Rules of
Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions and Professional Registration
Division 2263—State Committee for Social Workers
Chapter 3—Ethical Standards/Disciplinary Rules

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20 CSR 2263-3.010 Scope of Coverage and Organization

PURPOSE: This rule is promulgated pursuant to section 337.630.2(15), RSMo Supp. 1997 and sets forth the scope of coverage and organization of the ethical standards/disciplinary rules.

(1) The ethical standards/disciplinary rules for licensed social workers, provisional licensed clinical social workers, temporary permit holders and registrants, as set forth hereafter by the committee, are mandatory. The failure of a licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder or registrant to abide by any ethical standard/disciplinary rule in this chapter shall constitute unethical conduct and be grounds for disciplinary proceedings.


20 CSR 2263-3.020 Moral Standards

PURPOSE: This rule is promulgated pursuant to section 337.630.2(15), RSMo Supp. 1997 and sets forth the moral obligations of the ethical standards/disciplinary rules.

(1) The public must be protected from those who are not qualified to be licensed social workers, provisional licensed social workers, temporary permit holders, or registrants by reason of a deficiency in education, experience, moral standards or other relevant factors, who who nevertheless attempt to or actually practice clinical social work or baccalaureate social work. To assure the maintenance of high standards of the profession of clinical or baccalaureate social work, licensees, temporary permit holders and registrants should assist the committee in promulgating, enforcing and improving requirements for admission to and for the practice of clinical social work or baccalaureate social work.

(2) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall not—
   (A) Violate any ethical standard/disciplinary rule;
   (B) Circumvent any ethical standard/disciplinary rule through the actions of another; or
   (C) Engage in conduct which is dishonest, deceitful or fraudulent;
   (D) Allow the pursuit of financial gain or other personal benefit to interfere with the exercise of sound professional judgment or skills; or
   (E) Use therapeutic relationships with clients to promote, for personal gain or the profit of an agency, commercial enterprises of any kind.

(3) Prior to recommending an applicant for licensure, a licensed social worker should satisfy him/herself that the applicant is of good moral character. Although a licensed social worker should not become a self-appointed investigator or judge of applicants, s/he must report to the committee all unfavorable information not otherwise privileged which s/he possesses relative to the character, education, experience, citizenship, age or other qualifications of an applicant.

(4) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall be subject to discipline if s/he has made a materially false statement, or if s/he has deliberately failed to disclose a material fact requested in connection with his/her application.

(5) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder, registrant and applicant shall respond to all requests for information and/or all other correspondence from the committee. Failure to provide the requested information may be cause for denial of licensure, permit and/or registration of supervision.

(6) Licensed social workers, provisional licensed social workers, temporary permit holders and registrants shall not engage in any activity that exploits clients, students or supervisees, including sexual intimacies, which means physical or other contact by either the licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder, registrant or the client, including, but not limited to:
   (A) Sexual intercourse—any penetration or contact with the female sex organ by a finger, the male sex organ or any object;
   (B) Sodomy—oral or anal copulation, oral or anal copulation or sexual intercourse between a person and an animal, or any penetration of the anal opening by any body part or object;
   (C) Kissing by either the licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder, registrant or client;
   (D) Touching or caressing by either the licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder, registrant or client of the other person’s legs, thighs, stomach, chest, breasts, genitals or buttocks, clothed or unclothed;
   (E) Exhibitionism and voyeurism—exposing one’s self or encouraging another to expose him/herself; and
   (F) Comments, gestures or physical contacts of a sexual nature.

(7) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall report to the committee any known or suspected violation(s) of the laws or regulations promulgated by the committee governing the practice of social work or baccalaureate social work which do not violate a client’s right to privacy.


20 CSR 2263-3.040 Client Relationships

PURPOSE: This rule is promulgated pursuant to section 337.630.2(15), RSMo 2000 and sets forth the ethical standards/disciplinary rules for client relationships.
(1) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall not enter into or continue a dual or multiple relationship, including social relationship, business relationship or sexual relationship, as defined by the committee, with a current client or with a person to whom the licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder or registrant has at anytime rendered psychotherapy (clinical social work) or other professional social work services for the treatment or amelioration of mental and emotional conditions. Business relationships do not include purchases made by the licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder or registrant from the client when the client is providing necessary goods or services to the general public, and the licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder or registrant determines that it is not possible or reasonable to obtain the necessary goods or services from another provider.

(2) Licensed social workers, provisional licensed social workers, temporary permit holders and registrants shall be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment.

(3) Licensed social workers, provisional licensed social workers, temporary permit holders and registrants should make clear to clients the purposes, goals, techniques, rules of procedure and limitations that may affect the professional relationship at or before the time that it is begun. Licensed social workers, provisional licensed social workers, temporary permit holders and registrants shall not provide professional services to clients without being able to justify the basis upon which those services are rendered.

(4) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant should be aware of his/her own mental health and emotional stability and the effect those have on his/her ability to provide appropriate services to clients. A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall not undertake or continue a professional relationship with a client when the competency of the licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant is or reasonably could be expected to be impaired due to mental, emotional, physiologic, pharmacologic or substance abuse conditions. If that condition develops after a professional relationship has been initiated, the licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall notify the client in writing of the termination of services and shall assist the client in obtaining services from another professional.

