

CODE OF ETHICS

OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
SOCIAL WORKERS

NA
SW

2021 Revisions

*NASW Code of Ethics: Self-Care
and Cultural Competence*

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When does the 2021 revision of the NASW *Code of Ethics* go into effect?

The 2021 NASW *Code of Ethics* goes into effect on June 1, 2021.

Where can I purchase a copy of the 2021 revised NASW *Code of Ethics*?

The NASW *Code of Ethics* is available for sale at <https://naswpress.org/product/53535/code-of-ethics>

What sections of the NASW *Code of Ethics* were revised?

The 2021 amendments are limited to the following sections of the Code: Purpose of the NASW *Code of Ethics*, Ethical Principles (namely, the Value of Integrity), and standard 1.05, Cultural Competence.

Will licensing boards now approve self-care content for continuing education credit?

NASW is not a licensing body and therefore has no jurisdiction over state licensing requirements. Social workers should contact

their state licensing board to determine how the recent revisions to the NASW *Code of Ethics* will impact licensure, including prelicensing testing, and continuing education requirements. To find out more about state licensing requirements visit the Association of Social Work Boards at aswb.org.

How can social workers advocate for professional self-care, especially when working in host settings, i.e. non-social work organizations?

Many social workers are employed in settings that are not primarily social work organizations. As such, employers may not be aware of specific professional requirements impacting social work practice. Standard 3.09 of the NASW *Code of Ethics* guides social workers to adhere to commitments made to employers and employing organizations; however, when an employer's directives conflict with the NASW *Code of Ethics*, it is imperative that social workers educate their employer about ethical and other obligations specific to social workers and the implications for social work practice in the context of the organization.

Educating employers about social workers' ethical obligations is a win-win situation for both social workers and employers.

How do we hold social work professionals and organizations accountable regarding self-care?

The self-care language in the NASW *Code of Ethics* is aspirational and not prescriptive. Adherence to professional self-care cannot be easily measured and is therefore seen more as a goal that social workers and organizations should STRIVE to uphold and achieve.

What resources are currently available for developing a professional and personal self-care plan and promoting professional self-care?

SELF-CARE DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

www.socialworkers.org/Practice/Infectious-Diseases/Coronavirus/Self-Care-During-the-Coronavirus-Pandemic

JUSTICE AND JOY: SELF-CARE IN 2020

www.socialworkers.org/News/Social-Work-Talks-Podcast/EP61-Justice-and-Joy-Self-Care-in-2020

SELF-CARE AND AVOIDING BURNOUT

www.socialworkers.org/News/Social-Work-Talks-Podcast/EP17-Self-Care-and-Avoiding-Burnout

ARTICLE:

www.socialworkers.org/Practice/Infectious-Diseases/Coronavirus/Self-Care-During-the-Coronavirus-Pandemic

SEARCH SELF-CARE IN NASW'S SOCIAL WORK CE ONLINE INSTITUTE FOR THESE AND OTHER SELF-STUDY CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDIT PROGRAMS:

<https://naswinstitute.inreachce.com>

- [The 3 S's: Supervision, Self-Reflection, and Self-Care](#)
- [Mindfulness and Self-Care](#)

NASW PRESS PUBLICATIONS

<https://naswpress.org/product/53484/burnout-and-self-care-in-social-work>

<https://naswpress.org/product/53634/self-care-in-social-work>

Visit www.terrickahardy.com for more on professional self-care.

Why was the term "cultural competence" reinstated as the title of standard 1.05?

The reinstatement of the title and other revisions to standard 1.05 of the NASW *Code of Ethics* were approved based on the recommendations of the National Committee on Racial and

Ethnic Diversity. They argued that the approved amendments would provide more emphatic language that operationalizes how cultural competence is demonstrated. The term "cultural competence" can be seen as an umbrella that encompasses other relevant characteristics including cultural awareness, humility, and sensitivity.

How do we hold social work professionals and organizations accountable on cultural competence?

Social workers should educate themselves and the organizations in which they work about the important provisions in the NASW *Code of Ethics* concerning cultural competence. The pursuit of cultural competence requires training, supervision, consultation, and other professional and personal development opportunities to identify and address implicit bias, discrimination, and racism in the many forms it may show up in practice. Individual social workers and organizations can advance accountability through formal and informal systems that continually review the demonstration of cultural competence or lack thereof.

Furthermore, standard 2.10, Unethical Conduct of Colleagues, charges social workers to prevent, address, and expose unethical conduct of colleagues by first discussing concerns with the colleague if feasible; if not feasible, social workers should explore available channels for filing a complaint.

What other NASW resources are available to support the advancement of cultural competence in social work practice?

STANDARDS AND INDICATORS FOR CULTURE COMPETENCE IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

<https://naswpress.org/product/53592/nasw-standards-and-indicators-for-cultural-competence-in-social-work-practice>

NASW ETHNICITY AND RACE PRACTICE TOOLS

www.socialworkers.org/Practice/Ethnicity-Race/Ethnicity-Race-Tools

SEARCH CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN NASW'S SOCIAL WORK CE ONLINE INSTITUTE FOR SELF-STUDY CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDIT PROGRAMS:

<https://naswinstitute.inreachce.com/>

NASW PRESS PUBLICATIONS

<https://naswpress.org/product/53641/multiracial-cultural-attunement>

<https://naswpress.org/product/53646/reenvisioning-therapy-with-women-of-color>