

Code of Ethics

1. Preamble

This Code of Ethics is predicated upon the principles and aspirations of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.¹

Members of the Society of Professional Social Workers (Inc) ('the Society') agree, upon joining the Society, to support and abide by this Code of Ethics.

2. The Profession of Social Work

2.1 Scope of the profession

Professional social work practice embraces individuals, families, groups and communities and maintains high standards of professionalism.

Social work practice also encompasses social policy and social administration, has a commitment to social justice and is underpinned by refereed research.

2.2 Continuing professional education

Members are to maintain standards through participation in continuing professional education (CPE).

The Society facilitates CPE activities and awards members who complete accredited CPE with the title of Fellow.

3. Responsibilities of Professional Social Workers

3.1 Confidentiality and privacy

Professional social workers will respect the privacy and confidentiality of the client at all times.

They will fully and clearly apprise the client of the rights of all parties at commencement of the professional relationship.

Signed consent to release of information if required for client benefit, must be obtained from clients when there are no alternative statutory obligations.

3.2 The client

Professional social workers must not use their professional relationship to obtain any personal advantage, other than a fee for service or salary.

3.3 Objectivity

A professional professional social worker shall maintain practice objectivity at all times.

Professional supervision, CPE and ongoing personal development are integral to best practice.

3.4 Professional collaboration

A professional social worker must cooperate with and value the work of other professionals and agencies in the best interest of clients.

3.5 Clients of other social workers

A professional social worker will not see the client of another social worker unless agreed by the client.

3.5 Empowerment of clients

The role of the professional social worker is primarily to help clients become autonomous in decision making, leading to fulfilling and rewarding lives as part of families and communities.

The needs of clients are paramount over the personal wants and beliefs of the social worker. Only with respect to the law or the lawful requirements of the employing agency can this be limited.

3.6 Provision of information

A professional social worker will provide the client with all possible information relevant to their needs as required.

This includes access to social work records concerning them wherever legally available.

3.7 The employing agency

Professional social workers are required to abide by statutory requirements and the policy and procedures, standards and protocols of the employing agency.

When these conflict with the values of the social work profession, they are obliged to strive to change them.

Footnotes

¹ *United Nations, General Assembly Resolution 217A (III), UN Doc A/810 at 71 (1948).* <<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/resolutions.html>>