(5) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall not undertake and/or continue a professional relationship with a client when the objectivity or competency of the licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder or registrant is, or reasonably could be expected to be, impaired because of present or previous familial, social, sexual, emotional, financial, supervisory, political, administrative or legal relationship with the client. If that dual relationship develops or is discovered after the professional relationship has been initiated, the licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall terminate the professional relationship in an appropriate manner, shall notify the client in writing of this termination and shall assist the client in obtaining services from another professional.

(6) Licensed social workers, provisional licensed social workers, temporary permit holders and registrants should be knowledgeable about the services available in the community and make appropriate referrals for their clients. When a licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder or registrant has a relationship, particularly of an administrative, supervisory and/or evaluative nature, with an individual seeking counseling services, the licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder or registrant shall not serve as the practitioner for such individual but shall refer the individual to another professional.


(8) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall terminate a professional relationship when it is reasonably clear that the client is not benefiting from the relationship or when the service has been satisfactorily rendered.

(9) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall protect clients against physical threats, intimidation and coercion in the provision of social services insofar as is reasonably possible.

(10) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall not attempt any intervention unless thoroughly trained in its use or under the supervision of an expert.

(11) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant rendering services to a client shall maintain professional records that include:

(A) The presenting problem(s), assessment, plan of action and progress notes;

(B) The fee arrangement;

(C) The date and substance of each contact with the client;

(D) Notation and results of formal consults with other providers;

(E) A copy of all evaluative reports prepared or received as a part of the professional relationship; and

(F) A copy of a written communication with the client identifying the date and reason for termination of professional service if the licensed social worker is in private practice.

(12) For the purpose of these rules, the licensed social worker and temporary permit holder shall assure that professional records are maintained for at least five (5) years after the date of service is terminated.

(13) The licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall not falsify or permit the unauthorized destruction of client records.


Chapter 3—Ethical Standards/Disciplinary Rules

20 CSR 263-3.060 Relationships with Colleagues

PURPOSE: This rule is promulgated pursuant to section 337.630.2(15), RSMo and sets forth the ethical standards/disciplinary rules for relationships with colleagues.

(1) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall act with integrity in his/her relationships with colleagues, other organizations, agencies, institutions, referral sources and other professions so as to facilitate the contribution of all colleagues toward achieving optimum benefit for clients.

(2) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall not knowingly cause a client to terminate the service of another professional solely for personal gain.

(3) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall not exploit his/her professional relationships with supervisors, colleagues, supervisees, students or employees either sexually, economically or otherwise.

(4) Licensed social workers, provisional licensed social workers, temporary permit holders and registrants who have direct knowledge of a social work colleague’s impairment which is due to personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties, and which interferes with practice effectiveness should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.

(5) Licensed social workers and temporary permit holders who function as supervisors or educators should not engage in sexual intimacies or contact as defined in the rules promulgated by the committee, with supervisees, students, trainees, or other colleagues over whom they exercise professional authority.

(6) Licensed social workers and temporary permit holders must exercise appropriate supervision and provide appropriate working conditions, timely evaluations, constructive consultation and experience opportunities.


20 CSR 2263-3.080 Public Statements/Fees

PURPOSE: This rule is promulgated pursuant to section 337.630.2(15), RSMo and sets forth the ethical standards/disciplinary rules as they pertain to public statements/fees.

(1) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall not—
   (A) Give or receive a commission or rebate or any other form of remuneration for referral of clients for professional services;
   (B) Engage in fraud or misrepresentation;
   (C) Use relationships with therapeutic or therapy clients to promote, for personal gain or the profit of an agency, commercial enterprises of any kind; and
   (D) Render services until assured that clients are aware of the fees and billing arrangements.

(2) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall use only those educational credentials in association with his/her license and practice as a licensed social worker that have been earned at an acceptable educational institution. Licensed social workers, provisional licensed social workers, temporary permit holders and registrants shall not misrepresent their credentials, training or level of education.

(3) A licensed social worker holder shall use the title “Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)” or “Licensed Baccalaureate Social Worker (LBSW)” in any advertising, public directory or solicitation, including telephone directory listings, regardless of whether this presentation is made under the licensee’s name, a fictitious business or group name, or a corporate name.

(4) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker and temporary permit holder shall have his/her license prominently displayed at all times as proof of licensure to the client.

(5) Licensed social workers whose licenses have lapsed or been revoked shall not use the title “Licensed Clinical Social Worker” or “Licensed Baccalaureate Social Worker (LBSW).”

(6) Without disclosure to the client, a licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall not accept compensation for the professional services from anyone other than the client without disclosure to the client or his/her legal guardian.

(7) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall not accept for professional services any form of remuneration including the bartering of services which has the effect of exploiting the professional relationship or creating a dual or multiple relationship.

(8) A licensed social worker and temporary permit holder shall consider the value of his/her services and the financial ability of clients in establishing reasonable fees for professional services.

