program. This also includes field placement. Eligibility will be considered on a case-by-case basis. However, students should be aware that a criminal background may prevent field placement or employment in certain settings. Additionally, students may not be able to obtain professional licensure. As laws vary from state to state, students are encouraged to consult individual state licensing agencies for additional information. Social work licensure information for Missouri can be obtained on the Internet by visiting <http://www.pr.mo.gov/socialworkers.asp>

Prior to entering field placement, all BSW students will be required to submit to a background check. Forms will be available online to fill out the paperwork necessary to complete this check. If concerns arise, the BSW Program has the right to request further background checks at the cost of the student before entering a field placement. Additional background checks may be required by the agency for specific field placements. The student is responsible for any additional costs related to additional background checks. Students must complete the required forms and receive confirmation of their background screening before a field placement is identified. Students will NOT be placed in field agencies without background clearance.

# Student Placement Process

---

## ***Introduction to Field Placement***

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) identifies field education as the signature pedagogy for which students learn their profession. The social work program's desire is for students' experiences in the field to incorporate what they have learned in the classroom and make it come alive in the practice setting. It is important to recognize the field practicum as an extension of students' educational experiences. Consequently, the placement of students is based upon their educational needs and the availability of placement slots within agencies. The Director of Field Education is committed to considering personal factors related to the type and location of placement settings. However, the primary concern is placing students in enriching environments that maximize their professional development. It is crucial for students to carefully consider their field placement options. One of the most important considerations is with respect to the mandated hours required per semester. The expectation of all students entering into field placement is that they will be able to do most, if not all, of their placement during regular weekday business hours. Students who are unable to make this commitment should discuss with the Director of Field Education the possibility of postponing their field placement.

## ***Student Placement Process***

Placements are made by the Director of Field Education after considering student preferences, educational needs, and agency capacity. Placements begin in the fall semester and continue through the spring semester. *Students are requested not to contact field agencies without discussing it first with the Director of Field Education.* The procedure for securing a field practicum is as follows:

1. The student will fill out a **Field Information Form** and **resume** and submit it to the Director of Field Education by the deadline provided. Failure to submit the form on time may jeopardize the student's ability to participate in a field practicum for the following academic year.
2. The Director of Field Education will contact the student to set up a time to discuss field placement options. Together they will develop several available field site options.
3. The Director of Field Education will contact the preferred agency to confirm their willingness to take practicum students and confirm to the student the agency's willingness.
4. The student will contact the agency directly to set up an interview time. The student will prepare a professional resume to bring to the interview with them.
5. The student will arrive on time to the interview and be dressed in professional attire. After the interview, the student will send a thank you card to all agencies who interviewed them.
6. The student will report back to the Director of Field Education and indicate what agency he/she would like to be placed with for his/her practicum. The Director of Field Education will contact the preferred agency as to whether or not the student will be accepted. When there is an agreement between all three parties the student and the agency will receive a letter confirming the placement for the following academic year.

## ***Employment-Based Placement Process***

The purpose of field work is to give students the opportunity to foster the integration of empirical and practice-based knowledge. The field experience is designed to provide students with new and challenging opportunities which will enhance their skill set. The standard policy for the social work program is to provide students placement in field agencies different from their current or previous employment. This is based on the educational rationale that students will be better generalist practitioners if they are provided the broadest variety of practice opportunities. The option of a student using a current or previous employer should only be requested under conditions of extreme hardship or special circumstances. This will be **considered on an individual basis** by the Director of Field Education. The following steps must be taken prior to consideration of an employment based practice:

1. The student should complete the **Employment-Based Placement Form** and return to the Director of Field Education.
2. The Director of Field Education will review the form and determine the appropriateness of an employment based practicum for the student.
3. The student will be notified in writing of the decision.
4. Students should have an alternative plan developed for the completion of practicum hours in the event that the **Employment-Based Placement Form** is not accepted and/or does not meet the educational requirements needed.

Prior to approval, the student will be responsible for contacting his/her employer and ensuring the below guidelines are acceptable.

