

Code of Ethics
for
Professional Social Workers in India



National Association of Professional Social Workers in India

(NAPSWI)

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Code of Ethics for Professional Social Workers in India

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Preface

All professions provide specialized services to their stakeholders, based upon advanced knowledge and skills. Their professionals are also bound by a distinctive *ethical code* that determines and mandates their relationships with the clientele groups, professional peers and the generalised masses. Such *codes of ethics* for professionals conducts are normally designed, developed and governed by the professional association(s) to ensure their integrity and accountability. Therefore, the *Code of Ethics* for a profession refers to social sanction to its existence with its many facets such as admissions, educational standards, examination, licensing, career opportunities and career growth and development, ethical and performance standards, professional discipline and autonomy in control of the actual work of the profession.

A code of ethics issued by a professional body is a particular kind of policy statement. Moreover, a properly framed code is, in effect, a form of legislation within the closed group of professionals which is binding on its stakeholders, with specific sanctions for violation of the code. In other words, ethics refers to right and wrong conduct or behaviour and responsibilities attached to a professional role in a work context. The codification of socially desirable behavior and conduct of a professional is the main element of any code. It is expected that the adherence of such code of conduct shall lead to a higher standard in professional education, training and practice with equally high professional accountability.

Although, the University Grants Commission's *Second Review Committee on Social Work Education in India (1975)* recommended the setting up of a National Council for the Social Work Education in India, but it could not take shape till date. As a result, after seven and a half decades of history of social work education and practice in India, we are struggling with its professional identity which is still an issue of debate and discussion and till now even we are not guided by the *code of ethics* despite being a practice based human service profession like others.

Establishment of professional body is one of the main characteristics of any profession. At present, National Association of Professional Social Workers in India (NAPSWI) is the national level professional organization dedicated to the promotion of standards and enhancement of the status of the social work profession. It is one of the largest amongst the associations of social work professionals in India. NAPSWI was born in 2005, following the concerns of professional social workers to cater to the need of having an organization at the national level. Since its inception, it has been making attempts to bring professional social workers on one platform, so that a collectivity identity of the profession could emerge. NAPSWI intends to fulfill the twin

purposes of promoting the social work profession within the country together with safeguarding and protecting the interests of social work professionals. Its Central/President's Office is located at the Department of Social Work, University of Delhi.

This *code of ethics* is the result of tireless work by Drafting Committee consisting of experts in social work constituted by NAPSWI that started with a critical investigation of the existing *codes* along with in-depth review of the other *codes of ethics*. After that, the draft *code* had been submitted to NAPSWI for a final consultation and which has been adopted with some minor modifications. We are grateful to Dr. Atul Pratap Singh who has extended excellent support to the whole process.

NAPSWI sincerely acknowledges and expresses gratitude and appreciation to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), the British Association of Social Workers (BASW), Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW), Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW), AvenirSocial - Professional Social Work Switzerland and Singapore Association of Social Workers (SASW) for consulting the sections of their *Code of Ethics* along with other resource materials that were used while developing this *code of ethics* and the same have been properly cited.

Prof. Sanjai Bhatt
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On behalf of the
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1. PREAMBLE

A *code of ethics* is a statement which expresses the primary ethical values, obligations and goals of the profession. It is a commitment which serves to bear witness to our promise as a profession to uphold the values and ethical obligations expressed in the *code*. It gives definition to our commitment to practice in ethical terms. A *code of ethics* lays out clearly the profession's values and explains what they are in terms of what we ought to do in order to protect and promote the public good, and what we must avoid doing in order to prevent harm to the public.

A *code of ethics (code)* serves as a central guide for day-to-day professional practice and the decision making at work. It clarifies the cornerstones of any profession - its mission, values and principles - helping the stakeholders to understand how these cornerstones translate into everyday decision making, behaviour and action. While some may believe that the *codes* are designed to limit one's actions, the best codes are actually structured to liberate and empower people to make more effective decisions with greater confidence....An effective code has many uses, but two critical ones stand out. A *code* should: (a) clarify gray areas or values and expectations; and (b) help build trust and commitment....A *code* also serves as a key reference tool. Use it to locate key documents, support services and other resources related to ethics and values within a profession.¹

A *code of ethics* can make a difference in a profession. Beyond clarifying gray areas and providing guidance on everything from the simplest of questions to the most complex ethical dilemma, a code can help to²:

- a) Build trust internally and externally;
- b) Increase awareness of key ethical issues;
- c) Stimulate and legitimize ethical dialogue;
- d) Build consensus around vital issues;
- e) Guide decision-making;
- f) Encourage stakeholders to seek advice;
- g) Foster the reporting of misconduct and related concerns; and
- h) Clarify where stakeholders should go to seek advice.

Basically, *codes* are designed to³:

- a) Raise ethical expectations (aspirational provisions);

¹Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Tool Kit (2001). *A Guide to Developing Your Organization's Code of Ethics*. United States: Ethics Resource Centre.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

- b) Legitimize dialogue about ethical issues (communication provisions);
- c) Encourage ethical decision-making (judgment provisions); and
- d) Prevent misconduct provide a basis for enforcement (accountability and enforcement provisions).

Moreover, a code of ethics is a set of guidelines which are designed to set out acceptable behaviours for members of a particular group, association, or profession. Many professions govern themselves with such a code, especially when they handle sensitive issues like -medical, nursing, education, human and social service. In addition to setting a professional standard, a code of ethics can also increase confidence in a profession by showing outsiders that members are committed to follow basic ethical guidelines in the course of doing their work. Thus, a well written code of ethics is easy to follow and with very clear sections that people can point in order to illustrate specific issues.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim of this *code of ethics* is to articulate its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards in order to guide the conduct of social work professionals. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. Sets forth ethical guidelines to control professional conduct of social workers;
2. Provide ethical standards to which the people can hold the social work profession answerable;
3. Serves as a guideline for the development of ethically based professional conduct and helps social work professionals, especially new comers to take a stand on various issues and situations;
4. Stimulate ethical discourse between professionals in social work and social organisations, training and professional development institutions, other disciplines and professional organisations; and
5. Strengthen the professional identity and self-conception of professionals, their networks and the organisations in which social work is practiced.

3. SCOPE AND COVERAGE

This *code of ethics* extends to the whole fraternity of social work in India including educators, practitioners, employers/administrators and students. It applies to all the social work professionals (under-graduates and post-graduates) and their professional associations, the organisations in which social work professionals are employed, schools or colleges affiliated to the Universities recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC) or through the specially established departments of social work functioning as a part and parcel of the

University system providing its education at Under-graduate, Post-graduate, M. Phil., Doctoral and Post-doctoral levels, training and professional development institutions, professionals in other occupations and disciplines with whom social work professionals cooperate and the people among whom social work professionals accomplish their tasks.

4. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

- a) '*Clients*' are individuals, families and other kinship arrangements, groups, communities, organisations and societies, especially those who are neglected, vulnerable, disadvantaged, alienated or have exceptional needs.
- b) '*Codes of ethics*' are “documents that aim to identify the broad values, principles and standards of ethical conduct on which a particular profession is based” (Bowles, Collingridge, Curry & Valentine, 2006: 75-76).
- c) '*Competence*' is about “care-giving, the actual work of care that needs to be done – one’s ability to do something about another’s needs. The term ‘competence’ is being used here in a holistic sense relating to professionals’ abilities and capacities, rather than a set of discrete technical skills (competencies)” (Banks & Gallagher, 2009: 104).
- d) '*Confidentiality*' means “respecting private and personal information, unless there are overriding ethical reasons for not doing”(Clifford & Burke, 2009: 68).
- e) '*Discrimination*' means “negative discrimination is the prejudging and unfavourable treatment of people on the basis of perceived difference. Positive discrimination refers to policies, programs or actions that favour disadvantaged persons or groups” (Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2008: 267).
- f) '*Ethics*' is a “branch of philosophy which addresses questions about morality, such as what is the fundamental nature of morality and the way in which moral values are determined” (Gray & Webb, 2010:1).
- g) '*Human rights*' refer to “the basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled. They are socially sanctioned entitlements to the goods and services that are necessary to develop human potential and well-being” (Ife, 2010: 148).
- h) '*Informed consent*', in general, for “consent to be considered valid six standards must be met: (1) coercion and undue influence must not have played a role in the client’s decision; (2) clients must be mentally capable of providing consent; (3) clients must consent to specific procedures or actions; (4) the consent forms and procedures must be

valid; (5) clients must have the right to refuse or withdraw consent; and (6) clients' decisions must be based on adequate information”(Reamer, 2006: 167-168).

- i) ‘*Social justice*’ refers to the “concept of a society in which justice is achieved in every aspect of society, rather than merely through the administration of law. It is generally considered as a social world which affords individuals and groups fair treatment, equality and an impartial share of the benefits of membership of society” (Ife, 2010: 148).
- j) ‘*Values*’ are a “particular grouping and ordering of values within a professional context. In social work such values tend to focus on human functioning, capabilities and development” (Congress, 2010: 19).

5. GLOBAL DEFINITION OF SOCIAL WORK

In July 2014, the Global Definition of Social Work was approved in the general meeting of International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and General Assembly of International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW). This definition is as follows:

“Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing”⁴.

This definition has given *four* core mandates, *four* principles and *four* knowledge base of Social Work. The *four Core Mandates* are: (i) Social Change; (ii) Social Development; (iii) Social Cohesion; and (iv) Empowerment and Liberation of People. Similarly, there are *four principles* of social work practice: (i) Respect for the inherent worth and dignity of human beings; (ii) Doing no harm; (iii) Respect for diversity; and (iv) Upholding human rights and social justice. The *four knowledge base* of social work are:

- i. The nature of social work is interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary;
- ii. Social work has developed its own theoretical foundation and research base as well as draws theories from other human sciences. This includes development, administration, management, nursing, anthropology, ecology, economics, education, psychology, psychiatry, public health and sociology;

⁴International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), 2014.

- iii. The theories of social work are unique since they are applied and emancipatory; and
- iv. Recognition and use of indigenous knowledge by acknowledging that in each region, country, area and people carry their own values, ways of knowing, ways of transmitting their knowledge and have made individual contribution to science.

Besides, the definition also talks about *four social work practices*, which are:

- i. Intervention at points where people interact with their environment which includes various social systems and the natural as well as geographical environment. Particularly methodology is suggested in social work which reflected when social work commits to engage people and structure to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing;
- ii. It supports working with rather working for the people. Social workers utilize wide range of skills, techniques, strategies, principles and activities at the levels of system for system maintenance and/or system change purpose;
- iii. The range of activities which includes various forms of theory and counseling, group work and community work, policy formulation and analysis, advocacy as well as political intervention, come in to the domain of social work;
- iv. Social work supports those strategies which aim at increasing people's hope, self-esteem and creative potential to comfort and challenge oppressive power dynamics and structural sources of injustice. Its intervention is micro-macro, as well as personal-political.

More significantly, it is for the first time that social work has been simultaneously called as both a *practice-based profession* and an *academic discipline*, which recognizes the following:

- i. Inter-connectedness of historical, socio-economic, cultural, political and personal factors. These factors serve as opportunities and/or barriers to human wellbeing and development.
- ii. Inequalities, discrimination, exploitation and oppression are perpetuated due to structural barriers.
- iii. Social work develops critical consciousness towards structural sources of oppression and/or privilege which are done on the bases of race, class, language, religion, gender, disabilities, culture and sexual orientation.
- iv. Social work practice is emancipatory practice, development of action strategies towards addressing structural and personal barriers with aim to empower and liberate people.
- v. Expressing solidarity with disadvantaged, the social work profession strives to alleviate poverty, liberate vulnerable and oppressed and promotes inclusion and social cohesion.
- vi. The mandate of social change envisages that: (a) Social work intervention takes place if the current situation at any level i.e. person, family, small group, community or society

- requires change and development; (b) Social Work strive to challenge and change structural conditions contributing to marginalization, social exclusion and oppression; (c) The recognition of the place of human agency in advancing human rights and economic, environmental and social justice; and (d) Social work profession is also for maintenance of stability until it is not used to marginalize, exclude or oppress any particular group of persons.
- vii. The mandate of social development: (a) consists of strategies for intervention, desired end states and a policy framework; (b) it's based on holistic bio-psycho social and spiritual assessment and interventions to transcending micro-macro divide, incorporating multiple system levels and inter-sectroial as well as inter-professional collaboration , aimed at sustainable development; (c) prioritizes socio-structural and economic development; and (d) does not subscribe the ideas that economic growth is prerequisites for social development.

6. ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

6.1. Human Rights and Human Dignity⁵

Social work is based on respect for the inherent worth and dignity of all people, and the rights that follow from this. Social workers should uphold and defend each person's physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual integrity and well-being. This means:

- a) **Respecting the Right to Self-determination:** Social workers should respect and promote people's right to make their own choices and decisions, irrespective of their values and life choices, provided this does not threaten the rights and legitimate interests of others.
- b) **Promoting the Right to Participation:** Social workers should promote the full involvement and participation of people using their services in ways that enable them to be empowered in all aspects of decisions and actions affecting their lives.
- c) **Treating Each Person as a Whole:** Social workers should be concerned with the whole person, within the family, community, societal and natural environments, and should seek to recognise all aspects of a person's life.
- d) **Identifying and Developing Strengths:** Social workers should focus on the strengths of all individuals, groups and communities and thus promote their empowerment.

