

SOCIAL WORKERS REGISTRATION BOARD

Notes of the 18th Meeting of the Taskforce on Review of Code of Practice

Date: 6 June 2018
Time: 9:15 a.m.
Venue: Room GH317, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Present: Dr. CHENG Yuk-tin, Carl (co-opted member)
Dr. LAM Chiu-wan (co-opted member)
Dr. LEUNG Chuen-suen
Apology: Mr. LUN Chi-wai
Mr. WONG Ka-ming (Acting Convenor)
Secretary: Mr. LEE Wing-po, Eric, Registrar
Ms. FAN Lai-yee, Veronica, Assistant Registrar

Confirmation of notes of last meeting

1. Members endorsed the notes of meeting.

Matters Arising

Cultural awareness and social diversity

2. Members had the following revisions:
 - (a) In point 1.1, members agreed to change “social or national origin” to be “national or social origin” according to the alphabetical order. The same wordings in Value 2 would be revised accordingly.
 - (b) In considering the word “sex” or “gender”, members agreed to adopt “sex” which would bring less debate in view of the gender movement.
 - (c) In point 2.1, typo “social works” should be revised as “social workers”.
 - (d) Members agreed to invite the translator to comment on whether it was appropriate to use “modalities” when the document was translated.
 - (e) The proposed changes were marked in Annex 1.

Use of information and principles of confidentiality

3. Members had the following suggestions:
 - (a) In point 1.2, the meaning of “employer” and “agency” were confusing as in most of the cases, agency was the employer of a social worker. It was agreed to use “agency” in the whole document instead of “employer” and an overall review would be conducted at a

later stage.

- (b) It was clarified that in point 1.2, “social workers’ policy” referred to the policy of social workers who were in private practice. It was agreed to revise the latter part of the sentence as “...agency's policy, or in case of private practice, the social workers’ own policy, concerning the disclosure of confidential information...” Similar revision would be made in point 1.6.
- (c) In point 1.6, social workers should inform clients when he/she had knowledge about the unauthorized access of clients’ information. Social workers should inform clients of such unauthorized access of information and the act should be consistent with applicable laws and the policy of agency or of social workers, in case in private practice. In this context, the applicable law and policy were limited to the use of information only.
- (d) In point 3, the “identifying information” was limited to clients’ information.
- (e) The meaning of point 3.2 was not clear and it was suggested to revise as “social workers should not disclose identifying information when seeking consultation...”
- (f) Point 5 was newly added subsequent to the last meeting. It was made reference to the Code of Practice of NASW. It was suggested to remove 5.3 as it was already covered under 1.6.
- (g) It was suggested to move Point 5.4 to be 5.1.
- (h) The activities described in point 5.5 should not be under the Board’s monitoring or control and in the meantime, it was not practicable.
- (i) The posting of confidential information of clients on website or social media should not be allowed. Identifying information of clients was excluded.
- (j) The remarks would be removed.
- (k) The proposed changes were marked in Annex 2.

Discussion on revising the Code of Practice

- 4. The meeting took note of the summary of revisions.
- 5. Section 4 Ethical Practice and Decision Making
 - (a) The document covered (iii) Ethical practice and/or decision making and (iv) Personal commitment to engage in ethical practice and this part was mainly reference to NASW.
 - (b) Members’ discussions were summarized as follows:

- (i) It was suggested to incorporate paragraph 1 and 2 into Section 2 Purpose of Code of Practice and Dr. Cheng undertook to revise Section 2.
 - (ii) In paragraph 4, when there are conflicts, the Code does not specify which values and principles are of absolute importance and necessarily outweigh others. To make the meaning more clear and consistent, members agreed to delete the words “standards” and “ethical”.
 - (iii) Regarding the last paragraph, members agreed that it was not necessary to highlight the use of communication technology as we had specific paragraph covering related contents i.e. point 5 in “Use of information and principles of confidentiality”. It was therefore suggested to delete this paragraph.
 - (iv) The changes were marked in Annex 3 and the rest would be discussed at subsequent meeting due to time being run off.
- (c) Dr. Lam undertook to draft (i) Contextual, Individual and Professional Diversity and (ii) Aspirations as well as Setting Minimum Standards. The contents would cover discussions in relation to “community versus individual”, “uniqueness versus diversity” and “aspirations versus minimum standards”.
6. Discussion on work schedule and collection of views from stakeholders on the first draft
- (a) Members targeted to have the first draft version for consultation by December 2018. To catch-up this timeline, the first draft should be ready for translation by end of August and the work should be finished in October 2018 for final touch-up by the Taskforce and the Board office. A bilingual document would then be submitted to the Committee on Professional Conduct and the Board for endorsement at their respective meetings in November 2018.
 - (b) A member had lined up a translator who had experience in handling social work subject. The Board office would contact her and at the same time obtain other quotations according to the Board’s purchasing policy.

Date of next meeting

7. Members realized that only two sections of the Code were outstanding i.e. Section 4 Ethical Practice and Decision Making and Section 6 Definition and Interpretation. It was estimated that three additional sessions of meeting would be required to complete the work. The following meeting timeslots were proposed
- (a) 19th meeting: 20 June 2018 or 22 June 2018 at 9:15am
 - (b) 20th meeting: 5 July 2018 or 6 July 2018 at 9:15am
 - (c) 21st meeting: 13 August 2018 or 14 August 2018 at 9:15am.

The Board office would check the availability of the other two members and confirmed the meeting dates after the meeting.

8. There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 11:40 am.

7 June 2018