1. The Field Instructor cannot be the agency supervisor normally assigned to the applicant in his/her job.
2. There must be a qualified field instructor within the agency.
3. The **Learning Contract** and assignments must not be completed during a student's ordinary job responsibilities.
4. Practicum hours and normal work hours must be clearly shown to the Director of Field Education in writing.
5. The agency must agree to allow the student's practicum time to be educationally focused and meet the requirements of the BSW program and CSWE standards. A student's employment at the agency should not be allowed to interfere with the educational component of field learning.
6. The student should be provided with different client populations, program areas, or service areas during field hours.
7. The agency and student will be willing to sign an employer waiver indicating if the student is terminated from the agency they will be responsible for notifying the BSW program and provide the circumstances of termination.
8. Agency support of the plan at all appropriate levels must be verified using the **Field Placement Contract**.

## Roles and Responsibilities in Field Education

---

### ***Expectations of Field Agency***

Field agencies are committed to strengthen students understanding of social work education by reinforcing student learning with the purposes, values, and ethics of the profession. They will promote these activities as demonstrated by:

1. Provide learning opportunities for the students that allow demonstration of (CSWE) core competencies and the acquisition of an eclectic knowledge base (fields of practice, systems theories, the ecological perspective, human behavior and the social environment, social welfare policy and policy practice, social work practice, research-informed practice and practice-informed research, values and principles that guide practice); acquisition of professional values and application of professional ethics (National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, International Federation of Social Workers, awareness of personal values, and management of ethical dilemmas); the use of a wide range of practice skills (micro, mezzo, and macro); orientation to target any size system (micro, mezzo, and macro); emphasis on client empowerment, strengths and resiliency; the importance of human diversity; advocacy for human rights, and the pursuit of social and economic justice; work within an organizational structure; assumption of a wide range of professional roles (counselor, educator, broker, case manager, mobilize, mediator, facilitator, integrator/coordinator, manager, initiator, negotiator, spokesperson, organizer, consultant, and advocate); application of critical thinking skills; incorporation of research informed-practice; and the use of planned change (Kirst-Ashman and Hull, 2012);
2. A commitment to high quality services to the client in an atmosphere compatible with the ethics and values of the social work profession as listed in the NASW Code of Ethics. Specifically, focusing on the value of human diversity, as shown by the organizations work with various dimensions of diversity. This includes, but is not limited to, age, class, race, ethnicity, people of color, culture, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sex, sexual orientation, immigration status, political ideology, and religion;
3. Offer opportunities for students to take part in staff meetings, in-service training, interagency conferences, and other learning opportunities that arise;
4. Adequate physical space, if needed, to meet with clients, write reports, have supervisory conferences, and any other activities necessary;
5. Orient the students to policies, forms, schedules, and organizational structure of the agency;
6. Develop and maintain records and reports on students performances;
7. Agency commitment to allow the field instructor time away from her/his normal duties for the amount of time necessary to plan and oversee the student's learning experience;



8. Designate a field instructor, mutually agreed upon by the practicum agency and the Director of Field Education, who will provide weekly supervision to discuss student's assigned tasks and activities;
9. Allow time for the field instructor to attend BSW program meetings, orientations, etc., in conjunction with the placement;
10. The agency views participation in the education of BSW students as a worthwhile activity and agrees to support the goals and objectives of the social work program.

## ***Expectations of Field Instructor***

Field instructors are dedicated social work professionals who are committed to the next generation of social workers by providing insight, education, and growth to students in their placement settings.

The criteria for selection are below:

1. A minimum of two years of experience with master's or bachelor's degree in social work from a CSWE accredited program, or a related field as approved by the Director of Field Education
2. In a setting that does not employ a person with a bachelor's or master's degree in social work, a social service professional may be designated as a contact person for the agency, if the agency is willing to provide appropriate learning experiences. The Director of Field Education will consult regularly with the agency contact person and meet weekly with the student for instruction and consultation. The Director of Field Education will meet one-on-one with the agency contact person, prior to student placement, to discuss the following items with the social service professional. These include:
  - a) The definition and roles of a generalist social work practitioner.
  - b) Examples of appropriate student practicum experiences.
  - c) A copy of the NASW Code of Ethics and an overview of the values and ethics adhered to by the social work profession.
  - d) The student **Learning Contract**.
3. Will provide an educationally focused practicum experience as outlined in this Field Manual;
4. Anticipates remaining in the field agency for the duration of the student's practicum;
5. In the case of absence, assigns someone at the agency to oversee the student's learning;
6. Is recognized in his/her area of practice as a competent professional whom adheres to ethical standards;
7. Will provide educational supervision. The expectation is to meet with the student weekly to review and provide feedback to work performed, allow opportunities for the student to ask questions, and promote the integration of classroom and field learning experiences.
8. Develops a **Learning Plan** with the student by appropriate deadlines;
9. Assigns and monitors the student's performance when they are assigned to work with other agency staff as a part of the practicum experience.
10. Orientates the student to agency policies and procedures including but not limited to, dress code, attendance, record keeping, practice procedures, and agency safety protocol;
11. Attends and participates in the field orientation organized by the BSW program;
12. Provides times of availability to the student during the student's practicum hours;
13. Completes the student's evaluation at the end of the practicum;
14. Informs the Director of Field Education immediately in the event concerns arise in the student's performance;

