

Practice Note

Advertising

The Manitoba College of Social Workers wishes to remind Social Workers of their ethical obligations when advertising or promoting their services.

Advertising and other communications are intended to inform and educate the public about available social work services. Registered Social Workers should ensure that all advertising and communications are compatible with the standards and ethics of the social work profession.

Social Workers value openness and transparency in professional practice [Code of Ethics, Value 4]. With any regulated profession, if a member of the public wants to confirm that they are receiving services from a Social Worker in good standing, it is important that the name under which the member practices, including the name published on websites (i.e. Psychology Today, LinkedIn etc.), is the same as on the public registry.

Social Workers must use one or more of the following designations, titles, abbreviations or French equivalents on business cards, letterhead stationery, forms, professional websites and professional social media profiles, business telephone listings, digital or print directories, signs and identification of business premises, and/or other communications with clients and/or the public:

- “Social Worker”; or
- “Registered Social Worker”; or
- “RSW”.

Registered Social Workers should consider the following when using promotional communications:

- ☐ information is verifiable and not false or misleading;
- ☐ identify expertise in areas of practice/modalities only if able to provide evidence to the satisfaction of the College of specialized training, extensive experience and/or education;
- ☐ describe education, training, experience, areas of competence, professional affiliations and services honestly and accurately so that service participants can make informed decisions;
- ☐ do not claim uniqueness or special advantage unsupported by professional or scientific evidence;
- ☐ do not bring the social work profession or the College into disrepute;
- ☐ do not compare services with those of other Social Workers or professionals in a way that undermines their competence or professionalism. Promoting work by disparaging others is not only unprofessional—it risks breaching the trust and respect that are fundamental to our shared work;
- ☐ present yourself in a manner that reflects your role as a Social Worker and avoid including personal information or content that could blur professional boundaries.

- ❑ ensure content is non-discriminatory and avoid content, including illustrations, that may defame individuals or be perceived as demeaning to any individual or group;
- ❑ do not display any affiliation with an organization or association in a manner that falsely implies that organization's sponsorship or certification;
- ❑ be aware of conflicts of interests and ensure not to take advantage of any professional relationship or exploit others to further professional or personal interests;
- ❑ be familiar with and comply with all legislation and provincial requirements;
- ❑ do not participate in uninvited solicitation or coercion and follow guidance such as Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL).
- ❑ RSWs are generally not allowed to solicit or accept testimonials from past or current service participants.

Resources:

MCSW Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, [Code and Standards - MCSW](#)

[MCSW Standards-for-Technology-in-Social-Work-Practice](#)

Use of Legal Name requirements, [Responsibilities and Benefits - MCSW](#)

CASW, [Private Practice Portal | Canadian Association of Social Workers](#)

Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers, [Principle VII: Advertising and Communications - OCSWSSW](#)

NASW, [8 Ethical Considerations When Using Social Media Marketing](#)

[Social Workers Can Create a Buzz About Their Profession](#)

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Practice Notes provide support and information for Manitoba social workers, employers, and members of the public regarding social work practice issues. These notes offer general guidance only and are not a substitution for legal advice. College members with specific inquiries are invited to consult the College.