

# SOCIAL MEDIA AND ETHICS IN CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

43rd Annual APOSW Annual Conference  
 Association of Pediatric Oncology Social Workers  
 Embracing the Diverse Landscape of Pediatric Oncology Social Work  
 April 8-10<sup>th</sup>, 2019 - Phoenix, Arizona

Presented by Dawn M. Hobby, LICSW

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Learning Objectives

- Examine the key ethical considerations that gave rise to technology focused revisions to the NASW Code of Ethics
- Gain an understanding of the new standards in the NASW Code of Ethics and how they impact the use of social media in clinical practice.
- Understand the benefits and ethical challenges associated with various social networking sites.
- Develop strategies for minimizing risk of ethical violations using technology and social networking sites.

©2019 Property of Dawn Hobby - Contractor. All Rights Reserved. 2

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Technology

Technology-assisted social work services\* include any social work services that involve the use of computers, mobile or landline telephones, tablets, video technology, or other electronic or digital technologies; this includes the use of various electronic or digital platforms, such as the internet, online social media, chat rooms, text messaging, e-mail, and emerging digital applications



©2019 Property of Dawn Hobby - Contractor. All Rights Reserved. 3

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Technology

Technology-assisted services encompass individual, family, or group counseling; community organization; administration; advocacy; mediation; education; supervision; research; evaluation; and other social work services. Social workers should keep apprised of emerging technological developments that may be used in social work practice and how various ethical standards apply to them.



---

---

---

---

---

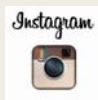
---

---

---

## Benefits of Technology/Social Media

- Promotion
- Advocacy
- Marketing
- Broader reach
- Competition
- Other benefits



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Risks

- Impulse control
- Broad reach
- Tone or core message misinterpretations
- Harm to clients
- Harm to self
- Legal implications

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Ethical Standards

### 1.03 Informed Consent

(i) Social workers should obtain client consent before conducting an electronic search on the client. Exceptions may arise when the search is for purposes of protecting the client or other people from serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm, or for other compelling professional reasons.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Ethical Standards

### 1.04 Competence

(d) Social workers who use technology in the provision of social work services should ensure that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to provide such services in a competent manner. This includes an understanding of the special communication challenges when using technology and the ability to implement strategies to address these challenges.

(e) Social workers who use technology in providing social work services should comply with the laws governing technology and social work practice in the jurisdiction in which they are regulated and located and, as applicable, in the jurisdiction in which the client is located.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Ethical Standards

### 1.05 cultural Awareness and Social Diversity

(d) Social workers who provide electronic social work services should be aware of cultural and socioeconomic differences among clients and how they may use electronic technology. Social workers should assess cultural, environmental, economic, mental or physical **ability**, linguistic, and other issues that may affect the delivery or use of these services.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Ethical Standards**

1.06 Conflicts of Interest

(e) Social workers should avoid communication with clients using technology (such as social networking sites, online chat, e-mail, text messages, telephone, and video) for personal or non-work-related purposes.

(f) Social workers should be aware that posting personal information on professional Web sites or other media might cause boundary confusion, inappropriate dual relationships, or harm to clients.

©2019 Property of Dawn Hobby - Contractor. All Rights Reserved. 13

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Ethical Standards**

1.06 Conflicts of Interest

(g) Social workers should be aware that personal affiliations may increase the likelihood that clients may discover the social worker's presence on Web sites, social media, and other forms of technology. Social workers should be aware that involvement in electronic communication with groups based on race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, mental or physical ability, religion, immigration status, and other personal affiliations may affect their ability to work effectively with particular clients.

©2019 Property of Dawn Hobby - Contractor. All Rights Reserved. 14

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Ethical Standards**

1.06 Conflicts of Interest

(h) Social workers should avoid accepting requests from or engaging in personal relationships with clients on social networking sites or other electronic media to prevent boundary confusion, inappropriate dual relationships, or harm to clients.

©2019 Property of Dawn Hobby - Contractor. All Rights Reserved. 15

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Ethical Standards

### 1.07 Privacy and Confidentiality

(m) Social workers should take reasonable steps to protect the confidentiality of electronic communications, including information provided to clients or third parties. Social workers should use applicable safeguards (such as encryption, firewalls, and passwords) when using electronic communications such as e-mail, online posts, online chat sessions, mobile communication, and text messages.

