

Korea Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics

Preamble

Social workers, based on the principles of humanity and equality, respect the dignity and the worth of people, and dedicate lives to ensure people's inherent right to freedom and survival. In particular, social workers should advocate for values of social justice, equality, freedom, and democracy on behalf of the socially and economically underprivileged. Social workers not only work with people in need to help enhance social status and skills, but also part take in various affairs to improve the quality of social institutions.

Social workers should endeavor to empower individuals claim self-identity and determination. Individual rights should not be unfairly dismissed under any circumstance. In order to accomplish these goals, social workers should develop professional expertise and strive to maintain competence and integrity as professionals who respect and materialize social values.

Therefore, social workers declare high ethical standards. These standards should provide a guiding framework to evaluate conduct concerning clients, colleagues, organizations, communities and the society as a whole. There should be a high level of commitment to the compliance of these standards.

Ethical Standards

I. Social Workers' Fundamental Ethical Standards

1. Code of Conduct as Professionals

1) Social workers should maintain the level of dignity and qualification

as professionals, taking responsibility for work assignments entrusted to them.

- 2) Social workers should never discriminate clients based on religion, race, gender, nationality, marital condition, sexual orientation, economic status, political faith, mental or physical disability, or other individual preferences, features, or status.
- 3) Social workers, as professionals, should attend work assignments with diligence and equity. They should never under any circumstance compromise their integrity when working with clients.
- 4) Social workers should dedicate to seeking social justice and improving the well-being of clients. This should be backed with a demand for the country and its society to ensure an enabling environment.
- 5) Social workers should not be subject to unjustified interventions or pressures from inside or outside the organizations when fulfilling work assignments and responsibilities.
- 6) Social workers should not prioritize their own interests at the expense of the values and dignity of the social work profession.
- 7) Social workers should actively participate in the activities of professional organizations, including those of the Korea Association of Social Workers. They should strive to ensure social justice and promote the rights of all social workers.

2. Endeavors for Professional Development

- 1) Social workers have the responsibility to aspire for professional development, as to utilize and disseminate knowledge and skills that provide clients with quality services.
- 2) Social workers must obtain voluntary and informed consent from clients when conducting research.
- 3) The information obtained in the process of research must be kept confidential. The clients must be protected from physical and mental

harm during the course of data collection.

- 4) Social workers must strive to develop professional competency, whilst maintaining high standards for service delivery.
- 5) Social workers should actively participate in the trainings offered by the Korea Association of Social Workers or any other agencies that share similar social work values.

3. Code of Conduct towards Financial Return

- 1) Social workers should provide services regardless of the clients' affordability and should never discriminate clients for this reason.
- 2) Social workers, if necessary, should set fair and reasonable fees for services provided.
- 3) Social workers should not take financial return through unjust means.

II. Social Workers' Ethical Standards with Clients

1. Relationship with Clients

- 1) Social workers should advocate for clients' rights and interests as their first priority.
- 2) Social workers should always respect the dignity of clients and fully utilize professional expertise to meet client needs
- 3) Social workers should empower clients to exercise their self-determination to the greatest extent possible, and advocate for client interests to the fullest.
- 4) Social workers should respect and protect the privacy of clients. They should always keep the information obtained in the process confidential.
- 5) Social workers must recognize and respect the clients' right to know by providing accurate and sufficient information about the scope and

content of services.

- 6) Social workers, in handling the information collected in the form of documents, pictures, computer files, etc., must inform clients of the purpose and use of the information as well as the limitation of confidentiality in detail. Client consent must be obtained prior to the disclosure of information.
- 7) Social workers should never exploit the relationship with clients for the sake of personal interests.
- 8) Social workers should not engage in inappropriate sexual relationship with a client, whether such contact was consensual or forced.
- 9) Social workers should recognize clients' strengths and work with them in creating an environment to promote social well-being.

2. Relationship with Colleagues' Clients

- 1) Social workers should not create a professional relationship with clients of colleagues or their organizations without legitimate and appropriate consultation.
- 2) If required to provide services to a colleague's client, a social worker should provide a commensurate quality of service as they would to their own clients.

III. Social Workers' Ethical Standards with Colleagues

1. Colleague

- 1) Social workers should treat colleagues with respect and trust. Their words and deeds should not hurt the status and dignity of other professionals.
- 2) Social workers should collaborate with colleagues to promote the interests and rights of the social work profession.

- 3) Social workers should facilitate ethical and professional conduct of colleagues. In cases where breaching occurs, issues must be dealt with respect to related regulations and ethical standards.
- 4) Social workers should take appropriate measures to protect the interest of clients in instances where issues arise due to professional misjudgment and malpractice.
- 5) Social workers should take measures according to related regulations and ethical standards in cases where unethical conduct has been reported by other members
- 6) Social workers should recognize and understand the value and significance of the duties of colleagues in the social work profession as well as other professions. They should strive to build a mutually democratic working relationship.

2. Supervisor

- 1) Supervisors should not exploit their status in order to pursue personal interests.
- 2) Supervisors should fulfill their responsibilities with fairness according to professional standards. Evaluation results must be shared with social workers, trainees and field practice students when conducted.
- 3) Social workers should respect the professional support and guidance of supervisors. Supervisors should advise social workers concerning professional assignments.
- 4) Supervisors should never sexually or personally humiliate social workers, trainees and field practice students.

IV. Social Workers' Ethical Standards with Society

- 1) Social workers should respect human rights and equality of every person. They should also lead in advocating and representing the socially disadvantaged.

- 2) Social workers should actively participate in the establishment, advancement, legislation and implementation of social policies aimed at developing necessary social services.
- 3) Social workers should demand and advocate for the establishment, advancement, legislation and implementation of social policies aimed at enhancing the social environment and claiming social justice.
- 4) Social workers should understand the issues of the community in which they work in, and take active measures to resolve them.

V. Social Workers' Organizational Ethical Standards

- 1) Social workers, for the interests of clients, should strive to achieve the goals of organizations by ensuring efficiency and effectiveness of services.
- 2) Social workers should respond to unjust policies in organizations by applying professional values and knowledge, as well as to report immediately to the Social Work Ethics Committee.
- 3) Social workers should facilitate the growth of organizations through active participation in its activities.

VI. Formation and Operation of the Social Work Ethics Committee

- 1) The Korea Association of Social Workers should form a Social Work Ethics Committee in order to enhance the level of ethical practice of social work.
- 2) The Social Work Ethics Committee should receive reports on violation of the Code of Ethics and respond accordingly through a formal process.
- 3) Social workers should respect the ethical recommendation and decisions made by the Korea Association of Social Workers.