

**THE SASKATCHEWAN ASSOCIATION
OF
SOCIAL WORKERS**



**STANDARDS OF ETHICAL PRACTICE FOR
PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKERS IN
SASKATCHEWAN**

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FORWARD

The Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers has developed Standards of Ethical Practice for Professional Social Workers in Saskatchewan. The Standards were passed by Council on April 21, 1995. The standards described in this document are meant to assist social workers and the professional association in the regulation of social work practice.

These standards are generic in nature in order to provide a base line for the evaluation of social work practice. The protection of clients and the public are necessary for the continued credibility of the profession. The Social Work Act (Assented to May 4, 1993 and proclaimed April 17, 1995) outlines the process of accountability to these standards.

Each standard is accompanied by a set of guidelines. The intent is to provide ongoing direction in the carrying out of services. Agencies and employers will need to reference these standards to ensure the quality of their services to the public.

These standards are not static in nature. They will continually be evolving as the profession's knowledge and understanding continues to grow. Revisions will be part of the ongoing process.

Standards have been developed in the following areas:

- private practice;
- health care;
- school social work;
- child protection;
- custody and access

Standards have been drafted and are near completion in the area of:

- income security

Your support and cooperation is greatly appreciated in implementing these standards. Any suggestions regarding this document or the additional ones being developed will be respectfully accepted.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Standards of Ethical Practice for Professional Social Workers were generated at the request of the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers. They were developed by the Standards of Practice Committee, formerly called the Regulations of Practice Committee.

Our committee would like to express appreciation for the support and assistance given by:

The Alberta Association of Social Workers
The British Columbia Association of
Social Workers
The Canadian Association of Social Workers
The Ontario Association of Social Workers
The Quebec Association of
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The committee appreciates the support and encouragement they received from Council. Without this, the task would have been impossible.

STANDARDS OF ETHICAL PRACTICE FOR PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKERS IN SASKATCHEWAN

THE RATIONALE FOR THE REGULATION OF PROFESSIONS

In seeking to understand the issues related to the regulation of the social work profession, it is useful to consider the general question of rationale for regulating any of the professions. This section explores that background.

A profession may be defined as a cohesive and autonomous body of trained persons who perform work for the benefit of the public on the basis of applied specialized knowledge derived from education, research and practice experience. A key attribute of a professional is the exercise of discretionary judgment on behalf of a client who may not be able to judge the need for and/or quality of a service.¹ The terms “autonomous body” and “discretionary judgment” serve to differentiate a profession from an occupational group.

“The purpose of regulating members of a profession is to protect the public from preventable harm. The privilege of self regulation is granted to a profession by the provincial legislature. It is a social contract between a profession and the public. It is the property of the public the profession claims to serve.”²

The contract between a profession and society is part of the social contract between citizens and the government for public policy purposes. The question about establishing legislation to regulate a particular profession, as differentiated from other means of regulation, requires political decision makers to weigh the related costs of limiting practice and/or provision of services against the relative benefits/costs to the government and public. Decision makers must consider whether the public interest could be protected more effectively in other ways in relation to:

- protecting members of society from preventable harm;³
- the nature of the agency (or fiduciary)⁴ relationship between professionals and their clients;
- the use of public resources for the education of professionals⁵; and
- the use of public resources to build, maintain and operate institutional settings or government programs.

The agency’s (fiduciary) relationship of professional to client means that the professional must be relied upon to act in the best interests of the consumer, who may not possess or

be able to access the knowledge or skills needed to assess the need for or value of the professional’s services. Thus, the consumer is dependent upon the professional to be self-disciplined. The professional must at least recognize conflict of interest and behave ethically to protect the client’s interests.

Policing of the agency relationship is difficult, even by well motivated professionals. For any other group or government body it is difficult or impossible. There are also difficulties in using recourse to civil legal action to control this agency relationship.

