



NASW Code of Ethics Summary

The NASW Code of Ethics is intended to serve as a guide to the everyday professional conduct of social workers. This Code includes four sections. The first Section, "Preamble," summarizes the social work profession's mission and core values. The second section, "Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics," provides an overview of the Code's main functions and a brief guide for dealing with ethical issues or dilemmas in social work practice. The third section, "Ethical Principles," presents broad ethical principles based on social work's core values, that inform social work practice. The final section, "Ethical Standards," includes specific ethical standards to guide social workers' conduct, and to provide a basis for adjudication.

The Code identifies core values on which social work's mission is based, summarizes ethical principles that reflect the profession's core values, establishes a set of specific ethical standards that guide social work practice, and provides the basis on which the public can hold a practitioner accountable.

Summary of Principles

1. Social worker's primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems.
2. Social workers challenge social injustice.
3. Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.
4. Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.
5. Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.
6. Social workers practice within their areas of competence, and develop and enhance their professional expertise.

Ethical standards are articulated under social workers' ethical responsibilities to clients, to colleagues, in practice settings, as professionals, to the social work profession, and to broader society.

The National Association of Social Workers is the largest organization of

professional social workers with 155,000 members. It promotes, develops, and protects the practice of social work and social workers. NASW also seeks to enhance the well being of individuals, families, and communities through its work and its advocacy. A professional social worker has a degree in social work and meets state legal requirements. Professional social workers practice in many settings including family service agencies, child welfare, community mental health centers, private practice, schools, hospitals, employee assistance programs, and public and private agencies. Professional social workers are the nation's largest group of mental health services providers.

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