⁵The document "*Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles*" was approved at the General Meetings of the International Federation of Social Workers and the International Association of Schools of Social Work in Adelaide, Australia, October 2004.

6.2. Social Justice⁶

Social workers have a responsibility to promote social justice, in relation to society generally, and in relation to the people with whom they work. This means:

- a) **Challenging negative discrimination⁷:** Social workers have a responsibility to challenge negative discrimination on the basis of characteristics such as ability, age, culture, gender or sex, marital status, socio-economic status, political opinions, skin colour, racial or other physical characteristics, sexual orientation, or spiritual beliefs.
- b) **Recognising Diversity:** Social workers should recognise and respect the ethnic and cultural diversity of the societies in which they practice, taking account of individual, family, group and community differences.
- c) **Distributing Resources Equitably:** Social workers should ensure that resources at their disposal are distributed fairly, according to need.
- d) **Challenging Unjust Policies and Practices:** Social workers have a duty to bring to the attention of their employers, policy makers, politicians and the general public situations where resources are inadequate or where distribution of resources, policies and practices are oppressive, unfair or harmful.
- e) **Working in Solidarity:** Social workers have an obligation to challenge social conditions that contribute to social exclusion, stigmatisation or subjugation, and to work towards an inclusive society.

6.3. Integrity and Belongingness

Social workers demonstrate and promote the qualities of honesty, reliability, impartiality and diligence in their professional practice. They maintain a high level of professional conduct by acting with loyalty and accountability and promoting the values of the profession. Social workers value openness and transparency in professional practice and avoid relationships where their integrity or impartiality may be compromised.⁸ This means:

- a) **Being Loyal and Trustworthy⁹:** Social workers should work in a way that is honest, reliable and open, clearly explaining their roles, interventions and decisions and not seeking to deceive or manipulate people who use their services, their colleagues, employers and other concerned persons.

⁶Ibid.

⁷In some countries the term “discrimination” would be used instead of “negative discrimination”. The word negative is used here because in some countries the term “positive discrimination” is also used. Positive discrimination is also known as “affirmative action”. Positive discrimination or affirmative action means positive steps taken to redress the effects of historical discrimination.

⁸Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW).

⁹British Association of Social Workers (BASW).

- b) **Being Professionally Accountable and Responsible¹⁰**: Social workers should be accountable for their judgements and actions to the people who use services, to employers and the general public. They should make judgements based on balanced and considered reasoning, maintaining awareness of the impact of their own values, prejudices and conflicts of interest on their practice and on other people. Social workers should strive to use the power and authority vested in them as professionals in responsible ways that serve the needs of clients and the promotion of social justice.
- c) **Working with Transparency**: Social workers must operate with openness and transparency in such a way that it is easy for others to see what actions are performed. Their transparent approach should communicate the decisions and actions taken by them on the disclosure of information to all concerned persons.

6.4. Sustainability

Social workers have a responsibility to effectively manage and carry out any programme after donor assistance ends. They should develop capability to continue to deliver intended benefits, continue local action and initiatives and generate successor services over an extended period of time. For ensuring sustainability, it is necessary to seek people participation, develop leadership and build their capacities because it is the people who continue the programme in future. This means:

- a) **Seeking People's Participation**: Social workers should seek people's participation in planning, implementation, coordination and monitoring & evaluation of a programme. They should develop a sense of ownership and commitment among people.
- b) **Developing Leadership**: Social workers should allow the people to demonstrate their knowledge and skills to provide necessary direction to the programme, to mobilize the programme constituents to action and reflection, and to facilitate effective decision-making within the programme's organizational set-up.
- c) **Building Capacity**: Social workers should impart trainings to the people in the areas where they lack expertise in order to build their capacities.

6.5. Services¹¹

Social workers uphold the services in the interests of others in order to help people in need and to address their issues as well as social problems at large. They try to balance individual needs and rights and freedoms with collective interests to serve the strife ridden humanity. Social workers place the needs of others above self-interest when acting in a professional capacity. They

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW).

promote individual development and pursuit of individual goals, as well as the development of the society.

6.6. Human Relations¹²

Social workers are able to understand the importance of human relations. They also understand the dynamics of relationship between and among people is one of the most important determinants for social change. Social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful manner in order to promote, restore, maintain and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups and communities.

7. PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT¹³

It is the responsibility of the national organisations in membership of IFSW and IASSW to develop and regularly update their own codes of ethics or ethical guidelines, to be consistent with the IFSW / IASSW statement. It is also the responsibility of national organisations to inform social workers and schools of social work about these codes or guidelines. Social workers should act in accordance with the ethical code or guidelines current in their country. These will generally include more detailed guidance in ethical practice specific to the national context. The following general guidelines on professional conduct apply:

- i. Social workers are expected to develop and maintain the required skills and competence to do their job.
- ii. Social workers should not allow their skills to be used for inhumane purposes, such as torture or terrorism.
- iii. Social workers should act with integrity. This includes not abusing the relationship of trust with the people using their services, recognising the boundaries between personal and professional life, and not abusing their position for personal benefit or gain.
- iv. Social workers should act in relation to the people using their services with compassion, empathy and care.
- v. Social workers should not subordinate the needs or interests of people who use their services to their own needs or interests.
- vi. Social workers have a duty to take necessary steps to care for themselves professionally and personally in the workplace and in society, in order to ensure that they are able to provide appropriate services.

¹²National Association of Social Workers (NASW).

¹³Approved at the General Meetings of the IFSW and the IASSW in Adelaide, Australia, October 2004.

- vii. Social workers should maintain confidentiality regarding information about people who use their services. Exceptions to this may only be justified on the basis of a greater ethical requirement (such as the preservation of life).
- viii. Social workers need to acknowledge that they are accountable for their actions to the users of their services, the people they work with, their colleagues, their employers, the professional association and to the law, and that these accountabilities may conflict.
- ix. Social workers should be willing to collaborate with the schools of social work in order to support social work students to get practical training of good quality and up to date practical knowledge
- x. Social workers should foster and engage in ethical debate with their colleagues and employers and take responsibility for making ethically informed decisions.
- xi. Social workers should be prepared to state the reasons for their decisions based on ethical considerations, and be accountable for their choices and actions.
- xii. Social workers should work to create conditions in employing agencies and in their countries where the principles of this statement and those of their own national code (if applicable) are discussed, evaluated and upheld.

8. STANDARDS FOR THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION¹⁴

The *process* of developing standards for the education and training of the social work profession is as important as the *product*; the actual standards that have been developed which are as follows:

(A) Standards Regarding the SWEI's Core VMG (Vision, Mission, Goals) Statement

All SWEIs should aspire toward the development of a core purpose statement or a mission statement which is clearly articulated so those major stakeholders¹⁵ who have an investment in such a core purpose or mission understand it.

