

What You Might Experience During a Complaint Process

Information for Complainants

The purpose of professional regulation is to protect the public and maintain the integrity of the profession. The College has a responsibility to assess all complaints, ensuring a fair and just process. However, the Social Work Profession Act is not aimed at satisfying the rights of individual complainants, but rather the protection of the public in general.

- The Complaint process can be hard for anyone. It can make people feel stressed, angry, frustrated or upset.
- The process might feel slow. It may take time, but we want to make sure everyone has a chance to speak and be heard in a respectful way.
- The first step in the College's complaint process is to gather evidence fairly to see if the claims are true. College staff must stay neutral but will be kind and considerate about everyone's views, focusing on understanding and learning.
- The Complaint process looks at the Social Worker's actions as they relate to the *Social Work Profession Act*, the Manitoba College of Social Workers Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Regulations and By-Laws.
- The *Social Work Profession Act* (SWPA) requires that all complaints within the jurisdiction of the College be sent to the College's Complaints Committee. Just sending the complaint to the Committee doesn't mean it's a violation.
- It is important to understand that College staff must remain neutral and support the process. College staff are not authorized to dismiss a complaint, and they have no decision-making authority.
- If the evidence shows that a Social Worker made a mistake or acted in a way that infringes on the MCSW Code of Ethics or Standards of Practice, the Complaint Committee's first goal is to recommend remedial action to ensure that the Social Worker is supported to practice ethically and competently.
- The objective is to prevent small problems from becoming big problems through a culture that encourages disclosure, asking for help, acceptance of responsibility, the capacity to apologize and practice improvement. The complaint process cannot force a Social Worker to provide or change a specific treatment plan, assessment or outcome. It also cannot award money, personal remedies or recommend a Social Worker be terminated from their employment. The process cannot instruct a Social Worker to reconsider a custody or access assessment or influence a matter that is before the courts.

- The Complaints Committee can only make decisions based on the SWPA, however, if during this process you have a recommendation, or an idea for an alternative dispute resolution, we encourage you to propose these to the Regulatory Practice team.

You may find benefit during this process from the following services:

- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Employee Assistance Programs
- www.211.mb has a search function for counseling services in Manitoba