Monitoring of the agency relationship by a profession is achieved by:

- the code of ethics and standards of practice;
- professional education socializing new recruits into the values and norms of the group; and
- the professional regulatory body having power to discipline members who do not fulfill their responsibilities as agents.

¹ In law, the public interest is at stake when there is “a pecuniary interest, or some interest by which their legal rights or liabilities are affected” (Campbell C.J., R. V. Bedfordshire, 24 L.J.Q.B. 84).

² “Closer To Home”, Report of the B.C. Royal Commission on Health Care and Costs. 1991. page D-29.

³ Protection involves preventing harm through entry requirements of formal qualifications and/or periods of supervised practice and establishing practice standards and service protocols. It also involves redress of negligence or misconduct through processes of investigation and discipline. These do not guarantee that negligence/misconduct will not occur.

⁴ The social worker’s relationship with a client can be characterized as a fiduciary relationship. In *Fiduciary Duties in Canada* by Ellis, fiduciary duty is described as follows:… where one party has placed its “trust and confidence” in another and the latter has accepted – expressly or by operation of law – to act in a manner consistent with the reposing of such “trust and confidence”, a fiduciary relationship has been established.

⁵ It is important to distinguish between competence for employment purposes and for professional registration. Academic preparation is important in gathering knowledge for tasks. The important factor in public accountability is registration, ensuring that the public has ongoing protection through peer evaluation of services.

INTRODUCTION:

This document on Standards of Practice For Professional Social Workers is the outcome of networking with NASW, CASW and the provincial associations across Canada. These standards have been adapted to meet the needs of practice in Saskatchewan.

A consultation process was conducted involving SASW, members of the social work community and other interested parties.

In this document are a set of standards for social work practice. These standards are presented as generic to professional social work and as such can be applied to various fields of practice and program areas within a field of practice. The generic standards are stated in such a way that they can be used as a base and model for articulation of more specific standard statements at the direct service level.

The standards incorporate the major areas of social work practice that need to be considered in employing and evaluating the services of social workers. The standards also rely on the Canadian Association of Social workers Code of Ethics for expanded description of specific aspects of social work practice such as the value base and confidentiality.

The Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers through its Professional Act and the Code of Ethics expects these standards to operationalize the following objects:

- 1) to establish, maintain and develop standards of knowledge, skill and competence among its members for the purpose of serving and protecting the public interest;
- 2) to establish, maintain and develop standards of professional conduct among its members;
- 3) to promote, develop and sponsor activities appropriate to the strengthening and unification of the social work profession;
- 4) to provide a means by which the association through its members may take action on issues of social welfare;
- 5) to edit and publish books, papers, journals and other forms of literature respecting social work in order to disseminate information to members of the association as well as to members of the public at large;
- 6) to encourage specialized studies in social work among its members and to provide assistance and facilities for special studies and research; and
- 7) to carry on any other activities related to the above.

General Characteristics of Standards

Regardless of the system or sub-systems to which standards are applied standards should be:

- realistic
- achievable
- understandable
- acceptable
- based on current knowledge
- written in positive terms
- indicative of acceptable performance
- amenable to measurement

Standards Defined

The social work practice standards that follow must be viewed as separate from but related to other types of standards that may be in effect in the workplace, such as: program standards, service protocols or procedural standards and organizational or departmental standards. Other types of standards already specified with a given field of practice should be congruent with and augment social work practice standards.

For the purposes of a generic statement of social work practice standards, a practice standard is defined as a generally accepted written expectation for social work practice which can be judged against established criteria. Criteria are statements which indicate the performance requirements to achieve the standard. The performance requirements should be observable and/or measurable.

Purpose of Standards

Social workers shall be governed by these Standards of Practice whenever providing social work services in any context. These Standards of Practice shall apply to the conduct of all social workers.