15. Communicates periodically with the Director of Field Education. This includes allowing opportunities and providing agency space to meet with the student and Director of Field Education at least two times per semester;
16. Provides assignments which will enhance the student's learning and professional growth as a generalist practitioner;
17. Reviews the student's hours in the practicum setting and insure the student has completed the required hours prior to the final evaluation.

## ***Expectations of Director of Field Education***

The Director of Field Education is responsible for providing generalist practice opportunities for students to demonstrate the core competencies of social work practice. The role includes the following duties:

1. Recruits, assesses, and selects social service agencies as field practicum sites;
2. Develops and maintains cooperative relationships between the social work program and field sites;
3. Secures and maintains **Field Placement Contracts** with all agencies who agree to be practicum placements;
4. Builds a positive working relationship with the student, field instructor, and field agency representatives by being available on a reasonable basis and having a working knowledge of the BSW field policies and procedures;
5. Coordinates the field placement process with the student and selected agency representatives;
6. Works to match students to field agencies which will expand their strengths and support their professional development;
7. Oversees the implementation of field education policies and procedures in the field education setting by providing consultation and necessary materials to the student and field agency;
8. Empowers students professional growth and development in the field agency and supports the student and field agency in the event difficulties arise in the field placement;
9. Serves as the representative of the BSW program for field agencies used as practicum sites;
10. Monitors student learning in field placement by reviewing and approving the **Learning Contract** and providing feedback on assignments;
11. Meets with field instructors and students during the semester to discuss the students field experiences, assignments, and progress;
12. Provides a field orientation training workshop at the beginning of each fall semester;
13. Keeps documentation of required placement forms and students reported time;
14. Assigns a final grade for a student's field experience.



## ***Expectations of the Student***

The student's role is a critical component in field education. The primary responsibility of a social work student is to act as an active partner in planning, carrying out, and evaluating his/her practicum with continual awareness of the expectations of a professional social workers mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. BSW students will be responsible for applying this professional code in their field placement. The following are expectations the students will have to uphold this behavior in field placements:

1. BSW students will be accountable for their actions and take ownership of their learning process;
2. Will attend and actively participate in the seminar class;
3. Will conduct themselves in a professional manner including, but not limited to, being on time, dressing in accordance to agency policy, and immediately informing field instructors of unforeseen changes in their schedule;
4. Absences from regularly scheduled field work days must be approved by the student's field instructor. If a student is absent for any reason, including sickness, arrangements must be made to make up those hours. If an agency has approved a professional training and requests the student to attend, those hours may count towards the practicum requirement;
5. Completes all university requirements in relation to field placement;
6. Communicates with the field instructor and the Director of Field Education in a timely manner any conflicts that have arisen or might arise and be open to discussing strategies and problem solving techniques to minimize any potential or ongoing conflicts in his/her field placement;
7. Establishes and maintains a positive, courteous, and professional working relationship with the Director of Field Education, the field instructor, and agency staff in the field setting.
8. Adheres to the mission, policies, and procedures of the field agency and notifies the Director of Field Education in a timely manner if there is any discrepancy between agency policy and professional ethics.
9. Works with the field instructor to prepare and implement a **Learning Contract** in their field agency;
10. Takes responsibility for being an active participant in supervision with the field instructor by preparing and participating in weekly supervision meetings;
11. Maintains a weekly **Field Journal** and **Hours Documentation** and obtains signatures from their field instructor and provides copies to the Director of Field Education in a timely manner;
12. Comply with the Patient Confidentiality and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). They shall follow all policies and procedures of the agency, including those governing the use and disclosure of individually identifiable health information under federal law, specifically 45 CFR parts 160 and 164;
13. Have reliable transportation to the field agency;