- i. Reflects the values and the ethical principles of social work.
- ii. Reflects aspiration towards equity with regard to the demographic profile of the institution's locality. The core purpose or mission statement should thus incorporate such issues as ethnic and gender representation on the faculty, as well as in recruitment and admission procedures for students.

¹⁴Adopted at the General Assemblies of IASSW and IFSW, Adelaide, Australia in 2004.

¹⁵Stakeholders include the educational institution itself; the 'profession', however organised or informal, including practitioners, managers and academics; social work agencies as potential employers and providers of fieldwork learning opportunities; users of social work services; students; the government, where this funds the institution and/or sets standards and the wider community.

- iii. Respects the rights and interests of service users and their participation in all aspects of delivery of programmes.

(B) Standards Regarding Programme Objectives and Outcomes

In respect of programme objectives and expected outcomes, SWEI should endeavour to reach the following:

- i. A specification of its programme objectives and expected higher education outcomes.
- ii. A reflection of the values and ethical principles of the profession in its programme design and implementation.
- iii. Identification of the programme's instructional methods, to ensure they support the achievement of the cognitive and affective development of social work students.
- iv. An indication of how the programme reflects the core knowledge, processes, values and skills of the social work profession, as applied in context-specific realities.
- v. An indication of how an initial level of proficiency with regard to self-reflective¹⁶ use of social work values, knowledge and skills is to be attained by social work students.
- vi. An indication of how the programme meets the requirements of nationally and/or regionally/internationally defined professional goals, and how the programme addresses local, national and/or regional/international developmental needs and priorities.
- vii. As social work does not operate in a vacuum, the programme should take account of the impact of interacting cultural, economic, communication, social, political and psychological global factors.
- viii. Provision of an educational preparation that is relevant to beginning social work professional practice with individuals, families, groups and/or communities in any given context.
- ix. Self-evaluation to assess the extent to which its programme objectives and expected outcomes are being achieved.
- x. External peer evaluation as far as is reasonable and financially viable. This may be in the form of external peer moderation of assignments and/or written examinations and dissertations, and external peer review and assessment of curricula.
- xi. The conferring of a distinctive social work qualification at the certificate, diploma, first degree or post-graduate level as approved by national and/or regional qualification authorities, where such authorities exist.

¹⁶Self-reflexivity at the most basic level means the ability to question: What are we doing? Why are we doing it? Is it in the best interests of the people whom we are working with? Such reflexivity is necessary and desirable irrespective of the context one practices in, whether the emphasis is on, e.g. liberal democracy, communitarianism, autocracy or authoritarian socio-cultural systems or democratic socialism.

(C) Standards with Regard to Programme Curricula Including Field Education

With regard to standards regarding programme curricula, SWEI should consistently aspire towards the following:

- i. The curricula and methods of instruction being consistent with the school's programme objectives, its expected outcomes and its mission statement.
- ii. Clear plans for the organisation, implementation and evaluation of the theory and field education components of the programme.
- iii. Involvement of service users in the planning and delivery of programmes.
- iv. Recognition and development of indigenous or locally specific social work education and practice from the traditions and cultures of different ethnic groups and societies, insofar that such traditions and cultures do not violate human rights.
- v. Specific attention to the constant review and development of the curricula.
- vi. Ensuring that the curricula help social work students to develop skills of critical thinking and scholarly attitudes of reasoning, openness to new experiences and paradigms, and commitment to life-long learning.
- vii. Field education should be sufficient in duration and complexity of tasks and learning opportunities to ensure that students are prepared for professional practice.
- viii. Planned co-ordination and links between the school and the agency/field placement setting¹⁷.
- ix. Provision of orientation for fieldwork supervisors or instructors.
- x. Appointment of field supervisors or instructors who are qualified and experienced, as determined by the development status of the social work profession in any given country, and provision of orientation for fieldwork supervisors or instructors.
- xi. Provision for the inclusion and participation of field instructors in curriculum development.
- xii. A partnership between the educational institution and the agency (where applicable) and service users in decision-making regarding field education and the evaluation of student's fieldwork performance.
- xiii. Making available, to fieldwork instructors or supervisors, a field instruction manual that details its fieldwork standards, procedures, assessment standards/criteria and expectations.

¹⁷Field placements take place in different settings, within formal organisations or through direct links with communities, which may be geographically defined or defined by specific interests. Some schools have established independent student units in communities, which serve as the context for fieldwork.

- xiv. Ensuring that adequate and appropriate resources, to meet the needs of the fieldwork component of the programme, are made available.

(D) Standards with Regard to Core Curricula

In respect core curricula, schools should aspire toward the following:

- i. An identification of and selection for inclusion in the programme curricula, as determined by local, national and/or regional/international needs and priorities.
- ii. Notwithstanding the provision of D-(i) there are certain core curricula that may be seen to be universally applicable. Thus the school should ensure that social work students, by the end of their first Social Work professional qualification, have had exposure to the following core curricula which are organised into four conceptual components:

(a) Domain of the Social Work Profession

- i. A critical understanding of how socio-structural inadequacies, discrimination, oppression, and social, political and economic injustices impact human functioning and development at all levels, including the global.
- ii. Knowledge of human behaviour and development and of the social environment, with particular emphasis on the person-in-environment transaction, life-span development and the interaction among biological, psychological, socio-structural, economic, political, cultural and spiritual factors in shaping human development and behaviour.
- iii. Knowledge of how traditions, culture, beliefs, religions and customs influence human functioning and development at all levels, including how these might constitute resources and/or obstacles to growth and development.
- iv. A critical understanding of social work's origins and purposes.
- v. Understanding of country specific social work origins and development.
- vi. Sufficient knowledge of related occupations and professions to facilitate inter-professional collaboration and teamwork.
- vii. Knowledge of social welfare policies (or lack thereof), services and laws at local, national and/or regional/international levels, and the roles of social work in policy planning, implementation, evaluation and in social change processes.
- viii. A critical understanding of how social stability, harmony, mutual respect and collective solidarity impact human functioning and development at all levels, including the global, insofar as that stability, harmony and solidarity are not used to maintain a status quo with regard to infringement of human rights.

