

## WHAT IS MEDIATION?

no action be taken, the normal process for handling complaints will be followed.

Mediation is a conflict resolution process whereby two or more parties meet with a trained mediator for the purpose of seeking a mutually satisfactory solution to an issue(s). Participation is voluntary. The mediator, who is neutral, facilitates the process of assisting the participants to develop a resolution.

Complaints against members in good standing, which fall within the mandate of SASW, will be examined for possible resolution through a mediation process. When a complaint is deemed suitable, the voluntary agreement of the parties to enter into mediation will be sought. When it has been determined that all issues have been resolved, the complaint file will be closed. If the mediation process is deemed not suitable, given the nature of the complaint, if mediation is unacceptable to any one of the parties or unsuccessful, or if the Professional Conduct Committee recommends that

**Saskatchewan  
Association  
of  
Social Workers**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
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Understanding  
the Regulatory  
Function:  
Receipt,  
Investigation  
and  
Adjudication  
of  
Complaints  
Against  
Registered  
Social Workers  
in

## WHAT IS REGULATION?

The social work profession is a regulated profession in every province in Canada. In 1993, the Saskatchewan Legislature passed an Act Respecting Social Workers (*The Social Workers Act*) which, among other things, empowered the **Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers (SASW)** to control the use of the title "**Social Worker**" (Section 24) and to discipline members (Section 25 to 34).

In order to enforce observance of these objectives, the Act provides for the establishment of a Professional Conduct Committee to adjudicate complaints referred to it. The intent of the Act is to serve & protect the public. In accordance with the the Act, a mechanism has been established by SASW to enable it to receive complaints, investigate, and adjudicate those complaints (Section 26).

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In order to use the title "*Social Worker*" in Saskatchewan, a person must become registered with the

Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers (Section 24 of The Act) through having the required qualifications, being of good character, and committing to the values of social work. As well, a current criminal record check & transcript of marks must be submitted.

## Product/Service Information



## WHO MAY COMPLAIN?

Members of the public, colleagues, and supervisors may make complaints. Employers are required under Section 44 of *The Social Workers Act* to report to SASW cases of termination for cause where the employer reasonably believes the cause is professional incompetence or professional misconduct.

## CAN A COMPLAINT BE ANONYMOUS/VERBAL ?

A complaint must be made in writing. It is preferred that the complaint be signed but that is not a specific requirement.

## WHAT IS A MEMBER'S OBLIGATION?

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Social workers are often involved with persons experiencing significant stress in their lives. A misunderstanding may arise and result in a complaint against a member. These complaints may or may not be justified. Members have a legal responsibility to cooperate with an investigation as established in Section 49 of *The Social Workers Act*.

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A COMPLAINT IS RECEIVED?

### Professional Conduct Committee

The Professional Conduct Committee meets regularly to review and determine if complaints warrant further investigation. The Committee assigns investigation work to designated committee members. Upon completion of the investigation, a formal report is completed, recommending "no action" or referral to the Discipline Committee for further action.

### Discipline Committee

A Discipline Committee, appointed by Council, made up of members from a Discipline Resource Pool, and a member of the public appointed by the Lt. Governor, hears and decides each case. Penalties, if any, are applied by the Discipline Committee.

## WHAT CAN A MEMBER BE CHARGED WITH?

Under *The Act*, a member may be charged with, and found guilty of, ***professional incompetence*** and/or ***professional misconduct*** when he/she has contravened any section of *The Social Workers Act*, the Canadian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics or any SASW standards of practice.