

SPRING 2024

PERSPECTIVE

A PUBLICATION OF THE ONTARIO COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORKERS AND SOCIAL SERVICE WORKERS



IN THIS ISSUE

MESSAGE FROM THE REGISTRAR AND CEO	3
THE POWER OF CONVERSATION IN PSYCHOTHERAPY WITH ROXANNE FRANCIS, MSW, RSW	4
THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN PRACTICE	6
COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS	9
PRACTICE NOTES: WHAT CLIENTS ARE SHARING WITH THE COLLEGE	11
DISCIPLINE DECISION SUMMARIES	15
COLLEGE UPDATES AND REMINDERS	17
BULLETIN BOARD	19



MESSAGE FROM THE REGISTRAR AND CEO



➤ REGULATING WITH KINDNESS

Spring is a season of rejuvenation, and it's a time where we can sense the warmth and liveliness all around us. As we embrace this season of renewal and growth, we must also navigate the evolving world of regulatory governance. Now is the time to adopt a more compassionate approach to regulation for public protection.

Kindness has often been overlooked in the realm of regulation, yet it holds an immense power. The concept of a more focused approach on kindness within regulation has been an emerging trend for a number of years. This shift – with public protection at its core – is one that we must begin, while taking into account all those involved, including College registrants. Kindness is the thread that weaves through every interaction, decision and policy we enact. It is an approach that recognizes the complex emotional, and at times, stressful loads that may be present in the registrant experience. Developing humane approaches to maintain a strong focus on risk and patient safety while also considering registrant well-being is the essence of kindness in regulation. When we approach our duties with humanity and lead with empathy, in turn, kindness in regulation will enable us to regulate more effectively by upholding our mandate of public protection through embodying compassion.

Effective regulation is a collaborative responsibility and meaningful engagement is one of the ways we can redefine how the College approaches its public protection mandate. By infusing the concept of regulating with kindness into our governance framework, we not only foster a more humane approach to regulation, but one that is more effective. This approach acknowledges diverse lived experiences and perspectives which, in turn, builds trust and accountability. Ultimately, regulating with kindness nurtures a sense of collective responsibility around maintaining and safeguarding clients and communities served by our registrants.

We are dedicated to finding new ways to support College registrants in their professional and ethical journey towards being qualified, capable and competent social workers and social service workers. With the College mission in mind, we are thrilled to introduce two innovative resources in this issue that will empower our registrants to practise proactively and professionally. The new Practice Notes [“What Clients are Sharing with the College”](#) is a resource that will help to gain a deeper understanding of the client experience and ultimately strengthen relationships within this bound. We have created a new resource to explore the [“The Use of Artificial Intelligence in Practice,”](#) which will provide registrants with valuable insights into this rapidly evolving field. Our goal is for College registrants

to be better equipped to face the challenges of modern practice and we look forward to seeing the benefits of these resources.

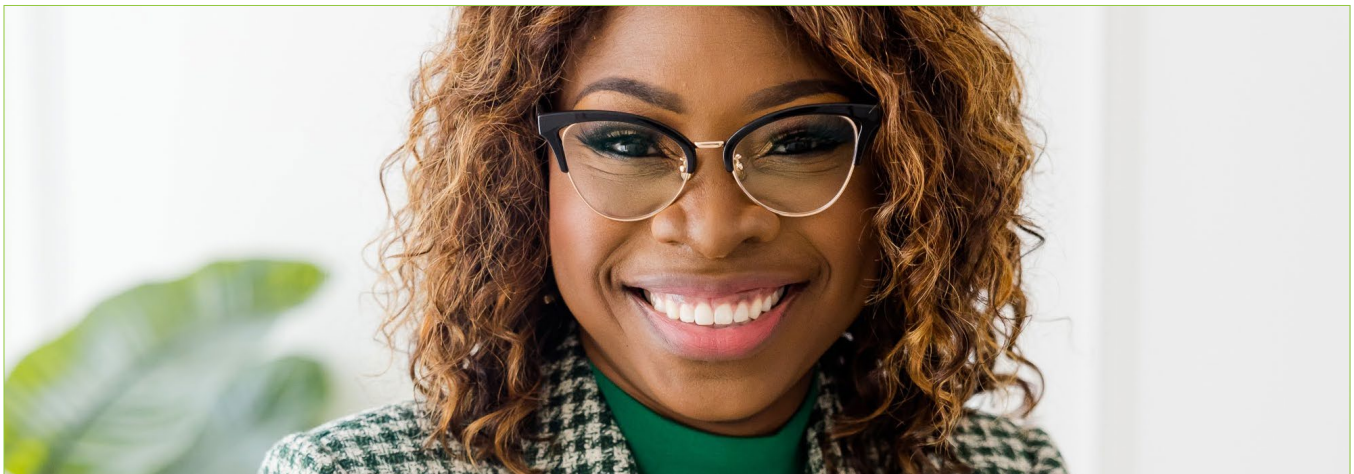
Regulating with kindness can transform the way the College protects the public. This framework embraces this mindset to create an environment that fosters empathy, recognition and understanding, ultimately leading to a safer and more fair society for all. While there is no one-size-fits-all solution, we are dedicated to continuous engagement with registrants and to

