



## **Social Media Policy**

### **Wayne State University School of Social Work**

The School of Social Work (SSW) encourages the use of communication technologies and social media, including, but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, faculty rating sites, blogs, texts, video messaging, instant messaging, picture sharing, interactive websites, and other forms of communication to enhance the exchange of professional and educational ideas within the broader social work educational community. This Policy intends to provide general expectations and guidelines to SSW faculty, staff, and students aimed at encouraging civility and respect for others while engaging in ethical and responsible social media and Internet use. Moreover, where possible, this Policy serves to bring awareness to privacy and confidentiality challenges associated with the use of social media and Internet-based communication among and between SSW students, faculty, staff, and the School's external constituents.

It is important to note that social workers continually assess the ethical implications of using social media, both as practicing social workers and while training as social work students. Social work students must be mindful of their professional standards and the obligation to follow the [National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics](#)

The creation of the [Technology Standards in Social Work Practice](#) ensure that ethical social work practice is enhanced by the appropriate use of technology. As noted within, these standards are 'intended to set a minimum core of excellence for professional practice when social workers use technology and to provide a framework to address possible benefits, challenges, and risks that arise when using technology'.

#### **Policy Expectations**

*Copyrights.* Internet posts may not include Wayne State University or School of Social Work logos, trademarks, or related representations unless granted permission in writing from the Office of the Dean, or designee, in the School of Social Work.

*Judiciousness.* Privacy and confidentiality rights of others may not be violated (including, but not limited to, classmates, faculty, field instructors, colleagues, family members, friends, acquaintances, and/or clients). Ask permission if you plan to share conversations or events that carried an expectation of privacy. What you decide to post is accessible to the masses, so carefully consider your content before posting. Social media sites are public domains and all information can be accessed by anyone. Once information is in cyber space, it never goes away.

Pay close attention to the NASW Code of Ethics 1.07 Privacy and Confidentiality, which states the following:

*Social workers should take precautions to ensure and maintain the confidentiality of information transmitted to other parties through the use of computers, electronic mail, facsimile machines, telephones and telephone answering machines, and other electronic or computer technology. Disclosure of identifying information should be avoided whenever possible.*

*Responsibility.* Post and practice within your area(s) of expertise, others will read/listen to your content and many will trust that you know what you are sharing. Do not misrepresent or present as an expert on a topic if you are not skilled/trained in the area. Whatever you post will be attributed to you and your reputation.

*Errors/Mistakes.* If you make an error, it is important to correct any misinformation as posts in cyberspace can be accessible for a very long time. If you are planning to post an item that gives you pause, do not post it. If you are unsure, gather additional research and discuss it with a trusted colleague.

*Respect.* Be respectful of the differences of others, including age, race/ethnicity, culture, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and/or disability. The NASW Code of Ethics 1.12 states:

*Social workers should not use derogatory language in their written, verbal, or electronic communications to or about clients. Social workers should use accurate and respectful language in all communications to and about clients.*

Social Workers' Ethical Responsibility to Colleagues, 2.01 states:

*Social workers should treat colleagues with respect and should represent accurately and fairly the qualifications, views, and obligations of colleagues.*

*Social workers should avoid unwarranted negative criticism of colleagues in verbal, written, and electronic communications with clients or with other professionals. Unwarranted negative criticism may include demeaning comments that refer to colleagues' level of competence or to individuals' attributes such as race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identify or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical ability.*

*Social workers should cooperate with social work colleagues and with colleagues of other professionals when such cooperation serves the well-being of clients.*

Violation of the policy may result in action consistent with the SSW Professional Performance Review process.

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