(n) Social workers should develop and disclose policies and procedures for notifying clients of any breach of confidential information in a timely manner.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Ethical Standards

### 1.07 Privacy and Confidentiality

(o) In the event of unauthorized access to client records or information, including any unauthorized access to the social worker's electronic communication or storage systems, social workers should inform clients of such disclosures, consistent with applicable laws and professional standards.

(p) Social workers should develop and inform clients about their policies, consistent with prevailing social work ethical standards, on the use of electronic technology, including Internet-based search engines, to gather information about clients.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Ethical Standards

### 1.07 Privacy and Confidentiality

(q) Social workers should avoid searching or gathering client information electronically unless there are compelling professional reasons, and when appropriate, with the client's informed consent.

(r) Social workers should avoid posting any identifying or confidential information about clients on professional websites or other forms of social media.

\*Please note letters s - w include old language with new letters

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Ethical Standards

### 1.08 Access to Records

(b) Social workers should develop and inform clients about their policies, consistent with prevailing social work ethical standards, on the use of technology to provide clients with access to their records.

\*Please note: standard b in the old code is now standard c

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Common risk areas

- Faculty and students
- Colleague and colleague
- Professional and client
- Professional and former client
- Professional and family member or friend of client

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Considerations

- Professional Codes of Ethics
- Policies and Procedures
  - Agency
  - Social media policies
- Laws and Regulations
  - State and federal
  - Regulatory



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Decision-making Model – DECISIONS by Dawn M. Hobby, LICSW

- ❖ Determine the facts
- ❖ Ethical considerations? If so, what ethical standards apply?
- ❖ Consider your values. Assess the personal morals and values involved.
- ❖ Impact of Self (Consider how the combination of professional knowledge and values and aspects of one's personality, belief systems and life experiences are impacting the decision)
- ❖ Stakeholders, who are they?
- ❖ Incorporate professional literature review.
- ❖ Other considerations: standards of practice, agency policies, regulatory and/or legal considerations, consultation.
- ❖ Narration of your decision: be prepared to articulate your decision. Do some critical thinking and be confident.
- ❖ Secure and support your decision through excellent documentation and evaluation of the outcome of the decision.

Hobby - Contractor. All Rights Reserved.

22

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Think before you hit!

Don't Tweet/post when....

- 1. You've been drinking or are otherwise altered in some way.
- 2. You're angry with someone or about a specific issue.
- 3. It's after 10 p.m. or before 7 a.m. (unless there's been a terrorist attack or other life threatening emergency).
- 4. The message would be hurtful or embarrassing to anyone (including you!)
- 5. You're wondering as you're typing if the message could be misinterpreted or misunderstood

*Dana Brownlee*

©2019 Property of Dawn Hobby - Contractor. All Rights Reserved.

23

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

©2019 Property of Dawn Hobby - Contractor. All Rights Reserved.

24

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Resources

- National Association of Social Workers. (2017). Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social workers. Washington, DC: Author.
- National Association of Social Workers (NASW), Council on Social Work Education, Association of Social Work Boards, & Clinical Social Work Association. (2017). Practice standards on Social Work and Technology. Washington, DC: Author.
- Association of Social Work Boards. (2015). Model Regulatory Standards for Technology and Social Work Practice. Retrieved from <https://www.aswb.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/ASWB-Model-Regulatory-Standards-for-Technology-and-Social-Work-Practice.pdf>
- Barsky, A. E. (2017). Social work practice and technology: Ethical issues and policy responses. *Journal of Technology in Human Services*, 35(1), 1-12. doi:10.1080/15228835.2017.1277906

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Resources

- [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/to-tweet-or-not-to-tweetthat-is-the-question\\_us\\_58aceae4b0d818c4f0a37f](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/to-tweet-or-not-to-tweetthat-is-the-question_us_58aceae4b0d818c4f0a37f)
- Kolmes, K. (2010). Private practice social media policy. Retrieved from <http://www.drkkolmes.com/docs/socmed.pdf>
- National Association of Social Workers (NASW), Council on Social Work Education, Association of Social Work Boards, & Clinical Social Work Association. (2017). Practice standards on Social Work and Technology. Washington, DC: Author.
- Reamer, F. (2015). Digital technology in social work. In C. Franklin (Ed.-in-Chief), *Encyclopedia of Social Work Online*. New York and Washington, DC: Oxford University Press and NASW Press. Retrieved from <http://socialwork.oxfordre.com>

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---