

The **NASW Code of Ethics** (National Association of Social Workers) is a crucial document that provides a set of principles and standards to guide the ethical practice of social workers, including **Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSWs)**. The Code of Ethics outlines how social workers should conduct themselves in their professional roles, ensuring that they uphold the highest ethical standards in all areas of practice.

## **NASW Code of Ethics Overview**

The NASW Code of Ethics consists of **six core values** and **ethical principles** that guide social workers in their professional behavior and decision-making:

---

### **Core Values in the NASW Code of Ethics**

1. **Service**

Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems.

- **Ethical principle:** Social workers' primary responsibility is to promote the well-being of clients and help them meet their needs.

2. **Social Justice**

Social workers challenge social injustice and work toward a more equitable society.

- **Ethical principle:** Social workers strive to ensure that marginalized and oppressed groups are treated justly and with respect.

3. **Dignity and Worth of the Person**

Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of all individuals.

- **Ethical principle:** Social workers uphold the rights and freedoms of clients and ensure that their services do not diminish their dignity.

4. **Importance of Human Relationships**

Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.

- **Ethical principle:** Social workers strive to strengthen relationships to improve the well-being of individuals, families, and communities.

5. **Integrity**

Social workers behave honestly and ethically in their professional interactions.

- **Ethical principle:** Social workers act in a trustworthy manner, being truthful and transparent in all professional matters.

6. **Competence**

Social workers practice only within their areas of expertise and seek to enhance their professional knowledge and skills.

- **Ethical principle:** Social workers engage in ongoing professional development and seek supervision when needed to ensure that they are providing effective services.

---

### **Ethical Standards in the NASW Code of Ethics**

The NASW Code of Ethics includes specific **ethical standards** in the following categories, which provide guidelines for social workers in various professional situations.

### 1. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibility to Clients

- **Commitment to Client Welfare:** Social workers prioritize the needs of clients, acting in their best interests.
- **Informed Consent:** Social workers obtain informed consent from clients regarding treatment, acknowledging that clients have the right to make informed decisions about their care.
- **Confidentiality:** Social workers respect clients' privacy and confidentiality, disclosing information only with permission or when required by law.
- **Dual Relationships:** Social workers avoid dual relationships (e.g., personal, familial, or business) that could impair professional judgment or create conflicts of interest.

### 2. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibility to Colleagues

- **Respect for Colleagues:** Social workers treat colleagues with respect and professionalism, collaborating to improve service delivery.
- **Interdisciplinary Cooperation:** Social workers cooperate with other professionals to meet clients' needs, ensuring a coordinated and effective approach to treatment.

### 3. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibility in Practice Settings

- **Supervision and Consultation:** Social workers engage in supervision and consultation when faced with challenging ethical dilemmas or cases, seeking guidance to provide the best possible care.
- **Delegation of Responsibilities:** Social workers only delegate tasks to those who have the requisite qualifications, ensuring that tasks are within the scope of competence for both the social worker and the subordinate.

### 4. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibility to the Social Work Profession

- **Upholding the Integrity of the Profession:** Social workers should uphold and promote the values, ethics, and standards of the social work profession.
- **Contributing to Professional Knowledge:** Social workers share knowledge, resources, and insights to advance the field and promote social justice.

### 5. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibility to Society

- **Advocacy for Social Change:** Social workers advocate for policies that promote social and economic justice, focusing on marginalized and oppressed populations.
- **Sustainability and Environmental Responsibility:** Social workers engage in practices that promote the health and well-being of communities, including attention to environmental sustainability.

## 6. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibility to the Profession's Ethical Standards

- **Adherence to Ethical Standards:** Social workers are expected to follow the professional ethical standards set forth by the NASW Code of Ethics and other relevant professional guidelines.
  - **Responsibility to Report Violations:** Social workers have a responsibility to report any unethical behavior or violations of professional standards by colleagues or other professionals.
- 

### Ethical Decision-Making Framework

The NASW Code of Ethics encourages social workers to use a systematic decision-making process when facing ethical dilemmas. Key considerations include:

- Respect for client autonomy and dignity.
  - Consideration of the broader social context and societal impact.
  - Review of ethical principles and applicable laws.
  - Seeking supervision and consulting with colleagues when in doubt.
- 

### Importance of the NASW Code of Ethics

The **NASW Code of Ethics** plays an essential role in ensuring the integrity of the social work profession. By providing clear ethical guidelines, it helps social workers navigate complex situations, balance competing interests, and ensure that they act in the best interests of their clients and society. Additionally, it offers a framework for accountability, guiding social workers to uphold the values of the profession and promoting public trust.

---

For more detailed information, the full **NASW Code of Ethics** can be accessed on the **National Association of Social Workers** official website.