(9) A licensed social worker and temporary permit holder should not accept a fee for professional services or any form of remuneration from clients who are entitled to services from that licensed social worker and temporary permit holder or similar services through an institution or agency or other benefits structure, unless clients have been fully informed of the availability of, or payments for, these services from other sources.


20 CSR 2263-3.100 Confidentiality

**PURPOSE:** This rule is promulgated pursuant to section 337.630.2(15), RSMo and sets forth the ethical standards/disciplinary rules as they pertain to confidentiality.

(1) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant should take reasonable personal action, and inform responsible authorities or inform those persons at risk, when the conditions or actions of clients indicate that there is clear and imminent danger to clients or others. When the licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant is uncertain about the duty to protect, consultation with other professionals is appropriate.

(2) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall inform clients, at the onset of the professional relationship, of the limits of confidentiality.

(3) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall keep confidential his/her therapy relationships with clients including information obtained from this relationship with clients with the following exceptions:

(A) When the client gives written consent;

(B) When the client constitutes a danger to him/herself or to others;

(C) When the licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder or registrant is under court order to disclose information; or

(D) When required by law.

(4) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant should make every effort to see that the employer provides for maintenance, storage and disposal of the records of clients so that unauthorized persons shall not have access to these records.

(5) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall not forward to another person, agency or potential employer any confidential information without the written consent of the client(s) or their legal guardian(s) nor shall they violate any laws or regulations of this state or the federal government with respect to this information.

(6) When providing counseling services to families, couples or groups, licensed social workers, provisional licensed social workers, temporary permit holders and registrants shall seek agreement among the parties involved concerning each individual’s right to confidentiality and obligation to preserve the confidentiality of information shared by others. Participants in family, couples or group counseling shall be informed by the licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant that there is no guarantee that all participants will honor such agreements.


20 CSR 2263-3.120 Research on Human Subjects

**PURPOSE:** This rule is promulgated pursuant to section 337.630.2(15), RSMo and sets forth the ethical standards/disciplinary rules as they pertain to research on human subjects.

(1) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall ensure that the welfare of a client is in no way compromised in any experimentation and/or that the client is not participating against his/her will.

(2) In presenting case studies in classes, professional meetings or publications, licensed social workers, provisional licensed social workers, temporary permit holders and registrants shall disguise the identity of clients to assure full protection.

(3) In conducting any research on human subjects, a licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall not violate any laws or regulations of this state or the federal government.

(4) When planning any research activity dealing with human subjects, a licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall ensure that research problems, design and execution are in full compliance with Protection of Human Subjects as published in the Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46).

(5) Licensed social workers, provisional licensed social workers, temporary permit holders and registrants engaged in evaluation or research must obtain voluntary and written informed consent from participants without any implied or actual deprivation or penalty for refusal to participate, without undue inducement to participate, and with due regard for participants' well-being, privacy and dignity. Informed consent must include information about the nature, extent and duration of the participation requested and disclosure of the risks and benefits in the research.


20 CSR 2263-3.140 Competence

**PURPOSE:** This rule is promulgated pursuant to section 337.630.2(15), RSMo and sets forth the ethical standards/disciplinary rules as they pertain to competence.

(1) Licensed social workers, provisional licensed social workers, temporary permit holders and registrants shall limit their practice to the area(s) for which they are trained.

(2) Licensed social workers, provisional licensed social workers, temporary permit holders and registrants shall utilize consultation on an as-needed, self-determined basis.

(3) Licensed social workers, provisional licensed social workers, temporary permit holders and registrants shall be knowledgeable about how and when to utilize the expertise of other professional disciplines for their clients.
(4) Licensed social workers, provisional licensed social workers, temporary permit holders and registrants shall maintain their accessibility to clients.

(5) Licensed social workers, provisional licensed social workers, temporary permit holders and registrants shall make every effort to foster maximum self-determination on the part of the client.

(6) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall stress the personal risks involved in any services and help clients explore their readiness to face these risks.

(7) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall promote the welfare of clients in the selection, utilization and interpretation of assessment measures and strategies of intervention.

(8) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall recognize the effects of socioeconomic, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, disability and racial and cultural factors on clients in assessment and planning services.

(9) When a client’s judgement is seriously impaired, a licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall use careful deliberation before assuming responsibility for the client. The client should resume responsibility for him/herself as quickly as possible.

(10) A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall not engage in the practice of clinical social work or baccalaureate social work beyond the scope of his/her competence, as is demonstrated by his/her education, training or experience. A licensed social worker, provisional licensed social worker, temporary permit holder and registrant shall make a referral to other professionals when the services required are beyond his/her competence.

(11) Licensed social workers, provisional licensed social workers, temporary permit holders and registrants shall seek treatment for their own medical, substance abuse, psychological and emotional problems to ensure that their personal problems do not interfere with their ability to provide services to clients.

(12) A licensed social worker shall take all necessary and reasonable steps to maintain continued competence in the practice of clinical social work or baccalaureate social work by completing at least thirty (30) clock hours of continuing education on or before the expiration of the license for each renewal period.