improving our approaches through intentional and genuine action. Embodying these practices will enable us to pave the way for a more humane approach to regulation while maintaining the public's safety.

Sincerely,

Denitha Breau, RN, MSN, MBA
Registrar and CEO
Ontario College of Social Workers and
Social Service Workers

THE POWER OF CONVERSATION IN PSYCHOTHERAPY WITH ROXANNE FRANCIS, MSW, RSW



➤ Starting a conversation is always the first step towards making progress, says Roxanne Francis, MSW, RSW.

For over 15 years, Roxanne, a registered social worker, acclaimed psychotherapist and renowned international speaker, has profoundly impacted countless lives through the power of conversation. Her passion for initiating dialogue was sparked by pressing societal issues, such as inadequate mental health resources and gaps of representation in the profession.

"My love of people drew me to the field of social work, but it was also my inability to stand for social injustice,"

Roxanne says. "I came to Canada from Jamaica as a young adult, and whenever I went back to visit, I saw a lack of a social safety network. This led to me asking questions, which eventually landed me in this profession."

ESTABLISHING HER FOUNDATION

Roxanne earned her BSW from Toronto Metropolitan University in 2009 and her MSW from the University of Toronto in 2010, specializing in children and families. Over time, as stress, anxiety, and other mental struggles worsened due to societal structures and systems, Roxanne felt it was her duty to provide

outlets designed for wellness. In 2018, she started Francis Psychotherapy & Consulting, allowing clients of various backgrounds to receive a reasoned, yet compassionate approach, to managing mental clarity.

Before entering private practice, Roxanne says it was crucial for her to first develop the skills necessary as a social worker, so that her advice to clients would lead to action.

“Before anyone opens a private practice, they [social workers/social service workers] need to be curious about people and their situations,” she says. “Understanding that you can’t look at someone’s life from a single story or from what you think you know or have read during your academic training is key, since that person’s lived experience may say something different.”

It’s hard work, Roxanne explains, since private practice isn’t the same as working for an established agency or organization. With an increasing number of professionals entering private practice since the COVID-19 pandemic, she acknowledges that learned skills, knowledge, and judgment need to be developed with time and experience outside of academic training.

“This isn’t a route towards easy money – it’s entrepreneurship,” Roxanne says. “This takes a lot of work for clients to come to your door, and I think those who are coming out of university or college should have an understanding of how to run a business.”

SUPERVISION AND EMPHASIZING LIVED EXPERIENCES

Roxanne highlights the importance of supervision and building relationships with experienced professionals before entering private practice. To optimize learning and the professional relationship between supervisor and supervisee, Roxanne says it boils down to the individual. Having served over 60 clinicians as a certified clinical supervisor, she says that taking a personalized approach to each case will result in progress. “Some supervisors may only do case consultations, but I believe working holistically leads to something better.”

“If a supervisee needs advice on how to get out of a difficult situation, or work through their trauma, I provide encouragement and a bit of non-clinical therapy

to allow the individual to work through their present problems, ranging from imposter syndrome to achieving a healthy work-life balance. We talk about clinical work, but also the non-clinical pieces that can affect the clinical side of things which educates both parties while being fun.”

Roxanne’s lived experiences significantly impact and influence the direction of all her work which is demonstrated in her teachings as an adjunct professor at the University of Toronto. Her primary focus is centered on anti-Black racism, racial trauma, wellness at work and women’s wellness, which stem from her personal experiences.