These standards are expected to:

- 1) promote a better protection of the public, and more specifically, of the clients of social workers;
- 2) improve the quality and, where necessary, the quantity of services social workers provide;
- 3) establish professional expectations so that accountability for practice can be maintained;
- 4) seek to provide uniformity in the quality of services offered;
- 5) reflect the core values, ethics, knowledge and skills of the social work profession so that other professions, employers, client groups and the general public will understand what social work practice encompasses;
- 6) establish professional expectations so that social workers can monitor, evaluate and improve their own practices;
- 7) serve as a base and provide direction for social work training and staff deployment; and
- 8) direct the concept of professional development for the future.

STANDARD I

Social workers shall have fully assimilated the values and principles which guide social work practice.

The following values and principles are of particular importance:

- respect for the dignity of every individual;
- belief in the ability of every individual to evolve and develop;
- recognition of the necessity to perceive and understand the individual as an element of interdependent systems which may promote change;
- respect for the rights of individuals, groups, and communities;
- respect for the principles of individual autonomy and self-determination;
- recognition of the right of any endangered individual to receive assistance and protection if necessary; and
- belief in and defense of the concept of social justice.

STANDARD II

Social Workers shall have a clear understanding of and have assimilated the philosophy, values, goals and functions of social work practice as defined in the Code of Ethics.¹

The goal of social work practice is for social workers to be dedicated to the welfare and self-realization of human beings; to the development and disciplined use of scientific knowledge regarding human and societal behaviors; to the development of resources to meet individual, group, national and international needs and aspirations; and to the achievement of social justice for all.

This is achieved by:

- 1) helping people manage their lives more effectively and develop to the fullest capacity;
- 2) helping people find and use the resources, services and opportunities that are appropriate to their needs;
- 3) promoting and developing effective and humane systems that provide people with resources and services;
- 4) creating awareness of the need to develop and improve resources; services, opportunities and mobilizing individuals, groups and organizations toward this end; and
- 5) developing and improving social policy.

¹ Code of Ethics developed and adopted by the Canadian Association of Social Workers in 1994, and by SASW Council on January 14, 1994.

STANDARD III

Social Workers shall demonstrate knowledge basic to the social work profession.

This knowledge is obtainable through formal professional social work education programs and experience. It shall be recognized that there are levels of practitioner knowledge beginning with the basic level and progressing to specialized or advanced levels.

Basic Professional Level

- 1) knowledge and understanding of human development, social systems, social institutions, organizations and socio-economic development;
- 2) knowledge and understanding of basic social work theories and processes in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities;
- 3) knowledge and understanding of methods of intervention;¹ and awareness of the “use of self” in methods of intervention.
- 4) knowledge and understanding of Canadian social welfare policies and related delivery systems;
- 5) knowledge and understanding of public and private delivery systems of social services, as well as the ability to use these systems;
- 6) knowledge and understanding of basic research concepts and techniques;
- 7) knowledge and understanding of social problems (their impact on individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations and communities), knowledge of the resources which may provide support, as well as the ability to use this knowledge in intervention;
- 8) knowledge and understanding of theories relating to personality, interpersonal communication, social group and family relations, and community organization;
- 9) knowledge and understanding of the different uses of supervision, consultation, and social work administration;
- 10) knowledge and understanding of the Code of Ethics and its implications for practice;
- 11) knowledge and understanding of human rights legislation; and
- 12) knowledge and understanding of minorities;

In addition to the above, specialized and advanced professional levels are marked by the following characteristics:

Specialized Professional Level

- 1) knowledge of at least one field of professional practice and general knowledge of others;
- 2) knowledge and competency in methods of intervention and treatment;
- 3) knowledge of at least one social problem area so that the practitioner may competently provide private counselling services, consultation services, teaching programs and/or supervision of professional staff, and general knowledge of others;
- 4) awareness of when inter-collegial consultation is required. This implies that the practitioner must be aware of the limits of his/her knowledge and skills. Consultation should take place between social workers or other human service professionals;
- 5) knowledge of personnel supervision, organizational administration and social program administration;
- 6) knowledge of techniques and methods of research and planning relevant to the practitioner’s field of practice; and
- 7) sufficient knowledge and ability to participate in the field work training of social work students.

