

SOCIAL WORKERS REGISTRATION BOARD

Notes of the 16th Meeting of the Taskforce on Review of Code of Practice

Date: 25 April 2018
Time: 9:15 a.m.
Venue: Room GH317, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Present: Mr. WONG Ka-ming (Acting Convenor)
Dr. LEUNG Chuen-suen
Dr. CHENG Yuk-tin, Carl (co-opted member)
Dr. LAM Chiu-wan (co-opted member)
Apology: Mr. LUN Chi-wai
Secretary: Mr. LEE Wing-po, Eric, Registrar
Ms. FAN Lai-yee, Veronica, Assistant Registrar

1. The meeting originally arranged on 10 April 2018 was cancelled.

Confirmation of notes of last meeting

2. Members endorsed the notes of meeting.

Matters Arising

3. Members endorsed the document “Related to clients – continuation of service”.
4. The discussion about “Related to clients – responsibility to client” was summarized as follows:
 - (a) In point 1.2, it was proposed to revise the sentence structure for a clearer meaning.
 - (b) It was proposed to revise the last sentence of point 1.3 to be “clients should be made aware of such situations” to make it more objective.
 - (c) In point 2, it was proposed to add the principle that “If needed, for the best interest of clients, social workers should involve and collaborate with other social workers or professionals”. The standard and rule under this point should be divided into point 2.1 and 2.2.
 - (d) Point 3 should be moved to “Related to clients - conflict of interest”.
 - (e) Point 4 had already been discussed and covered in “Related to client – continuation of services” and it should be deleted.
 - (f) The revisions were shown in Annex 1.
5. The summary of further revisions in “Related to client – conflict of interest” was as follows:

- (a) It was proposed to further elaborate the principle and to have two principles. Social workers should stay alert of and avoid conflict of interests and secondly, social workers should establish boundaries in professional relationship.
- (b) There were three rules and standard under the first principle. Social workers should refrain from providing services when they aware of potential conflict. Secondly, when conflict was unavoidable, social workers should declare and make known to clients. Lastly, social workers should not take advantage of professional relationship or exploit others to further personal interests.
- (c) There were two rules and standard under the second principle. Social works should clarify their roles and responsibilities when services were provided to two or more people. Secondly, when a conflict is anticipated, social workers should clarify their roles with the parties involved and take action to minimize any conflict.
- (d) For details of revision, please refer to Annex 2.

Discussion on revising the Code of Practice

- 6. The meeting took note of the master summary of revisions.
- 7. Related to clients – sexual relationship
 - (a) Members suggested to revise the principle as “social workers should not engage in behaviour of a sexual nature with clients” which covered a broader meaning including sexual activities, sexual contacts, and sexual harassment. The same was applied to the rule and standard. It was also agreed to add in the phrase “maintain professional boundary” and to replace “helping” with “professional”.
 - (b) With reference to the Code of Practice in the USA, members agreed to extend the coverage to clients’ close relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintained a close personal relationship but it should be confined to the condition when there was a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client and in the setting of clinical service.
 - (c) Members agreed to extend the coverage to the protection of former clients, also in the clinical service setting.
 - (d) It was agreed to remove point 8.5.
 - (e) The proposed changes were marked in Annex 3.
- 8. Related to client - cultural awareness
 - (a) References were drawn to the Code of Practice in the USA and Australia. In both countries, there were detailed and concrete descriptions about cultural awareness. For

example, in the USA, social workers should have a knowledge base and obtain education to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, color, sex, sexual orientation etc. The content was related to the competency of social workers and responsibilities of agency.

- (b) Members noted that what the current version used in Hong Kong was very brief and generic. It was necessary to have further elaboration by referencing to those in USA.
- (c) Members noted that when revising this part, feasibility of implementation should be considered.
- (d) Dr. Cheng took up to revise this part for further discussion at the next meeting.

9. Related to client – Billing practice

- (a) There was in-depth discussion on whether this part should be developed as a separate section to govern the private practice or self-employment.
- (b) After discussion, it was agreed not to prescribe anything extra for self-employed social workers or those in private practice. It was agreed not to make any changes to this part.

Date of next meeting

- 10. The next two meetings would be held on 23 May 2018 and 6 June 2018, both at 9:15am at Room GH317 Hong Kong Polytechnic University.
- 11. There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 12:20 pm.

26 April 2018