14. Look for ongoing ways to apply classroom knowledge to field experience activities;
15. Have a firm understanding of the social work code of ethics and apply these principles to the practice setting at all times;
16. Complete all field hours over the course of the complete semester and be present at the agency throughout the entire academic semester as outlined by the BSW Program Calendar;
17. Complete a minimum of 200 hours in the first semester and 250 hours in the second semester during what are considered normal working days and hours (typically Monday-Friday 8am to 5pm).
18. If maintains outside employment, or extracurricular activities, which interfere with normal practicum working days and hours, will adjust, or terminate employment or activity to be fully available for their practicum.
19. Complete HIPPA (Health Information Privacy and Portability Act) prior to field. Students may not participate in practice clinic observation without completing this training.

## Evaluation

---

### ***Student Evaluation by the Field Instructor***

The purpose of the evaluation process is to provide students feedback to contribute to their ongoing professional and personal growth and development. The strengths perspective is strongly encouraged in this process to recognize progress, discuss learning needs, and identify areas of growth and change. The evaluation of a student's performance and improvement is ongoing throughout field education between the field instructor and the student. **At any point during the semester the field instructor recognizes problems in the student's performance, the field instructor should communicate with the student his/her concerns. If the student's behavior does not change, the field instructor should inform the Director of Field Education immediately.** In addition to this ongoing process, the field instructor is responsible for evaluating students by the following:

1. The student and field instructor will have weekly supervision. During this time, the supervisor will provide constructive feedback on the student's progress and growth areas;
2. A **Learning Contract** will be established between the student and field instructor. The field instructor will be responsible for rating how well the student is meeting their learning plan objectives. The learning plan will be evaluated by the field instructor at the midterm and end of the student's practicum.
3. The student will provide the field instructor a **Student Evaluation Form** at mid-term and the end of each semester which provides a formal mechanism of feedback from the field instructor to the student. It is important that the formal evaluation not be a surprise to the student. Therefore, the student should be aware of all problems or concerns prior to form completion.

### ***Student Evaluation of the Field Education Experience***

The BSW Program strongly encourages students to critically analyze and evaluate the knowledge, values, and skills they obtained in their field education experience. At the end of their field placement, the students will be asked to complete an evaluation regarding their field education experiences. The Director of Field Education will use this information in making decisions regarding future agency placements.

### ***Field Instructor's Evaluation of the Field Education Program***

The BSW Program is committed to preparing and equipping competent generalist practitioners. The field instructor's feedback is very important regarding the placement process, the field trainings, and the Field Education Program in general. At the end of the practicum experience, the field instructor will be asked to submit an evaluation form of the Field Education Program. This information will be reviewed by the Director of Field Education and used to make changes to improve the program. Field instructors are also strongly encouraged to provide feedback during field trainings and through ongoing communication with the Director of Field Education.





## Policy

---

### ***Statement of Confidentiality***

Social work students will be expected to understand the NASW Code of Ethics and the relationship of privacy and confidentiality prior to entering field placement. The agency will reiterate these ethical responsibilities by orienting the student on the agency's policies and procedures and applicable federal laws and regulations, including HIPAA Privacy Standards, related to confidentiality of health information. The student is expected to comply with all agency policies and procedures related to confidentiality. The BSW program agrees to not require students to use or disclose any individually identifiable information about any field placement's clients in any reports, essays, and class discussion.

### ***Use of Personal Vehicles***

Students should not drive their personal vehicles or University owned or rented vehicles under any circumstances. Students may drive agency vehicles provided the agency provides for insurance and covers the students under the agency insurance policy.

Students should contact their automobile insurance carrier about any limits on coverage when using their personal vehicle in field education. Automobile liability insurance is the student's responsibility and the university will not be held responsible for any accidents that take place during field education hours. Many placements will require the use of your personal automobile. Prior to accepting a placement, the student is responsible for discussing with potential agencies their automobile policy to make sure they are comfortable with the agencies requirements. A student will be advised to not accept a placement if the agency and student cannot agree on transportation expectations.

As a matter of record and additional areas of liability, SBU provides practice liability only, and does not provide auto insurance to students. Any accidents involving a SBU student who is driving during the course of field placement must be reported to local law enforcement, the agency, and the School of Social Work Field Director.

