



Social Work Program | University of Washington, Tacoma

Major Principles of the National Association of Social Worker's Code of Ethics

The NASW is the major professional organization for social workers. The following is an outline of the major principles of the NASW Code of Ethics to which students in the Social Work Program are also expected to adhere.

I. The Social Worker's Conduct and Comportment as a Social Worker

- A. Propriety – The social worker should maintain high standards of personal conduct in the capacity or identity as a social worker.
- B. Competence and Professional Development – The social worker should strive to become and remain proficient in professional practice and the performance of professional functions.
- C. Service – The social worker should regard as primary the service obligation of the social work profession.
- D. Integrity – The social worker should act in accordance with the highest standards of professional integrity.
- E. Scholarship and Research – The social worker engaged in study and research should be guided by the conventions of scholarly inquiry.

II. The Social Worker's Ethical Responsibility to Clients

- F. Primacy of Client's Interests – The social worker's primary responsibility is to clients.
- G. Rights and Prerogatives of Clients – The social worker should make every effort to foster maximum self-determination on the part of the clients.
- H. Confidentiality and Privacy – The social worker should respect the privacy of clients and hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of professional service.
- I. Fees – When setting fees, the social worker should ensure that they are fair, reasonable, considerate, and commensurate with the service performed and with due regard for the clients' ability to pay.

III. The Social Worker's Ethical Responsibility to Colleagues

- J. Respect, Fairness, and Courtesy – The social worker should treat colleagues with respect, courtesy, fairness, and good faith.
- K. Dealing with Colleagues' Clients – The social worker has the responsibility to relate to the clients of colleagues with full professional consideration.

IV. The Social Worker's Ethical Responsibility to Employers and Employing Organizations

- L. Commitments to Employing Organizations – The social worker should adhere to commitments made to the employing organization.

V. The Social Worker's Ethical Responsibility to the Social Work Profession

- M. Maintaining the Integrity of the Profession – The social worker should uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, and mission of the profession.
- N. Community Service – The social worker should assist the profession in making social services available to the general public.
- O. Development of Knowledge – The social worker should take responsibility for identifying, developing, and fully utilizing knowledge for professional practice.

VI. The Social Worker's Ethical Responsibility to Society

- P. Promoting the General Welfare – The social worker should promote the general welfare of society.

PLEASE NOTE: The complete text of the NASW's Code of Ethics is available in the UWT Library or by writing the national office at NASW, Attn: Publication Sales, 7981 Eastern Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20910.