



# PRINCIPLE I: RELATIONSHIP WITH CLIENTS

The social work relationship and the social service work relationship, as a component of professional service, are each a mutual endeavour between active participants in providing and using social work or social service work expertise, as the case may be. Clients and College members jointly address relevant social, organizational, and/or personal problems of concern to clients. The foundation of this professional orientation is the belief that clients have the right and capacity to determine and achieve their goals and objectives. The social work relationship and the social service work relationship are each grounded in and draw upon theories of the social sciences and social work or social service work practice, as the case may be.

## Interpretation

Clients and client systems with whom College members are involved include individuals, couples, families, groups, communities, organizations and government. The following fundamental practice principles arise from basic professional values. College members adhere to these principles in their relationships with clients.

- 1.1 College members and clients participate together in setting and evaluating goals. A purpose for the relationship between College members and clients is identified.
  - 1.1.1 Goals for relationships between College members and clients include the enhancement of a client's functioning and the strengthening of the capacity of clients to adapt and make changes.
- 1.2 College members observe, clarify and inquire about information presented to them by clients.
- 1.3 College members respect and facilitate self-determination in a number of ways including acting as resources for clients and encouraging them to decide which problems they want to address as well as how to address them.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.4 Although not compelled to accept clients' interpretation of problems, College members demonstrate acceptance of each client's uniqueness.
- 1.5 College members are aware of their values, attitudes and needs and how these impact on their professional relationships with clients.



- 1.6 College members distinguish their needs and interests from those of their clients to ensure that, within professional relationships, clients' needs and interests remain paramount.
- 1.7 College members employed by organizations maintain an awareness and consideration of the purpose, mandate and function of those organizations and how these impact on and limit professional relationships with clients.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Limitations to self-determination may arise from the client's incapacity for positive and constructive decision-making, from law, from the order of any court of competent jurisdiction and from agency mandate and function.