### ***Liability Insurance***

Liability insurance will be provided by the BSW program for all students entering field placement. The BSW program highly recommends that students purchase individual professional liability insurance over and above the insurance provided by the university. Coverage is available through student membership in the National Association of Christian Social Workers (NACSW) or the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). Membership applications are available online through the organizations' homepage.

### ***Transporting and Handling Medication***

Students are not to dispense, package, or transport medication at any time or under any circumstances.

## ***Student Schedule, Attendance, and Holidays***

BSW students are required to complete a minimum of 200 hours in the first semester and 250 hours in the second semester for a total of 450 hours, unless otherwise stated. In the event a student completes his/her hours prior to the semester ending, **the student will be expected to continue to report to the field placement for the full duration of the semester.** Students should complete their hours during normal business hours for their specific agency. Any variations to this schedule must be planned in advance and approved by their field instructor.

### **Students will be expected to observe agency holidays that occur during the placement semester.**

Students will be required to make up any hours needed during the semester due to holidays. If the student is scheduled to work during a university holiday, the student is expected to make arrangements with the agency if they are unable to work during this time. Students will be expected to immediately report any absences to their Field Instructor due to illness, conference, or other problem situations that may arise during placement. Students will be responsible for making up all hours missed.

## ***Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect***

It is the policy of the BSW program that students follow Missouri Revised Statutes regarding the reporting of abuse and neglect. The Missouri Revised Statute states:

### **Section 210.115.1**

When any physician, medical examiner, coroner, dentist, chiropractor, optometrist, podiatrist, resident, intern, nurse, hospital or clinic personnel that are engaged in the examination, care, treatment or research of persons, and any other health practitioner, psychologist, mental health professional, social worker, day care center worker or other child-care worker, juvenile officer, probation or parole officer, jail or detention center personnel, teacher, principal or other school official, minister as provided by section 352.400, peace officer or law enforcement official, or other person with responsibility for the care of children has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect or observes a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, that person shall immediately report or cause a report to be made to the division in accordance with the provisions of sections 210.109 to 210.183. As used in this section, the term "abuse" is not limited to abuse inflicted by a person responsible for the child's care, custody and control as specified in section 210.110, but shall also include abuse inflicted by any other person.

If the student is in a field placement they have an obligation to report abuse and neglect if they have firsthand knowledge of it, or if they have personal knowledge of evidence which strongly suggests abuse or neglect. Students must inform their field instructor and the Director of Field Education of the action taken. The Children's Division Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline Unit (CA/NHU) accepts reports of suspected child abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Reports are received through a toll-free telephone line which is answered seven days a week, 24 hours a day. The **toll-free** number is **1-800-392-3738**.

## ***Background Checks***

Prior to entering field placement, all BSW students will be required to submit to a background check. Forms will be provided to complete the paperwork necessary to complete this check. If concerns arise, the BSW Program has the right to request further background checks at the cost of the student before entering a field placement. Additional background checks may be required by the agency for specific field placements. The student is responsible for any additional costs related to additional background checks. Students must complete the required forms and receive confirmation of their background screenings before a field placement is identified. Students will NOT be placed in field agencies without background clearance. Background checks are not released to third parties.

## ***Agency Conflict of Interest***

The BSW Program believes it is important for students to recognize and avoid any conflicts of interest which might interfere with students' discretion and impartial judgment. If in doubt, the student is responsible for referring to the NASW Code of Ethics for potential conflicts of interest. However, the BSW program believes it is not in the students, agencies, or clients' best interest to allow the following scenarios in field education:

1. Students who have been the recipient of services offered by the field agency within the past five years;
2. Placement in any agency where there is a possibility of a dual or multiple relationships with their field instructor or another agency representative.

## ***Safety Procedures***

Students are required to attend Field Safety Training and complete the Field Safety Checklist within the first week of field placement. For their safety, students will not be allowed to continue in field without the completion of the checklist and safety training. Training is generally offered at the end of the semester prior to field placement.

Social work faculty recommend students complete the following trainings: Ask, Listen, Refer; Green Dot; Haven Training; and Active Intruder Training

It is the BSW Program's intent that you have the right to be informed of any risks associated with your educational and professional preparation. We believe that this risk can be minimized with proper knowledge, preparation, and an awareness of areas of concern. The BSW Program expects students to recognize their limits of knowledge and skills and avoid situations that are not within their area of competence. When questions arise in field placement on how to handle a particular case it is always appropriate to consult your field instructor. Below are generalized recommendations on how to reduce risk in specific areas of social work practice that can be problematic for field students.

