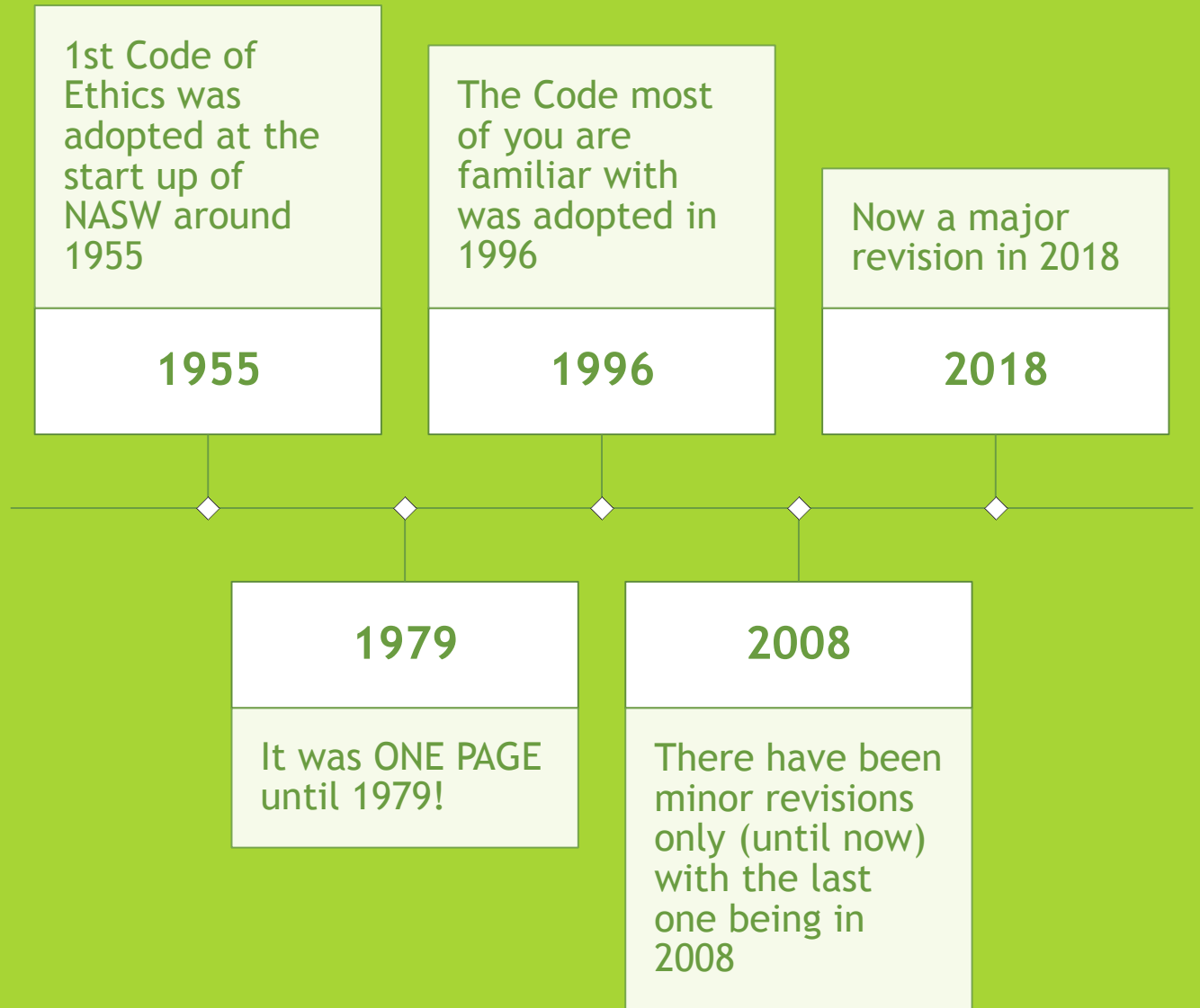


Practice Update: NASW Code of Ethics 2018

Traci Bartley, MSW, LCSW
Frannie Pryor, MSW, LCSW, LADC

Brief History of NASW Code of Ethics



What motivated this revision?