(b) Domain of the Social Work Professional

- i. The development of the critically self-reflective practitioner, who is able to practice within the value perspective of the social work profession, and shares responsibility with the employer for their wellbeing and professional development, including the avoidance of ‘burn-out’.
- ii. The recognition of the relationship between personal life experiences and personal value systems and social work practice.
- iii. The appraisal of national, regional and/or international social work codes of ethics and their applicability to context specific realities.
- iv. Preparation of social workers within a holistic framework, with skills to enable practice in a range of contexts with diverse ethnic, cultural, ‘racial’¹⁸ and gender groups, and other forms of diversities.
- v. The development of the social worker who is able to conceptualise social work wisdom derived from different cultures, traditions and customs in various ethnic groups, insofar that culture, tradition, custom and ethnicity are not used to violate human rights.
- vi. The development of the social worker who is able to deal with the complexities, subtleties, multi-dimensional, ethical, legal and dialogical aspects of power¹⁹.

(c) Methods of Social Work Practice

- i. Sufficient practice skills in, and knowledge of, assessment, relationship building and helping processes to achieve the identified goals of the programme for the purposes of social support, and developmental, protective, preventive and/or therapeutic intervention – depending on the particular focus of the programme or professional practice orientation.
- ii. The application of social work values, ethical principles, knowledge and skills to confront inequality, and social, political and economic injustices.
- iii. Knowledge of social work research and skills in the use of research methods, including ethical use of relevant research paradigms, and critical appreciation of the use of research and different sources of knowledge²⁰ about social work practice.

¹⁸The concepts ‘racial’ and ‘race’ are in inverted commas to reflect that they are socio-structural and political constructs, wherein biological differences amongst people are used by some dominant groups to oppress, exclude and marginalise groups considered to be of minority status.

¹⁹Quoted from Dominelli, L. (2004). *Social Work: Theory and Practice for a Changing Profession*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

²⁰Pawson, R. et al. (2003). *Types and Quality of Knowledge in Social Care*. Social Care Institute for Excellence.

- iv. The application of social work values, ethical principles, knowledge and skills to promote care, mutual respect and mutual responsibility amongst members of a society.
- v. Supervised fieldwork education, with due consideration to the provisions of Item (iii) above.

(d) Paradigm of the Social Work Profession

Of particular current salience to professional social work education, training and practice are the following epistemological paradigms (which are not mutually exclusive), that should inform the core curricula:

- i. An acknowledgement and recognition of the dignity, worth and the uniqueness of all human beings.
- ii. Recognition of the interconnectedness that exists within and across all systems at micro, mezzo and macro levels.
- iii. An emphasis on the importance of advocacy and changes in socio-structural, political and economic conditions that disempower, marginalize and exclude people.
- iv. A focus on capacity-building and empowerment of individuals, families, groups, organisations and communities through a human-centered developmental approach.
- v. Knowledge about and respect for the rights of the people as citizen and more so as service users.
- vi. Problem-solving and anticipatory socialisation through an understanding of the normative developmental life cycle, and expected life tasks and crises in relation to age-related influences, with due consideration to socio-cultural expectations.
- vii. The assumption, identification and recognition of strengths and potential of all human beings.
- viii. An appreciation and respect for diversity in relation to 'race', culture, religion, ethnicity, linguistic origin, gender, sexual orientation and differential abilities.

(E) Standards with Regard to Professional Staff

With regard to professional staff, schools should aspire towards:

Retrieved from: <http://scie.org.uk/sciesproducts/knowledgereviews/KRO3summaryonlineversion071103.pdf>

- i. The provision of professional staff, adequate in number and range of expertise, who have appropriate qualifications as determined by the development status of the social work profession in any given country. As far as possible a Masters level qualification in social work, or a related discipline (in countries where social work is an emerging discipline), should be required.
- ii. The provision of opportunities for staff participation in the development of its core purpose or mission, in the formulation of the objectives and expected outcomes of the programme, and in any other initiative that the school might be involved in.
- iii. Provision for the continuing professional development of its staff, particularly in areas of emerging knowledge.
- iv. A clear statement, where possible, of its equity-based policies or preferences, with regard to considerations of gender, ethnicity, ‘race’ or any other form of diversity in its recruitment and appointment of staff.
- v. Sensitivity to languages relevant to the practice of social work in that context.
- vi. In its allocation of teaching, fieldwork instruction, supervision and administrative workloads, making provision for research and publications.
- vii. Making provision for professional staff, as far as is reasonable and possible, to be involved in the formulation, analysis and the evaluation of the impact of social policies, and in community outreach initiatives.

(F) Standards with Regard to Social Work Students

In respect of social work students, schools should endeavor to reach the following:

- i. Clear articulation of its admission criteria and procedures.
- ii. Student recruitment, admission and retention policies that reflect the demographic profile of the locality that the institution is based in with active involvement of practitioners and service users in relevant processes. Due recognition should be given to minority groups²¹ that are under-represented and/or under-served. Relevant criminal convictions, involving abuse of others or human rights violations, must be taken into account given the primary responsibility of protecting and empowering service users.
- iii. Provision for student advising that is directed toward student orientation, assessment of the student’s aptitude and motivation for a career in social work,

²¹“Minority groups” may be defined in terms of numerical representation and/or “minority” in terms of socio-economic and/or political status. It remains an ambiguous and contested concept and needs to be defined and clarified within specific social contexts.

regular evaluation of the student's performance and guidance in the selection of courses/modules.

- iv. Ensuring high quality of the educational programme whatever the mode of delivery. In the case of distance, mixed-mode, decentralised and/or internet based teaching, mechanisms for locally-based instruction and supervision should be put in place, especially with regard to the fieldwork component of the programme.
- v. Explicit criteria for the evaluation of student's academic and fieldwork performance.
- vi. Non-discrimination against any student on the basis of 'race', colour, culture, ethnicity, linguistic origin, religion, political orientation, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, physical status and socio-economic status.
- vii. Grievance and appeals procedures which are accessible, clearly explained to all students and operated without prejudice to the assessment of students.

(G) Standards with Regard to Structure, Administration, Governance and Resources

With regard to structure, administration, governance and resources, the school and/or the educational institution should aspire towards the following:

- i. Social work programmes are implemented through a distinct unit known as a Faculty, School, Department, Centre or Division, which has a clear identity within the educational institution.
- ii. The school has a designated Head or Director who has demonstrated administrative, scholarly and professional competence, preferably in the profession of social work.
- iii. The Head or Director has primary responsibility for the co-ordination and professional leadership of the school, with sufficient time and resources to fulfill these responsibilities.
- iv. The school's budgetary allocation is sufficient to achieve its core purpose or mission and the programme objectives.
- v. The budgetary allocation is stable enough to ensure programme planning and sustainability.
- vi. There are adequate physical facilities, including classroom space, offices for professional and administrative staff and space for student, faculty and field liaison meetings, and the equipment necessary for the achievement of the school's core purpose or mission and the programme objectives.
- vii. Library and, where possible, internet resources, necessary to achieve the programme objectives, are made available.
- viii. The necessary clerical and administrative staff is made available for the achievement of the programme objectives.

