



The Guiding Framework for the development of the revised

BC College of Social Workers Standards of Practice

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the office of the BC College of Social Workers is located on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Musqueam people. The College recognizes the need for a significant connection with Indigenous¹ peoples and communities so that Indigenous perspectives and knowledge are inherent within the revised Standards of Practice and the social work profession in BC.

Introduction

The BC College of Social Workers is revising the Standards of Practice in response to ongoing and rapid change taking place in the human services field regionally, nationally, and internationally. The current Standards of Practice inadequately reflect emerging scopes of practice and the comprehensive nature of the needs of clients and communities in BC from a cultural and practice perspective. The revision project is based on an identified need to address national and international best practices, and current trends in regulatory standards for social work.

Aims and purpose of Standards of Practice

The work on revising the Standards of Practice is being done within the broader context of the duty and objects of the College as established by the *Social Workers Act*. The main purpose of Standards of Practice for social work in BC is to establish benchmarks for all forms of practice based on the College's duty to act in the public interest. The revised Standards of Practice will seek to define a registered social worker's professional obligations in the delivery of services.

Therefore the new Standards of Practice will aim to articulate more clearly what social workers must **know** and **understand** in **undertaking** professional social work practice representing minimum threshold competency and capacity in order to practice *safely, effectively and ethically* within a particular scope of practice.

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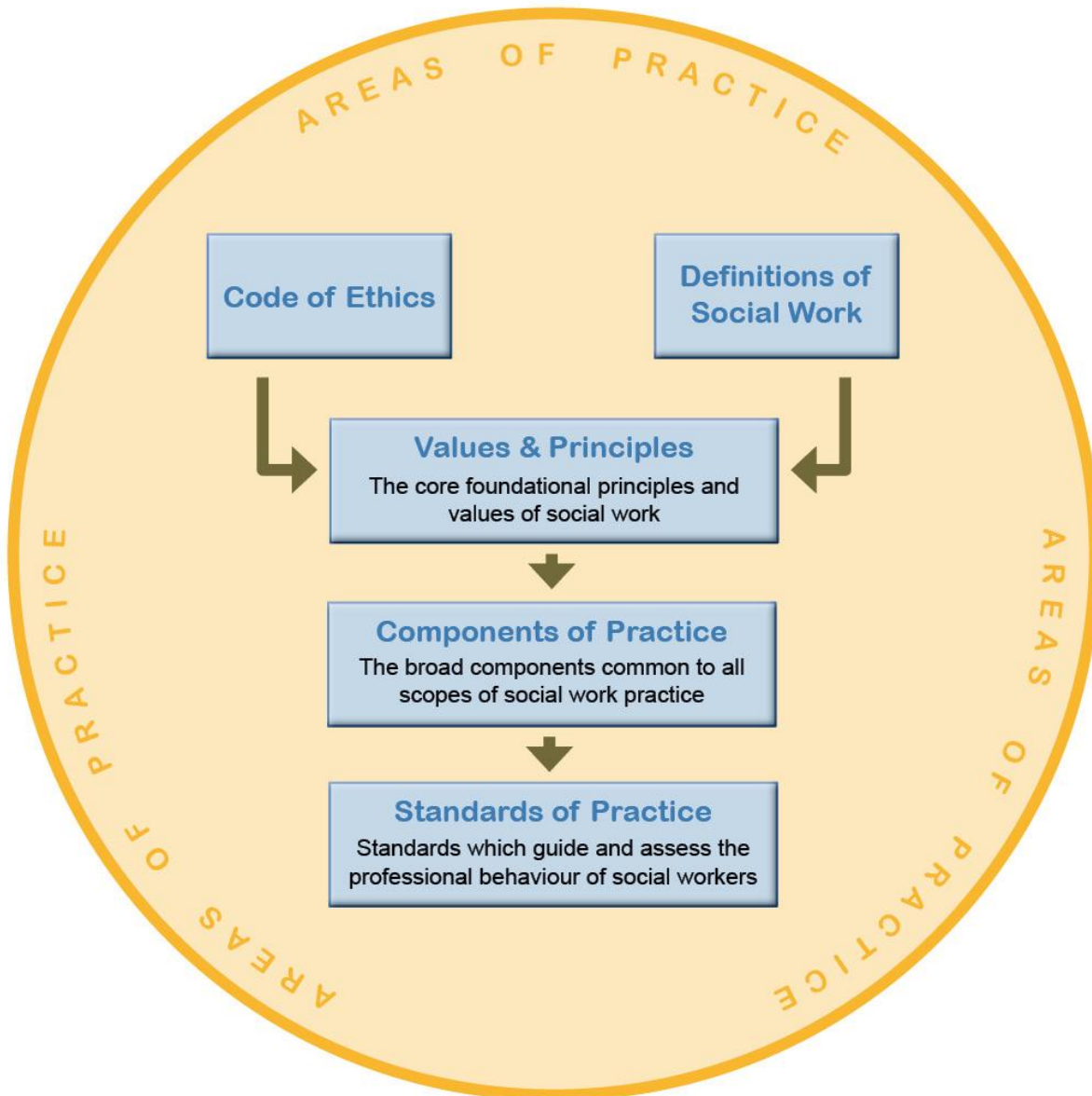
This guiding framework has been created to entrench the underlying ethos, ethics, principles and values of social work in BC within the revised standards. The values and principles underpin the components of practice which are common to all areas of practice. We seek to have practice standards statements which are quantifiable and operational and are specific to each of the components of practice. The revised standards will be relevant to, and encompassing of the different areas of social work practice delivered in varied settings and cultures across the province. This includes but is not limited to the