Advanced Professional Level

- 1) advanced and expert knowledge in social work practice, research, administration, social planning, social policy development or teaching;
- 2) a thorough knowledge of several types of populations at risk, of corresponding service delivery systems and methods of assessing the degree to which services are meeting the needs of the population in question; and
- 3) advanced knowledge which contributes to professional knowledge base; and
- 4) sufficient knowledge and ability to teach social work and practice.

¹ Methods of intervention include: counselling or therapy as it relates to individuals, couples, families or groups, community organization and development; social planning; and social policy development.

STANDARD IV

Social Workers shall demonstrate skill in developing constructive and appropriate intervention with clients.¹

Prepares for Intervention

- 1) knows and can interpret the mandate to intervene. The mandate may be derived from legislation, organizational mandate, professional role or a combination thereof;
- 2) assess the appropriateness of one's skills and/or services of the agency to assist the client's problems;
- 3) assesses the nature of the contact;
- 4) takes into account and prepares the physical setting, wherever possible, to assure confidentiality; and
- 5) uses information sources such as previous contact(s), file information, reports and referral information in an objective unbiased manner.

Establishes a Relationship With the Client

- 1) provides for the physical and psychological comfort of the client(s) in all contacts;
- 2) accepts client(s) as they present themselves; and
- 3) listens to client(s) with understanding and purpose:
 - a) heeds and interprets verbal and non-verbal communication;
 - b) empathizes with clients feelings and/or concerns;
 - c) maintains a non-judgmental approach; and
 - d) demonstrates sensitivity to the client's need for time to establish a sense of trust, to articulate problems and to determine what intervention is required.

Communicates Openly and Appropriately

- 1) uses understandable language;
- 2) clarifies purpose and role in client contact;
- 3) in client intervention:
 - a) has an appropriate sense of timing and uses this to focus discussion;
 - b) is able to request and receive feedback;
 - c) responds to the client's feelings and concerns and facilitates their expression;
 - d) establishes an atmosphere of openness through appropriate sharing of experience and self-disclosure;
 - e) accepts and deals constructively with hostility and other strong emotions;
 - f) is able to extrapolate from the general to the client's individual situation and deals with them appropriately;
 - g) expresses empathy appropriately;
 - h) has awareness of own feelings and thoughts towards the client's situation and deals with them appropriately; and
- 4) meets commitments made to clients.

¹ Clients, as referred to in this document, may be individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations.

STANDARD V

Social workers shall maintain confidentiality in an appropriate manner that promotes the well-being of the client.

- 1) Under normal circumstances all information obtained from a client(s) shall be considered confidential and the information not disclosed by the social worker without the informed written consent of the individual(s).
- 2) Social workers shall safeguard the confidential information obtained in the course of their practice including teaching, research, or other professional duties.
- 3) *Disclosure*
 - a) Social workers shall disclose confidential information without the informed written consent of the client when they believe that disclosure is necessary to protect against a clear and substantial risk of imminent serious harm being inflicted by the client on the client or another person.
 - b) Social workers shall release confidential information upon court order, or to conform with provincial or federal law, rule or regulation.
 - c) Social workers shall fulfill their legal obligation to report abuse or neglect of children and other vulnerable persons.
 - d) Social workers shall disclose information relevant to allegations of professional misconduct or unskilled practice against oneself, colleagues, employees, students or supervisors.
 - e) Social workers shall disclose confidential information if it is necessary in order to collect a fee and if there is no risk of clear and substantial risk of imminent serious harm to the client or another person.
 - f) When case reports or other confidential information is used as the basis of teaching, research or other published reports, social workers shall ensure that the reported material does not identify the client.
 - g) Social workers shall ensure that the assessment interview, therapeutic sessions, or other professional services with a client are observed by others or electronically audio or video recorded only with the informed written consent of the client.
 - h) Social workers shall continue to treat as confidential information about clients gained as a result of professional relationships with those clients after the professional relationships have ended.
- 4) *Corporation* When a corporation or other organization is the client, standards of confidentiality apply to information pertaining to the organization, including personal information about individuals when obtained in the proper course of that contract.
- 5) *EAP* In cases such as Employee Assistance Programs, it is the responsibility of social workers to ascertain and make clear to both organizational and individual clients, the bounds and limits of confidentiality. These contractual boundaries and limits of confidentiality are to be agreed to in writing by all parties.
- 6) *Services involving more than one interested party*