“My Canadian and Jamaican identities are important to me, as both have unique distinctions that influence my approach to private practice and supervision. For example, I know what it’s like to be a Black person in this country, the struggles that come with that identity, and the intersectionality of being a racialized immigrant woman. If I come across individuals who have a different social positioning than my own, I approach it with a willingness to learn from them and offer support that they need due to my own interest in learning from others.”

Roxanne says that many racialized supervisees who come from historically marginalized communities gravitate towards her due to feeling comfortably represented, but many non-racialized clinicians are supported in their own, respective way. Roxanne believes it’s necessary to ask questions without fear of judgment to unpack various traumas, so that it prepares them for working with every client.

“As a social worker, keeping an open safe space like this has helped me tremendously as well,” Roxanne says. “It shows that people can reach out for therapy once they have worked with someone who offered comfort and guidance, and it strengthens that relationship overall.”

EMBRACING CHANGE AND STAYING CURIOUS

Roxanne explains how in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and societal protests after George Floyd’s murder challenged professionals in the sector in new ways, namely how they interact with clients. She says that,

amidst these circumstances, opportunities arose to engage thoughtfully. “With the rise of virtual practice, professionals were able to expand their client base with less barriers. It also showed that remaining open-minded for diverse clientele was essential, since, as a social worker [or social service worker], you have to accommodate different sensitivities.”

Roxanne challenges the next generation of professionals to stay curious. Being open to the unknown but staying prepared and networking with established supervisors is key, she explains. Above all else, Roxanne states that wellness starts with the professional.

“I always affirm that it’s required to take care of yourself first. “Check in with yourself before you step into the arena; your role is very unique with people looking to you for guidance and it is therefore critical to be in the right frame of mind first.”

The College thanks Roxanne for speaking with us and sharing her experiences. In appreciation, the College has made a donation to the Refuge Youth Outreach Centre.

THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN PRACTICE

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS TO ENSURE REGISTRANTS REMAIN COMPETENT AND PROFESSIONAL IN THEIR PRACTICE



➤ Artificial Intelligence (AI) is an emerging technology that has the potential to play a role in the community and health landscape. The use of AI has demonstrated efficiencies and innovation, and the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (the College) can appreciate that registrants have been considering or have begun using AI in practice to assist with documentation or treatment planning, among other applications.

It is imperative that the use of AI in client care is done in conjunction with confidentiality and ethical

considerations in mind. The following information has been developed to assist registrants contemplating the use of AI in their practice.

SELF-REVIEW QUESTIONS

Registrants should consider the following questions about the use of AI in their practice:

- Is using AI-related tools in the client’s best interest?
- By using AI, am I prioritizing the client’s needs? Is a treatment plan or other documentation developed through AI evidence-based?

- Have I ensured that I am not being false, misleading or inaccurate by signing documentation or a treatment plan developed by AI?
- Have I researched the current and relevant legislation that relates to the use of AI?
- Have I ensured that no client demographics have been inputted in the AI tool or platform?
- Am I aware of where the information I am inputting is going, and where will it be stored?

If a registrant answers “no” to any of these questions, they should reconsider using AI in practice and seek further information and consultation or supervision.

UPHOLDING ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

As the provincial regulator, the College is legislated to develop and enforce professional standards which are applicable to all social workers and social service workers. Registrants are required to adhere to the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, which sets out the minimum standards of professional practice and conduct for both professions.

The College expects registrants to review the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice at least annually and when facing a particular issue or dilemma. This will help ensure they apply their professional judgment while practising social work or social service work. In particular, the College advises registrants to note the following principles:

Clients should participate in developing their goals and objectives. AI-generated treatment plans could impact client self-determination.

Standards of Practice, Principle I, Interpretation

1.4: College registrants shall respect and facilitate self-determination in a number of ways, including acting as resources for clients and encouraging them to decide which problems to address and how to address them.¹

Standards of Practice, Principle I, Interpretation 1.8:

College registrants shall distinguish their own needs and interests from those of their clients to ensure that, within professional relationships, clients’ needs and interests remain paramount.²

College registrants must be competent in using AI and interventions must be based on reliable sources of information.

