

Manitoba College of Social Workers Statement Related to Systemic Racism

June 5, 2020

The Manitoba College of Social Workers stands in solidarity with the black community and other marginalized and disadvantaged individuals and groups experiencing racial injustice and offers condolences to those affected by recent and historic events of systemic racism and racial violence (Bernhardt, 2020 & Simpson, 2020). The College recognizes that racism and discrimination is a painful and unjust reality for individuals and groups internationally, across our country and in our own province of Manitoba.

As a profession based on the values of respect, equality and the inherent worth and dignity of all people (Manitoba College of Social Workers, 2020), the College encourages members to reflect on the core social work values of social inclusion, equity and social justice as we consider our role in addressing and advocating against the dehumanization of people of colour and all forms of racial injustice.

In keeping with the ethical principles and standards of the profession, social workers promote social fairness, oppose prejudice and discrimination, and challenge oppressive and disempowering policies and practices (Manitoba College of Social Workers, 2018). As communities and organizations across the nation engage in social and political action, social workers play a critical role in “identifying societal inequality and making efforts to correct the imbalances imposed upon marginalized individuals” (Social Work License Map, 2015) to promote change and healing. The College supports members, as social change agents, in walking alongside and collaborating with those experiencing racial injustice to safely (Gilmore, 2020) advocate for the prevention and elimination of systemic racism, racial violence, discrimination and human right violations in our ongoing pursuit of social justice.

Manitoba College of Social Workers Code of Ethics (2018)

Value 1: Respect for the Inherent Dignity and Worth of Person

Social work is founded on a long-standing commitment to respect the inherent dignity and individual worth of all persons.

Social Workers recognize and respect the diversity of Canadian society, taking into account the breadth of differences that exist among individuals, families, groups and communities. Social Workers uphold the human rights of individuals and groups as expressed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

Value 2: Pursuit of Social Justice

Social Workers believe in the obligation of people, individually and collectively, to provide resources, services, and opportunities for the overall benefit of humanity and to afford them protection from harm. Social Workers promote social fairness and equitable distribution of resources, and act to reduce barriers and expand choice for all persons, with special regard for those who are marginalized, disadvantaged, vulnerable, and/or have exceptional needs. Social Workers oppose prejudice and discrimination against any person or group of persons, on any grounds, and specifically challenge views and actions that stereotype particular persons or groups.

Guideline 1 – Ethical Responsibilities to Clients

1.2.2 Social Workers acknowledge diversity within and among individuals, communities, and cultures.

Guideline 4.1 – Professional Practice

4.1.3 Social Workers appropriately challenge and work to improve policies, procedures, practice and service provisions that:

- Are not in the best interests of clients
- Are inequitable
- Are in any way oppressive, disempowering or culturally inappropriate; and
- Demonstrate discrimination

Guideline 8 – Ethical Responsibilities to Society

8.2.1 Social Workers strive to identify, document and advocate for the prevention and elimination of domination or exploitation of, and discrimination against, any person, group or class on the basis of age, abilities, ethnic background, gender, language, marital status, national ancestry, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation or socio-economic status.

8.2.2 Social Workers endeavour to engage in social and/or political action that seeks to ensure that all people have fair access to the resources, services, and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully.

8.2.3 Social Workers are aware of the impact of the political arena on practice and strive to advocate for changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions in order to meet basic human needs and promote social justice.

8.2.4 Social Workers endeavour to expand choice and opportunity for all people, with special regard for vulnerable, disadvantaged, oppressed, and exploited people and groups.

8.2.5 Social Workers strive to promote conditions that encourage respect for cultural and social diversity within Canada and globally. Social Workers promote policies and practices that demonstrate respect for difference, support the expansion of cultural knowledge and resources, advocate for programs and institutions that demonstrate cultural competence and promote policies that safeguard the rights of and confirm equity and social justice for all people.

Manitoba College of Social Workers Standards of Practice (2018)

Standard 3 – Integrity of Professional Practice

3.4 Social Workers will not discriminate against any person regardless of ethnicity, language, religion, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical appearance, physical or mental disability, economic status, political affiliation, or national origin.

Standard 8 – Advocacy and Public Policy

Social Workers will use their specialized training, professional values, and experience to advocate for and to promote social justice and public policy that will serve to enhance human well-being.

8.2 Social will advocate for the improvement of social, economic, and political conditions in order to promote the rights and interests of clients, as well as for the overall benefit and well-being of society.

Manitoba College of Social Workers Amended and Re-stated By-Laws (2020)

Values

1-5 In achieving its vision and mission, the work of the College is based on values of respect, for the equality, worth and dignity of all people, social inclusion, and social justice. The College shall strive to foster practices that reflect diversity.

Resources

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