## **Home Visits**

It is an expectation of the BSW program that students in field education perform duties and tasks expected of a professional social worker, which includes visiting in clients' homes. Students will be responsible for following agency guidelines on home visits; however, the BSW program strongly suggests students routinely adhere to the following suggestions to ensure ongoing safety during the field placement. These suggestions include:

1. All home visits will be approved by the field instructor prior to the visit;
2. The field instructor, or another agency representative, will be notified of the time, location, and planned duration of the visit;
3. If possible, the student will take a cell phone on visits and provide the field instructor with the number. If a student does not have a cell phone, the alternative would be for the student to provide the phone number of the client he/she is visiting to the field instructor;
4. The student will have emergency contact information for the field instructor, or another agency representative, prior to conducting the home visit;
5. Students should not make home visits after dark alone unless they have assessed risk with their field instructors prior to conducting the visits;
6. Students should ask their clients prior to home visits if there are any potential risks including, but not limited to: dogs, cats, snakes, and other household pets which may be a threat;
7. If a student arrives at the home and the client is under the influence, the student should leave the home immediately;
8. The student should not enter or remain in a home that appears to have dangerous levels of structural damage or appears to be an extremely unsanitary environment;
9. When in doubt, students should NOT TAKE RISKS!

## **Threatening Behavior from Clients**

It is important to discuss with your field instructor early in your field placement agency policies and procedures and recommended courses of action for clients who are angry, threaten, intimidate, or make the student feel abnormally uncomfortable. If you experience a threatening client in your field placement, immediately discuss this with your field instructor or another available agency representative available. It is appropriate to ask your field instructor, or another agency representative, to accompany you on any visits with any client who you feel may pose a danger to your safety and well-being.

## **Sexual Harassment**

Students should at all times avoid situations which could place them in compromising positions. Students are expected to immediately report to their field instructors and the Director of Field Education any sexual advances, overtures, or situations in which someone continually makes them feel uncomfortable. Additionally, students should review the NASW Code of Ethics regarding sexual harassment and misconduct found in Sections 1.09, 1.11, 2.07 and 2.08

## **Emergency Contact**

For any concerns, injury, incidents, or especially in emergencies, students are expected to notify their field instructors and the SBU Director of Field Education. **Students should always seek medical attention first in emergencies**, then notify the Director of Field Education when possible. If the Director of Field Education is unavailable, the SBU Social Work Program Director shall be notified. Students may be directed to the school nurse, counselor, or other appropriate referral source. Students may also need to complete an incident report when indicated or when advised by faculty. If social work faculty are unavailable, students may contact any of the following individuals:

**Neoma Sanders, MSW**  
**Director of Field Education**  
Cell: 417-894-4277

**Dr. Shelley Kilpatrick**  
**Behavioral Sciences Chair**  
417-328-1736 (business hours)

**Safety and Security**  
417-328-8733

**SBU School Nurse**  
417-328-1553

## ***Field Problems and Resolutions***

The BSW program recognizes the importance of matching in the field placement process. If a student, or an agency, determines after the interview they are not a good fit the following process should occur:

1. Students are allowed to turn down no more than one assigned field placement.
2. Students who are denied placement by two different agencies are required to meet with the Director of Field Education and the BSW Program Director. Options given to the student will include:
  - a. Students will be advised to extend her/his academic program another full year and pursue a placement the following year. In the interim, the student will be asked to pursue volunteer opportunities which require the student to go through the interview process.
  - b. Students will be advised that social work is not an appropriate profession for him/her and be referred to SBU's Success Center for guidance and/or SBU's Counseling Services for personal counseling.

After starting a field placement, the field instructor might decide the student is not meeting agency expectations outlined for a social work intern. The field instructor must take the following steps prior to determining this:

1. The field instructor will meet with the student to discuss his/her concerns and allow an agreed upon length of time for the student to rectify these concerns. The student is required to contact the Director of Field Education to notify them of the field instructor's concerns.
2. If the field instructor feels the student is not successfully addressing the concerns, the field instructor will request to meet with the Director of Field Education and the student to discuss the problem and complete a **Field Education Plan** to remedy the situation.
3. The field instructor, Director of Field Education, and the student will set a date to review the **Field Education Plan** to assure adherence to agency expectations have been met.
4. If the **Field Education Plan** is unsuccessful, the field instructor and the student will notify the Director of Field Education. The Director of Field Education will contact the agency and set a time for the student, field instructor, and the Director of Field Education to meet to discuss termination of agency placement.
5. In the event that the student, field instructor, and the Director of Field Education are unable to rectify the situation the student will be required to leave the field agency.