- ix. Where the school offers distance, mixed-mode, decentralised and/or internet based education there is provision of adequate infrastructure, including classroom space, computers, texts, audio-visual equipment, community resources for fieldwork education, and on-site instruction and supervision to facilitate the achievement of its core purpose or mission, programme objectives and expected outcomes.
- x. The school plays a key role with regard to the recruitment, appointment and promotion of staff.
- xi. The school strives toward gender equity in its recruitment, appointment, promotion and tenure policies and practices.
- xii. In its recruitment, appointment, promotion and tenure principles and procedures, the school reflects the diversities of the population that it interacts with and serves.
- xiii. The decision-making processes of the school reflect participatory principles and procedures.
- xiv. The school promotes the development of a cooperative, supportive and productive working environment to facilitate the achievement of programme objectives.
- xv. The school develops and maintains linkages within the institution, with external organisations, and with service users relevant to its core purpose or mission and its objectives.

(H) Standards with Regard to Cultural and Ethnic Diversity and Gender Inclusiveness

With regard to cultural and ethnic diversity schools should aspire towards the following:

- i. Making concerted and continuous efforts to ensure the enrichment of the educational experience by reflecting cultural and ethnic diversity, and gender analysis in its programme.
- ii. Ensuring that the programme, either through mainstreaming into all courses/modules and/or through a separate course/module, has clearly articulated objectives in respect of cultural and ethnic diversity, and gender analysis.
- iii. Indicating that issues regarding gender analysis and cultural and ethnic diversity are represented in the fieldwork component of the programme.
- iv. Ensuring that social work students are provided with opportunities to develop self-awareness regarding their personal and cultural values, beliefs, traditions and biases and how these might influence the ability to develop relationships with people, and to work with diverse population groups.
- v. Promoting sensitivity to, and increasing knowledge about, cultural and ethnic diversity, and gender analysis.

- vi. Minimising group stereotypes and prejudices²² and ensuring that racist behaviours, policies and structures are not reproduced through social work practice.
- vii. Ensuring that social work students are able to form relationships with, and treat all persons with respect and dignity irrespective of such persons' cultural and ethnic beliefs and orientations.
- viii. Ensuring that social work students are schooled in a basic human rights approach, as reflected in international instruments such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the UN Vienna Declaration (1993)²³.
- ix. Ensuring that the programme makes provision for social work students to know themselves both as individuals and as members of collective socio-cultural groups in terms of strengths and areas for further development.

(I) Standards with Regard to Values and Ethical Codes of Conduct of the Social Work Profession

In view of the recognition that social work values, ethics and principles are the core components of the profession, schools should consistently aspire towards:

- i. Focused and meticulous attention to this aspect of the programme in curricula design and implementation.
- ii. Clearly articulated objectives with regard to social work values, principles and ethical conduct.
- iii. Registration of professional staff and social work students (insofar as social work students develop working relationships with people via fieldwork placements) with national and/or regional regulatory (whether statutory or non-statutory) bodies, with defined codes of ethics²⁴. Members of such bodies are generally bound to the provisions of those codes.

²²While cultural sensitivity may contribute to culturally competent practice, the school must be mindful of the possibility of reinforcing group stereotypes. The school should, therefore, try to ensure that social work students do not use knowledge of a particular group of people to generalise to every person in that group. The school should pay particular attention to both in-group and inter-group variations and similarities.

²³Such an approach might facilitate constructive confrontation and change where certain cultural beliefs, values and traditions violate peoples' basic human rights. As culture is socially constructed and dynamic, it is subject to deconstruction and change. Such constructive confrontation, deconstruction and change may be facilitated through a tuning into, and an understanding of particular cultural values, beliefs and traditions and via critical and reflective dialogue with members of the cultural group *vis-à-vis* broader human rights issues.

²⁴In many countries voluntary national professional associations play major roles in enhancing the status of social work, and in the development of Codes of Ethics. In some countries voluntary professional associations assume

- iv. Ensuring that every social work student involved in fieldwork education, and every professional staff member is aware of the boundaries of professional practice and what might constitute unprofessional conduct in terms of the code of ethics. Where students violate the code of ethics, programme staff may take necessary and acceptable remedial and/or initial disciplinary measures, or counsel the student out of the programme.
- v. Taking appropriate action in relation to those social work students and professional staff who fail to comply with the code of ethics, either through an established regulatory social work body, established procedures of the educational institution, and/or through legal mechanisms.
- vi. Ensuring that regulatory social work bodies are broadly representative of the social work profession, including, where applicable, social workers from both the public and private sector, and of the community that it serves, including the direct participation of service users.
- vii. Upholding, as far as is reasonable and possible, the principles of restorative rather than retributive justice²⁵ in disciplining either social work students or professional staff who violate the code of ethics.

9. ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES²⁶

All the social workers are expected to shoulder ethical responsibility while performing their task related to education and practice. These responsibilities may be categorized in various forms which are as follows:

A. Towards Clients

- i. Social workers should promote the wellbeing of clients and maintain the best interests of clients as a priority with due regard to the respective interests of other persons. In

regulatory functions, for example disciplinary procedures in the event of professional malpractice, while in other countries statutory bodies assume such functions.

²⁵Restorative justice reflects the following: a belief that crime violates people and relationships; making the wrong right; seeking justice between victims, offenders and communities; people are seen to be the victims; emphasis on participation, dialogue and mutual agreement; is oriented to the future and the development of responsibility. This is opposed to retributive justice which reflects: a belief that crime violates the State and its laws; a focus on punishment and guilt; justice sought between the State and the offender; the State as victim; authoritarian, technical and impersonal approaches; and orientation to the past and guilt.

²⁶Based on the *Codes of Ethics* of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), the British Association of Social Workers (BASW), Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW), Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW), AvenirSocial - Professional Social Work Switzerland and Singapore Association of Social Workers (SASW).

- exceptional cases, the priority of clients' interests may be overshadowed by the interests of other persons or by legal requirements.
- ii. Social workers should respect and promote the right of clients to self-determination and their autonomy and assist and enable them in their efforts to identify their goals. They should discuss with clients their rights and responsibilities and provide them with honest and accurate available information regarding: (a) Nature of the social work service being offered; (b) Recording of information and who will have access to such information; (c) Foreseeable potential risks and benefits of proposed courses of action; (d) Their right to obtain a second opinion or to refuse or cease service; and (e) Their rights of access to records and to avenues of complaint.
 - iii. Social workers should ensure that clients understand the sense of informed consent and the circumstances under which it may be required. 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.
 - iv. Social workers should build up and sustain the professional relationships based on people's right to control their own lives and make their own choices and decisions. Such relationships should be based on people's rights to respect.
 - v. Social workers should provide services and represent themselves as competent only within the boundaries of their education, training and relevant professional experience.
 - vi. Social workers should have a knowledge base of their clients' cultures and be able to its function in human behaviour and society. For this purpose, they should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, colour, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical disability.
 - vii. Social workers should be vigilant to and avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with the exercise of professional decision and impartial judgment. They should inform clients when a real or probable 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.
 - viii. Social workers should respect clients' right to privacy. They should not solicit private information from clients unless it is essential to providing services. They may disclose confidential information when appropriate with valid consent from a client or a person authorized to consent on behalf of a client. Thus, social workers should protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of social work assistance.
 - ix. Social workers should provide clients with reasonable access to records concerning to them. Those who think that clients' access to their records could cause serious misunderstanding or harm to the client should provide assistance in interpreting the records. They 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.