In a situation in which more than one party has an appropriate interest in the professional services rendered by the social worker, the social worker shall clarify to all those parties prior to rendering the services the rules of confidentiality and professional responsibility to be followed. Such clarification is specifically indicated, among other circumstances, when the client is an organization.
- 7) *Multiple clients* When service is rendered to more than one client during a joint session, for example to a family or a couple or a parent and child or a group, social workers shall at the beginning of the professional relationship clarify to these clients the manner in which confidentiality will be handled. The clients shall be given opportunity to discuss and to accept or reject these rules of confidentiality. Further professional services will be not provided until all the affected clients agree on the rules of confidentiality.
- 8) *Legally dependent clients* At the beginning of a professional relationship, to the extent that the client can understand, social workers shall inform a client who is below the age of majority or who has a legal guardian, of the limit the law imposes on the right of confidentiality with respect to their communications with social workers.
- 9) *Limited access to client records* Social workers shall limit access to client records to preserve their confidentiality and shall instruct all persons working under their authority to comply with the requirements for confidentiality of client material. Social workers shall transfer information to another agency or individual only with the informed consent of the client or guardian of the client and then only with reasonable assurance that the receiving agency provides the same or better protection of confidentiality as provided by the sending agency.
- 10) See Chapter 5 of the Canadian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics on Confidential Information.

STANDARD VI

Social Workers shall demonstrate skill in the problem-solving process.

Assessment

- 1) assists the client in defining his/her needs and concerns;
- 2) identifies the client's strengths and weaknesses;
- 3) understands the client's needs and sense of priorities;
- 4) elicits information and assembles relevant facts in preparing a social history, assessment, report or contract; and
- 5) observes and interprets verbal and non-verbal behavior.

Sharing Information With Client

- 1) provides accurate and complete information on problem areas of concern to the client;
- 2) provides accurate and complete information on services and resources available to the client; and
- 3) discusses confidentiality as it relates to how information obtained from the client or other sources is to be used (see Code of Ethics, Chapter 5).

Contracting

- 1) assists the client to specify and prioritize problems to be solved;
- 2) engages the client in efforts to resolve these problems;
- 3) assists clients in selecting appropriate goals and action;
- 4) has reasonable expectations and makes appropriate demands of the client to change; and
- 5) re-negotiates the contract as the need arises.

Referral

- 1) assists clients in selecting and utilizing appropriate resources;
- 2) demonstrates appropriate problem solving through role-modeling;
- 3) explores innovative alternatives to deal with client problems; and
- 4) assists clients in resolving problems through a variety of processes.

Psycho-social interventions

- 1) promotes negotiation and mediation between parties in conflict;
- 2) encourages the resolution of problems through the use of role modeling;
- 3) helps the client find innovative solutions to meet their needs;

- 4) encourages the resolution of problems through advocacy; and
- 5) assists the client with the change process through a variety of appropriate and well chosen psycho-social interventions.

Evaluation

- 1) determines with the client the extent to which the contract goals have been met;
- 2) arranges for follow-up or referral when necessary; and
- 3) assist the client to terminate the relationship in the appropriate time.

STANDARD VII

Social workers shall demonstrate skill and commitment in identifying the needs of client populations to the community, to agencies and to governments as appropriate.