Students who have one failed placement during their field experience at SBU are not guaranteed another placement. Failed placements are defined as any placement where the student is asked by the field agency to leave the placement or where the student is performing at an unacceptable level as determined by the field instructor and the Director of Field Education. Students are not allowed at any time within the field placement period to request a new placement. The only exception to this rule would be if the agency the student was placed in became unable to complete the field experience due to unforeseen agency changes or if the agency was found during the semester to be involved in unethical practices and the agency did not immediately rectify the situation.

## Grievance Procedures During Field Placement

The student, field instructor, and Director of Field Education share responsibility for identifying, discussing, and working through any concerns that may arise during the field placement process. The student will be responsible for discussing problems as soon as they become apparent and be open to immediate and successful resolution of any concerns. This requires the student to be willing to have open and frequent communication between the BSW program and the field agency.

The Director of Field Education will maintain regular contact with the field agency and student and work to solve problems if needed. The BSW program can withdraw a student from a field placement due to problems which are unable to be resolved between the agency and student and/or due to other extenuating circumstances. Each individual situation will be carefully reviewed by the Director of Field Education for appropriateness. The following process should occur when a student wants to appeal the decisions of their Field Education:

1. Any social work student who has concerns related to field placement should first meet with the field instructor immediately, but no more than one week, of the concern.
2. If resolution of the matter is not achieved, the student should notify the Field Liaison, if applicable, or the Director of Field Education within 24 business hours after the meeting between the student and field instructor.
3. The Director of Field Education will meet with the student and the field instructor to mediate a resolution within ten business days of the initial meeting. A **Field Education Plan** will be developed between the field instructor and student to discuss steps for successful resolution of the concern. The plan will be forwarded to the BSW Program Director and the student's faculty advisor.
4. If a student disagrees with the **Field Education Plan**, the student will submit a grievance request in **writing** to the BSW Director of Field Education who will then convey the information to the BSW Program Director within five working days of receipt of the request. The grievance should include what specific items in the Field Education Plan the student disagrees with.
5. The BSW Program Director will meet with the student within 10 working days of the grievance request.
6. After meeting with the student, the BSW Program Director will provide a resolution to the Director of Field Education within 72 business hours.
7. If a satisfactory resolution is not found, the student should follow the appeals process outlined in SBU's *Student Handbook*.

## Program Accreditation

The BSW Program at Southwest Baptist University is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education and adheres to standards set forth by its Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards. A copy of the EPAS is provided to all field instructors and students by the Director of Field Education during the fall orientation seminar. It can also be located online at [www.cswe.org](http://www.cswe.org).



## Appendix A

### **NASW Code of Ethics** **(rev. August 2017)**

#### **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 Code of Ethics**

Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession has an obligation to articulate its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. The *NASW Code of Ethics* sets forth these values, principles, and standards to guide social workers' conduct. The *Code* is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve.

The *NASW Code of Ethics* serves six purposes:

1. The *Code* identifies core values on which social work's mission is based.
2. The *Code* summarizes broad ethical principles that reflect the profession's core values and establishes a set of specific ethical standards that should be used to guide social work practice.
3. The *Code* is designed to help social workers identify relevant considerations when professional obligations conflict or ethical uncertainties arise.
4. The *Code* provides ethical standards to which the general public can hold the social work profession accountable.
5. The *Code* socializes practitioners new to the field to social work's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards.

6. The *Code* articulates standards that the social work profession itself can use to assess whether social workers have engaged in unethical conduct. NASW has formal procedures to adjudicate ethics complaints filed against its members.\* In subscribing to this *Code*, social workers are required to cooperate in its implementation, participate in NASW adjudication proceedings, and abide by any NASW disciplinary rulings or sanctions based on it.

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

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

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

Ethical decision making is a process. In situations when conflicting obligations arise, social workers may be faced with complex ethical dilemmas that have no simple answers. 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.

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.