- x. Social workers should use the authority of their role in a responsible, accountable and respectful manner. They should exercise such authority appropriately to safeguard people with whom they work and to ensure people have as much control over their lives as is consistent with the rights of others.
- xi. Social workers should terminate their services to clients and professional relationships with them when such services and relationships are no longer required. They should take reasonable steps to avoid abandoning clients who are still in need of services.

B. Towards Professional Colleagues

- i. Social workers should treat their professional colleagues with respect and admire accurately and fairly their qualifications, views and obligations whenever needed. They should avoid criticism of colleagues in communications with other professionals and especially with the clients. They should cooperate with colleagues and with colleagues of other professions when such cooperation is essential for wellbeing of the clients.
- ii. Social workers should respect confidential information shared by colleagues in the course of their professional relationships and transactions. They should ensure that such colleagues understand social workers' obligation to respect confidentiality and any exceptions related to it.
- iii. Social workers those who are members of team of professionals which is interdisciplinary in nature, should participate and contribute to decisions that affect the wellbeing of clients by drawing on the perspectives, values, and experiences of the social work profession.
- iv. Social workers should not take any advantage of a dispute between a colleague and employer to obtain a position or otherwise advance the social workers' own interests. They should not drag their clients in disputes with colleagues or engage clients in any inappropriate discussion of conflicts between social workers and their colleagues.
- v. Social workers should seek the cooperation of colleagues and consult them whenever it is in the best interests of clients. They should keep themselves well informed about colleagues' areas of expertise and competencies.
- vi. Social workers should refer clients to other professionals when their specialized knowledge or expertise is needed to serve clients fully or partially, when it is believed that they are not being effective or making reasonable progress with clients and that

referral service is required. Social workers those who refer clients to other professionals should take appropriate steps to facilitate an orderly transfer of responsibility.

- vii. Social workers who have direct knowledge of a professional 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.
- viii. Social workers should take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, expose, and correct the unethical conduct of colleagues. They should be knowledgeable about established policies and procedures for handling concerns about colleagues' unethical behavior.
- ix. Social workers should contribute to the education and training of colleagues by sharing knowledge and practice wisdom. They should identify, develop, use and disseminate knowledge, theory and practice.

C. Towards Practice Settings

- i. Social workers should undertake to carry out their duties diligently according to the standards of the code of ethics and strive to ensure such are upheld, respected and complied with by the organisations for which they work.
- ii. Social workers should address any potentially conflicting goals or ethical differences between themselves and the organisation for which they work and try to find solutions to such problems in accordance with the code of ethics.
- iii. Social workers should strive for working conditions within their organisation satisfactory to all concerned that promote integrity and protect health, and for the continuous development and improvement of quality.
- iv. Social workers who provide supervision or consultation should have the necessary knowledge and skills appropriately and should do so only within their areas of knowledge and competence. Those who provide supervision or consultation are responsible for setting clear, appropriate and culturally sensitive boundaries.
- v. Social worker should carefully consider the client's needs before agreeing to provide services, especially, when he/she is receiving services from another agency or colleague and contacts him for his/her services. They 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 in order to minimize the possible confusion and conflict.

- vi. Social workers should take appropriate steps to ensure that documentation of records is accurate and reflects the services provided. They 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.
- vii. Social workers should adhere to commitments made to employers and employing organizations. They should work to improve employing agencies' policies and procedures and the efficiency and effectiveness of their services. They should also take appropriate steps to ensure that employers are aware of social workers' ethical obligations as set forth in the *code of ethics* for social work practice.
- viii. Social workers should not allow an employing organization's policies, procedures, regulations, or administrative orders to interfere with their ethical practice of social work.
- ix. Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate discrimination in the employing organization's work assignments and in its employment policies and practices.

D. Towards Self-Employment

Social workers those who are self-employed should:

- i. Inform their clients regarding monetary charges and any other costs before commencing professional service and charge only for hours and services contracted with them.
- ii. Arrange appropriate temporary or substitute service for clients when unavailable or unable to continue practice.
- iii. Inform clients and offer suitable referral when their needs fall outside the practitioner's area of expertise or ability to provide services or resources.
- iv. Not solicit the clients of either their colleagues or their place of self-employment.
- v. Maintain practice records in accordance with all relevant statutory requirements.
- vi. Maintain adequate professional indemnity and public liability insurance coverage as a protection for clients.
- vii. Ensure that when their services provided are funded by third parties, they have a prime responsibility for the welfare of their clients.
- viii. Ensure that the services they provide are ethically and professionally appropriate while making negotiations to provide services to clients on behalf of an agency or funding source.

E. Towards Education and Supervision/Instruction

Social workers those who function as educators or field work supervisors/instructors of students should:

- i. Provide instruction only within their areas of knowledge and competence based on the most updated information and knowledge available in the profession.
- ii. Assess and evaluate students' performance in a manner that is based on the scientific methodology and as per the institutional rules and regulations.
- iii. Take reasonable steps to ensure that clients are routinely informed when services are being provided by students.
- iv. Not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with students in which there is a risk of exploitation or probable harm to the students. Social work educators and field work supervisors of students are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.
- v. Arrange student field work placements only in organizations that exercise fair personnel practices.

F. Towards Research and Distribution of Its Findings

- i. Social workers those who are engaged in research should:
- ii. Undertake specific ethical responsibilities and observe the conventions of ethical scholarly enquiry.
- iii. Monitor and evaluate policies, the implementation of programs, and practice interventions.
- iv. Promote and facilitate evaluation and research to contribute to the development of knowledge.
- v. Critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work and fully use evaluation and research evidence in their professional practice.
- vi. Carefully consider possible consequences and should follow guidelines developed for the protection of evaluation and research participants.
- vii. 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.
- viii. Promote appropriate individual and community participation in research.
 - ix. Ensure that the research has merit and integrity by demonstrating its potential benefit, utilising appropriate methods and basing it on a thorough review of the literature.
 - x. Accurately and fully disseminate research findings.
 - xi. Bring research results that indicate or demonstrate social inequalities or injustices to the attention of the relevant bodies.
 - xii. Acknowledge and attribute fully the work of all other authors and contributors.
 - xiii. Adhere to general policies on authorship and credit should be taken only for work actually performed.
 - xiv. Educate themselves, their students, and their colleagues about responsible research practices.