- When current code developed, technology/electronic meant telephone and fax machines, essentially, and were peripheral to practice.
- Fast forward to 2017 and we seldom go for more than an hour without interface with technology in our social work practice.
- The NASW, ASWB, CSWE, and other social work organizations all had many complaints, inquiries, questions, etc. regarding the appropriate use of technology and electronics in practice.
- Many differing opinions abounded.

What was the process of the revision?

Eight person panel of ethics leaders/scholars reviewed and discussed all of the related issues around technology.

This task force proposed changes and drafted language to guide the profession in this arena

The draft was shared widely with membership and other interested bodies, and refined based on input received

It was reviewed, further refined and adopted by the **NASW Delegate Assembly** summer 2017

Effective January 1, 2018

Three main categories of revision

1. Amendments to existing clauses which are clarifying/minor
2. Small but significant-changes to existing language
3. New standards

Sex, Drugs and Rock n Roll

- 1.09 Sexual Relationships- *In appropriate sexual communications through the use of technology or in person*
- 1.11 Sexual Harassment- *written, electronic or physical contact of a sexual nature.*
- 2.06 Sexual Relationships- *including verbal, written, electronic or physical contact*
- 2.07 Sexual Harassment- *includes written, electronic or physical contact of a sexual nature.*

Services

ADDITIONS TO EXISTING SECTIONS

- **1.03 Informed Consent-** e), f), g), h) and i) pertain to use of technology both in service provision and obtaining information about clients
- **1.06 Conflicts of Interest-** e), f), g) and h) pertain to electronic communication, social media and the boundary-related implications of technology
- **1.07 Privacy and Confidentiality-** m), n), o), p), q) and r) pertain to confidentiality considerations related to technology, obtaining information about clients, electronic communication and social media
 - Other changes were made to existing standards to include language related to technology
- **1.08 Access to Records-** b) pertains to use of technology

Services

CHANGES TO EXISTING SECTIONS

- **1.15 Interruption of Services-** includes “disruptions in electronic communication”
- **1.16 Referral for Services-** includes “other services that are required”
- **2.01 Respect-** now specifies “verbal, written and electronic” communication and adds the term “ability” at the end
- **3.04 Client Records-**
 - a) includes “electronic and paper”
 - d) includes “Records should be maintained for the number of years required by relevant laws, agency policies, and contracts”

Competence

- New Section
- 1.04 Competence- both d) and e) have to do with competency in using technology.
- Minor Change (but important)
- 1.05 *Cultural Awareness* and Social Diversity
- 3.01 Supervision and Consultation-
 - a) *whether in person or remotely*
 - c) *including dual relationships that may arise while using social networking sites or other electronic media*
- 3.02 Education and Training-
 - d) *Including dual relationships that may arise while using social networking sites or other electronic media*

Commitment to the Profession

ADDITIONS TO EXISTING SECTION

- 5.02 Evaluation and Research-
f) addresses using technology to facilitate evaluation or research and obtaining informed consent related to the use of technology

CHANGES TO EXISTING SECTION

- 2.10 Unethical Conduct of Colleagues- includes “unethical conduct using technology and specifies “NASW National Ethics Committee” as a formal channel where social workers can take action
- 6.04 Social and Political Action- includes the term “ability” at the end of the paragraph

Additions to Purpose of Code of Ethics

- Ethical decision making is a process. In situations when conflicting obligations arise, social workers may be faced with complex ethical dilemmas that have no simple answers.

Additions to Purpose of Code of Ethics

- With growth in the use of communication technology in various aspects of social work practice, social workers need to be aware of the unique challenges that may arise in relation to the maintenance of confidentiality, informed consent, professional boundaries, professional competence, record keeping, and other ethical considerations. In general, all ethical standards in this Code of Ethics are applicable to interactions, relationships, or communications, whether they occur in person or with the use of technology. For the purposes of this Code, “technology-assisted social work services” include any social work services that involve the use of computers, mobile or landline telephones, tablets, video technology, or other electronic or digital technologies; this includes the use of various electronic or digital platforms, such as the Internet, online social media, chat rooms, text messaging, e-mail, and emerging digital applications. Technology-assisted social work services encompass all aspects of social work practice, including psychotherapy; individual, family, or group counseling; community organization; administration; advocacy; mediation; education; supervision; research; evaluation; and other social work services. Social workers should keep apprised of emerging technological developments that may be used in social work practice and how various ethical standards apply to them.

Updated Practice
Standards are now
available!



Thank you!