## Ethical Principles

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

### Value: Service

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

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

### Value: Social Justice

**Ethical Principle:** *Social workers challenge social injustice.*

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

### Value: Dignity and Worth of the Person

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

Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers promote clients' socially responsible self-determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients' capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Social workers are cognizant of

their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between clients' interests and the broader society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession.

### **Value: *Importance of Human Relationships***

**Ethical Principle:** *Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.*

Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process. Social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

### **Value: *Integrity***

**Ethical Principle:** *Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.*

Social workers are continually aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

### **Value: *Competence***

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

Social workers continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice. Social workers should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.

## ***Ethical Standards***

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

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

## **1. SOCIAL WORKERS' ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO CLIENTS**

### **1.1 Commitment to Clients**

Social workers' primary responsibility is to promote the wellbeing of clients. In general, clients' interests are primary. However, social

SBU Field Manual | 53

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.)

## **1.2 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.

## **1.3 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 audio taping or videotaping clients or permitting observation of services to clients by a third party.

## **1.4 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.

## **1.5 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, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical disability.

## **1.6 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.

### **1.7 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.

### **1.8 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.

### **1.9 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**

### **2.1 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, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, 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 wellbeing of clients.

### **2.2 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.

### **2.3 Interdisciplinary Collaboration**

- (a) Social workers who are members of an interdisciplinary team should participate in and contribute to decisions that affect the wellbeing 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 wellbeing.

### **2.4 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.



## **2.5 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.

## **2.6 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.

## **2.7 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.

## **2.8 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.

## **2.9 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**

#### **3.1 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.

#### **3.2 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.

#### **3.3 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.

#### **3.4 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.

#### **3.5 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.

#### **3.6 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.

#### **3.7 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*.

### **3.8 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.

### **3.9 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**

### **4.1 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.

### **4.2 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, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical disability.

#### **4.3 Private Conduct**

Social workers should not permit their private conduct to interfere with their ability to fulfill their professional responsibilities.

#### **4.4 Dishonesty, Fraud, and Deception**

Social workers should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, or deception.

#### **4.5 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.

#### **4.6 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.

#### **4.7 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.

#### **4.8 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**

#### **5.1 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.

#### **5.2 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' wellbeing, 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**

### **6.1 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.

### **6.2 Public Participation**

Social workers should facilitate informed participation by the public in shaping social policies and institutions.

### **6.3 Public Emergencies**

Social workers should provide appropriate professional services in public emergencies to the greatest extent possible.

#### **6.4 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, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical disability.

## **Appendix B**

### **NACSW's Statement of Faith and Practice**

The following statement of faith and practice appears in NACSW's Bylaws: Article II, Section 2

#### **Tenets emphasizing Christian beliefs:**

- 1 There is one God, who created and sustains everything that exists, and who continues to be active in human history.
- 2 Humanity is the highest creation of God, but rebelled against its Creator, and is in need of forgiveness and reconciliation.
- 3 God became incarnate in Jesus Christ, who died on the cross, who was raised bodily from the dead to reconcile human beings to their Creator, and who has promised to return personally in judgment to complete the establishment of His kingdom.
- 4 God works in and through people in the person of the Holy Spirit.
- 5 The character and purposes of God are revealed in the Bible, the Word of God, which is the basis for what Christians are to believe and how they are to live.
- 6 Jesus Christ calls all Christians to be a caring community and a corporate witness to faith in Him.

#### **Tenets emphasizing human relationships and responsibilities:**

- 7 Every individual is a person of worth, with basic human rights and essential human responsibilities.
- 8 The uniqueness of each human being and the distinctiveness of social groups derive from factors such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, life philosophy, family, culture, and economic and social structures.
- 9 Human beings are interdependent with each other and with their social and physical environments.
- 10 Jesus Christ is Lord over all areas of life, including social, economic and political systems.

#### **Tenets emphasizing vocation:**

- 11 A dynamic relationship exists between the Christian life and social work practice.
- 12 Christians in social work ought not to be motivated by temporal wealth, power or security.

13 Christians in social work ought to examine and evaluate all human ideologies and social work theories and methods as to their consistency with the Bible, their consciences, social laws, and professional codes of ethics.

14 Christians in social work ought to work for the temporal and eternal well-being of all human beings, and for the redemption of human communities and social institutions.

15 Christians in social work ought to support and submit themselves to the highest standards of professional education, practice, and ethics.

16 Christians in social work ought to use the insights of their faith in helping people, and to treat everyone as Jesus Christ would have them treated.