This is achieved by:

- 1) assessing and interpreting the client needs with reasonable accuracy;
- 2) being familiar with legislation, social policy and services pertinent to the needs and interests of the client, applying these correctly and advocating for change when necessary;
- 3) seeking and assembling relevant information for case documentation and reporting;
- 4) speaking and writing clearly in an organized and objective manner;
- 5) assessing the effectiveness of the agency's services as well as one's own practice;
- 6) using channels of communication appropriately;
- 7) seeking to resolve difficulties in providing mandated services;
- 8) identifying gaps in services;
- 9) being sensitive to emerging community and societal changes; and
- 10) facilitating community resource development.

STANDARD VIII

Social workers shall maintain their records, public, and private. Professional social workers are the guardians of clients' files and develop, maintain, transfer, and destroy file contents according to the ethical practical standards of the profession.

Social work records serve the following purposes:

- a) to ensure continuity and quality of service for clients and client groups;
 - b) to establish accountability for, and evidence of, services rendered;
 - c) to provide information which may allow for evaluation, research and education with client's informed consent.
- 1) A social worker shall enter the following information in each record:
 - a) the date on which each record was opened;
 - b) if the client is an individual or family, the given name(s), gender, date of birth, address, and telephone (or how they can be contacted);
 - c) if the client is a firm, government, community or group; the name, business address, telephone number and name and title of organizational representative;
 - d) a brief description of the reason for consultation, a summary of any assessment and planned intervention, and fees if applicable;
 - e) dates and descriptions of professional services provided;
 - f) a synthesis of results obtained, referrals, recommendations and date and details of termination;
 - g) notes, correspondence, consents, and releases of information regarding the professional services provided with the consent of the client;
 - h) reports from other professionals obtained with the authorization of the client;
 - i) the identity of the author.
 - 2) A social worker develops and maintains a thorough understanding of their employer's policies concerning record-keeping including content standards, storage, security, client access, and destruction. The social worker shall monitor and advocate for change where policies are not in accordance with their Code of Ethics.
 - 3) Maintenance and destruction of files:
 - a) records are securely preserved for a minimum of seven years from the date of last entry;
 - b) longer periods may be advisable and are defined by organizational policy and type of practice (e.g. children's files, files involving criminal or civil litigation);
 - c) a permanent record of biographical information, contact dates, and termination summary are recommended;
 - d) records are destroyed in a confidential manner.
 - 4) If record keeping is electronic, the social worker and employing organizations shall maintain appropriate security measures that adhere to the principles of confidentiality and informed consent.
 - 5) A social worker shall seek consultation/supervision when conflicts in record keeping arise.

STANDARD IX

Social workers shall fulfill professional responsibilities in the course of social work practice.

Social Workers can accomplish this by:

- 1) adhering to the Code of Ethics;
- 2) being courteous and receptive to clients;
- 3) seeking and using social work consultation/supervision appropriately;
- 4) functioning within legislation governing or affecting social work practice;
- 5) being accountable for professional actions;
- 6) working to facilitate needed changes in legislation and social policy;
- 7) organizing workload and setting priorities to meet designated service responsibilities;
- 8) maintaining current recording of all client contacts;
- 9) obtaining the client's written consent to give or obtain information from other involved parties;
- 10) seeking to promote the competent and ethical practice of social work, ie: reporting unethical practice of social workers or other professionals to managerial and professional organizations;
- 11) projecting a competent and concerned image;
- 12) collaborating with other professionals through team work or other means to meet client needs;
- 13) responsibility for one's own professional development and continuing education:
 - a) ability to learn and change
 - b) knowing one's capabilities and limitations
 - c) ability to be self-directed in learning
 - d) ability to share and cooperate with colleagues
 - e) ability able to monitor own stress level and take appropriate action when necessary
- 14) supports and contributes to the activities of social work organizations, public education about the profession and community service work; and
- 15) contributes to the development of the social work profession through professional organizations, public education about the profession and community service work.

