

Preamble

The Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE) Standards for Accreditation (May, 2012) State that:

In keeping with social work's commitment to the principle of confidentiality, social work programs develop guidelines for confidentiality to be followed by all students in the practicum program by:

- a. Clearly outlining guidelines to protect the confidentiality of service users, settings, social workers and students in assignments, process recordings, audio and video tapings, case examples, or any other learning situations, including use of all forms of social media,
- b. Requesting the necessary signed letters of consent for any case material used by a student where there is a possibility of identification of service users, and
- c. Contracting with settings regarding the use of process recordings, audio and videotapes and social media, and clearly identifying ownership of such material

Confidentiality is a professional value, as reflected in the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) Code of Ethics, that requires that professionally acquired information about service users be considered as private and shall not be shared with third parties unless the service user provides informed consent. This policy recognizes that in some circumstances a professional or legal obligation exists to share information without client consent

Policy Statement

As professionals, students and instructors will comply with applicable provincial privacy laws, including The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) and The Personal Health Information Act (PHIA) and will respect the guidelines on confidentiality as outlined in the CASW Social Work Code of Ethics.

All parties are responsible for ensuring that no personal information or personal health information that could identify a user of any service system be used in class meetings or in assignments. In addition, while it is acknowledged that the classroom is a public setting, instructors and students shall respect one another's privacy, when discussing classroom activities outside of the classroom.

Violations of privacy legislation or the policy may result in action related to student discipline or professional unsuitability.

Guidelines

The Faculty recognizes that circumstances can vary and encourages consultation with your field instructor, field liaison, advisor or course instructors. The following guidelines are based on general best practices:

- The issue of confidentiality will be discussed by student and instructor during orientation to field. The student is required to review the Code of Ethics regarding Confidentiality in Professional Practice prior to assignment of clients.
- The confidentiality policy of the field site will be shared with the student who is required to review and sign, where applicable, to confirm understanding and compliance.
- Students that will come in contact with personal information or personal health information will be provided with training on The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) and The Personal Health Information Act (PHIA) and will sign a pledge of confidentiality.
- The student is expected to possess a basic understanding of confidentiality and its limits and to demonstrate transparency with clients in communicating these limitations.
- Limits to confidentiality include matters as required or permitted by relevant laws, court order or when a clear threat to the safety of the client or others is evident.
- Case studies must not contain any identifying information.
- Documents with identifying information from field agencies must be treated in accordance with the agency's policies.
- Disposal of documents with identifying information, including electronic records, must be carried out according to Agency protocols.
- Identifying information is not to be used in the classroom or in other context aside from Faculty approved supervision meetings.
- Confidentiality guidelines will be observed, when using social media

Students are strongly encouraged to consult field instructors, field liaisons, Faculty advisors or course instructors, if they are unsure about matters related to this policy.