¹ The use of the term Indigenous is used intentionally as literature indicates it is a term that is inclusive of Aboriginal or First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples of Canada. Indigenous Peoples is generally used in an international context.

following areas of practice; direct practice, clinical social work, community development, social policy, education, training, research, management, leadership and administration.

The guiding framework is illustrated in the flowchart below and is followed by descriptive commentary:

The Guiding Framework



Values & Principles

These will be the core values and principles which underpin the professional practice of social work in BC. They will be informed by codes of ethics and comprehensive definitions/statements on social work. Preparatory work included the review of several Codes of Ethics so as to ensure consistent and relevant concepts will inform the core values and principles of the profession. These are also informed by the definition of Social Work within the *Social Workers Act* and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) Global Definition of Social Work. The IFSW definition (2014) reflects contemporary developments in the profession of social work while also respecting the core mandates and overarching principles of the profession.

Components of social work practice

The Standards of Practice will outline what is required for safe, effective, ethical and accountable professional social work practice. It is anticipated that the Standards of Practice will be categorized under various components of practice found to be common to all areas of social work delivered in BC e.g. '*professional integrity*'. Once the common components have been specified, the Standards of Practice will have detailed indicators developed which specify and illustrate the requirements for meeting each particular standard.

Areas of practice

The Standards of Practice will apply to a full spectrum of social work practice areas including but not exclusive to direct practice, clinical social work, community development, social policy practice, education and training, research, management, leadership and administration. Social work areas of practice are not mutually exclusive and many social workers work across varying practice areas. This consideration will be an important factor when identifying the areas of practice within which social work is currently performed and may be performed in the future.

Consultation

Once developed, the College will seek broad and extensive consultation on an *initial draft* of the Standards of Practice. This will establish a model for the periodic review and revision so as to ensure that they remain relevant to the changing social and political environment.

After the Standards of Practice

The standards will be accompanied by practice guidelines, which will support and clarify the standards. Practice guidelines will be evidence-based tools used to guide decision-making of social workers in specific practice issues. The guidelines will support practice that improve client outcomes based on successful strategies and having been derived from a combination of various sources including research, national (and international) guidelines, policies, expert opinion, and quality improvement data.