STANDARD X

Social workers shall be responsible for maintaining and advocating for a safe working environment which promotes optimal effectiveness with clients.

Specific factors in the working environment can detract from the efficiency and effectiveness of social work services and/or jeopardize the health of the service provider. Therefore, social workers have a shared responsibility with their employers to ensure a safe working environment through:

- 1) manageable workloads in terms of workload size or adequate time allotted to do the job, taking into account travel expectations, access to relief staff and shift work;
- 2) clarifying in-service mandate;
- 3) determine lines of authority and responsibilities and accurately stated job expectations;
- 4) access to a process of arbitration when professional responsibilities are in conflict with job expectations;
- 5) appropriate protection when working in situations where there is a potential threat to the social worker's physical well-being; and
- 6) access to preventative employee health programs which relate to communicable disease and other work related hazards.

STANDARD XI

Social workers shall not undertake or continue a professional relationship when their competency or judgment is impaired because of a present or past personal relationship, ie: familial, social, sexual, emotional, financial, supervisory, political, administrative or legal. This concept is described as dual relationships/conflict of interest.

The Social Worker shall:

- 1) inform the client of the possible or actual conflicting relationship and its consequences and terminate the professional relationship;
- 2) the social worker shall refer the client unless exceptional circumstances may exist, ie:
 - a) instances where other appropriate professional services are not available, such as in small communities that are isolated and remote;
 - b) instances in which the social worker has special attributes that may make their services particularly relevant, such as being a member of the same minority ethnic, cultural or linguistic group; and
 - c) instances in which specialized skills or services are required and are not otherwise available.
- 3) the social worker may continue to provide professional services in the instances described above provided that the social worker:
 - a) informs the client of the possible or actual conflicting relationship(s) and its (their) possible consequences;
 - b) includes a description of the relationship(s) in the case records along with a record of the discussion of the relationship(s) with the client(s); and
 - c) consults with another social worker regarding the relationship(s) and subsequent provision of professional services to the client(s). This consultation may be in person or by telephone.

These considerations of the relationship do not excuse a social worker from providing professional service in emergency situations such as family violence or child protection.

- 4) social workers having provided professional social work services to a client in the previous 24 months shall not:
 - a) enter into a financial relationship other than fee for service with them; or
 - b) engage in social relationships where the worker receives the support from the client;
 - c) engage in sexual or romantic relations with them.

- 5) a social worker shall adhere to the Canadian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (1994): Chapter 4 – Limit On Professional Relationship.

STANDARD XII

The Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers has the legislative mandate to set standards for its members. The Association expects that social workers will meet or exceed these standards in their practice. Employers also have an obligation to the public and to their employees to establish the conditions of employment that social workers need to meet these standards of practice. While the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers recognizes that it has no jurisdiction to enforce work-place standards, the Association regards work-place conditions to be critical elements in the delivery of services.

Agencies, public or private, who provide custody and access evaluations, should incorporate the following provisions:

- 1) to integrate into the work of the agency, the requirements provided in the *Code of Ethics* of the Canadian Association of Social Workers, the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers' *Standards of Ethical Practice for Professional Social Workers in Saskatchewan*, *Standards for the Private Practice of Social Work*, *Standards in Child Protection Services for Registered Social Workers in Saskatchewan*, *Custody and Access Standards* and *Health Care Standards*;
- 2) to ensure that supervisors, managers, and senior staff of the agency understand, support, and implement the values of the social work profession;
- 3) to demonstrate sensitivity and responsiveness to the ethnic and cultural differences of families and potential caregivers throughout the agency;
- 4) to maintain equality of services regardless of race, creed, gender, color, or sexual orientation;
- 5) to provide quality consultation for social work supervisors with a Master of Social Work Degree and at least five years of experience in the area;
- 6) to provide a minimum of 40 hours per year of training for each evaluator;
- 7) to create a positive work-place environment that is committed to safety, well being, and respect.

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S.A.S.W. Standards in Health Care
Standards in Education



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