G. Towards Administration/Management of Social Work Services

- i. Social work administrators should advocate within and outside their agencies for adequate resources to meet the needs of clients.
- ii. Social work administrators 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 non-discriminatory and based on appropriate and consistently applied principles.
- iii. Social work administrators should take appropriate steps to ensure that the working environment for which they are responsible is consistent with and encourages compliance with the code of ethics.
- iv. Social work administrators should take appropriate steps to eliminate any conditions in their organizations that violate, interfere with or discourage compliance with the code of ethics.
- v. Social work administrators should take appropriate steps to provide or arrange for continuing development for all staff for whom they are responsible which should address updated knowledge and emerging trends related to social work practice.

H. Towards Oneself of Being Professional

- i. Social workers should critically assess their own practice and be aware of their impact on others. They should recognise the limits of their practice and seek advice of other professionals if necessary in order to ensure that they work in a more effective manner.
- ii. Social workers should strive to become and remain proficient in professional practice and the performance of professional functions. They should critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work. They should also routinely review the professional literature and participate in continuing education relevant to social work practice and social work ethics.
- iii. Social workers should base their practice on recognized knowledge, including empirically based knowledge, relevant to social work and social work ethics.
- iv. Social workers should not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to inter in to their professional performance.
- v. Social workers should not participate in, condone or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, or deception in any manner.
- vi. Social workers should make clear distinctions between statements made and actions engaged in as a common individual and as a representative of the social work profession, a professional social work organization.
- vii. 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.
- viii. Social workers must shoulder responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for the work they have actually performed and to which they have contributed. They should honestly acknowledge the work of and the contributions made by others.

I. Towards the Social Work Profession Itself

- i. Social workers must work for the promotion and maintenance of high standards of education and/or practice.
- ii. Social workers must uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, mission and goals of the profession. They should protect, enhance, and improve the integrity of the profession through appropriate measures-study, active discussions & deliberations and responsible criticism of the profession.

- iii. Social workers should devote time and contribute professional expertise to activities that promote respect for the value, integrity, competence and recognition of the social work profession. These activities may include advocacy, teaching, research, consultation, service, legislative testimony, presentations in the community, and participation in their professional organizations.
- iv. Social workers should contribute to the body of knowledge of social work and share with colleagues their own knowledge related to practice, research, and ethics.
- v. Social workers should seek to contribute to the profession's literature and to share their knowledge at conferences, seminars, workshops and professional meetings.
- vi. Social workers must not indulge in and also act to prevent the unfair and non-professional practices of social work.

J. Towards the Society

- i. Social workers must work for the overall welfare of the society, from local to national levels, and the development of people, communities and environment. They must have faith in democratic values and uphold commitment to the constitution of the country.
- ii. Social workers must advocate for the conditions advantageous to the fulfillment of basic human needs and should promote social, economic, political, and cultural values and institutions that are well-suited with the realization of social justice.
- iii. Social workers should involve in social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment opportunities and services they require to meet their basic human needs.
- iv. Social workers must provide suitable professional services in public emergencies such as - natural and manmade disasters to the greatest extent possible.
- v. Social workers must respond upon expanding choices and opportunities for all, promoting people's participation with special reference to vulnerable, disadvantaged, oppressed, and exploited people and groups in order to empower them.
- vi. Social workers within their capacities must respond to prevent and eradicate any type of injustice, exploitation and discrimination against any person, group, or class. They should expedite people participation for public opinion in shaping social policies and institutions.

10. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

While the *code of professional conduct* is for voluntary adoption, the Disciplinary Rules are equally applicable on all the members of NAPSWI. Its constitution also provides that the members should have faith and allegiance to aim and objectives and willing to submit him/herself with rules and regulations of the NAPSWI. It is implied that those who do not have faith and allegiance to its constitution, may leave the organisation or if knowingly violate may face disciplinary actions for corrective measures. The spirit of the Disciplinary Rules in any code of ethics is based on the minimum level of conduct below which no professional social worker can fall without being subject to disciplinary action. The disciplinary rules should be uniformly applied to all members, regardless of the nature of their professional activities. This *Code of Ethics* does not prescribe either disciplinary procedures or penalties for violation, nor does it undertake to define standards for civil liability of professional social worker for his/her professional conduct. Anyone who violates the law prescribe for any civil or criminal acts, shall be dealt as per law, legal procedures and practices and shall be responsible for his/her act. The provision of this *Code of Ethics* may be used for preventive education and interpretive guidance to resolve conflicts arising thereof.

11. PLEDGE

A pledge is basically a formal promise that we accept to keep it at any cost. This pledge shall act as a guide in the journey of a professional social worker. NAPSWI has adopted the pledge to be administered to all professionals including to those who join the formal training in social work profession at any social work educational institution. It shall be endeavour of each professional social worker to internalise the pledge in professional conduct and behaviour and also to share, publicise, and disseminate the same at all possible places.

12. CONTINUOUS UPDATING

The *code of ethics for professional social workers* intends for entire social work fraternity including individuals, institutions and social work professional organisations in India. All the members of NAPSWI are expected to follow this while performing their task related to education, research and practice. Keeping in view that society's values and practices are changing constantly, NAPSWI has the responsibility to amend this code of ethics at the appropriate intervals and in accordance with the international and national mandate and to maintain its relevance for the social work profession in India. The comments and suggestions are always welcome for further improvement.

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THE PLEDGE

I pledge to step out of my area of comfort so I may meet people, listen to their lives, grow and remain open to their full humanity

- **I pledge to be critical and ask questions in order to cast doubt, inquire and prompt social change and transformation.**
- **I shall self-reflect to examine my own biases, clarify my beliefs and take stances.**
- **I shall strive continuously to advance knowledge about people, issues, and social work profession.**
- **I pledge to contribute towards turning our institutions into genuinely transparent, accountable and fair communities of action.**
- **I promise to defend freedom of expression, to being open always to dialogue and listening.**
- **I shall be consciously inclusive towards all people and act to promote diversity, equality, mutual respect, justice and reconciliation.**
- **I give a promise to walk with marginalized voiceless, and people who have been forced to silence.**
- **I promise to myself to engage people and structures to address life challenges and enhance their wellbeing.**

From this day I am aware that I am part of a community of change agents. I, thus, pledge to act ethically, in compassion, with thoughtfulness, conviction, passion, honesty, perseverance and humility.

That is the least I pledge for.....

(Adopted by NAPSWI @ 1st Indian Social Work Congress 2013)