Standards of Practice, Principle II, Interpretation

2.1: College registrants shall commit to ongoing professional development and to maintaining competence in their practice.³

Standards of Practice, Principle II, Interpretation

2.1.6: College registrants shall be knowledgeable about the policies, legislation, programs and issues related to the communities, institutions and services in their areas of practice.⁴

Standards of Practice, Principle II, Interpretation

2.1.7: College registrants shall ensure that any professional recommendations or opinions they provide are supported by evidence and a credible body of professional social work or social service work knowledge. Evidence can include information gathered from:

- i. direct observation;
- ii. clinical sessions;
- iii. professional meetings;
- iv. Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing;
- v. collateral sources;
- vi. documents and correspondence;
- vii. clinical tools (e.g. diagnostic assessment measures, rating scales);
- viii. research;
- ix. training and continuing education;
- x. supervision; and/or
- xi. journals/literature.⁵

¹ Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW), *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Third Edition, 2023*, Principle I: Relationship with Clients, interpretation 1.4.

² Ibid, interpretation 1.8.

³ OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Third Edition, 2023*, Principle II: Competence and Integrity, interpretation 2.1

⁴ Ibid, interpretation 2.1.6

⁵ OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Third Edition, 2023*, Principle IV: The Social Work and Social Service Work Record, interpretation 4.1.4.

Documentation is critical to ethical client care and must be factual and accurate. Registrants must consider whether signing documentation generated by AI is misleading or otherwise improper.

Standards of Practice, Principle IV, Interpretation

4.1.4: College registrants shall not make a statement in the record, or in reports based on the record, or issue or sign a certificate, report or other documents in the course of practising either profession that the College registrant knows or ought reasonably to know is false, misleading, inaccurate or otherwise unprofessional.⁶

Confidentiality is critical to professional and ethical practice and registrants must not enter client information into an AI tool or platform.

Standards of Practice, Principle V, Interpretation

5.1: College members comply with any applicable privacy and other legislation. College members obtain consent to the collection, use or disclosure of client information including personal information, unless otherwise permitted or required by law.

PRACTICE RESOURCES

Registrants must familiarize themselves with reliable sources of information and build their competency before using AI in their practice.

The following resources are meant to provide further support and guidance to ensure that registrants are practising ethically and professionally.

- [Practice Notes: Professional and Ethical: Communication Technology Practices and Policies for a Digital World](#)
- [Practice Notes: Communication Technology and Ethical Practice: Evolving Issues in a Changing Landscape](#)
- [Top 6 Considerations for Virtual Services](#)
- [Top 10 Considerations for Using Communication Technology in Practice](#)

- [Practice Notes: The Evolving Landscape of Electronic Practice](#)
- From the [Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario \(IPC\): Artificial Intelligence in the public sector: Building trust now and for the future](#)

NEXT STEPS

Registrants who have determined to move forward with using AI in their practice should consider the following:

- Question and never solely rely on the information AI generates.
- Search for errors and false information.
- Review data to ensure it does not contain any confidential information.
- Determine if there has been any copyright infringement if direct quotes are used.
- Confirm if using AI-related tools to search and/or generate information requires you to agree to terms of use that may jeopardize confidential information.

AI technology is only as reliable as the humans who develop it. Bias, errors, and lack of current perspective can result in the development of false and inaccurate information. Registrants must recognize this and proceed competently, ethically, and professionally.

For any further questions about using AI in practice, please contact the Professional Practice Department at practice@ocswssw.org.

⁶ (OCSWSSW), *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Third Edition, 2023*, Principle V: Confidentiality, interpretation 5.1.

COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS



➤ COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS FOR DECEMBER 1, 2023

- John Fleming, Council Chair, provided his report to Council.
- Denitha Breau, RN, MSN, MBA, Registrar and CEO, presented her report to Council. The report provided updates under each strategic priority in the College's Strategic Plan and included information about the following: an update on the launch of the College's new database and renewals; registrant-base data including registration stats by electoral districts; recent outreach in Thunder Bay; and the recent Educational Forum.
- Council reviewed the Statement of Financial Position as of September 2023.
- Council reviewed the Statement of Operations for September 2023.
- Council reviewed the College's Risk Register.
- Reports were received from the following statutory committees: Executive; Complaints; Discipline; Fitness to Practise; and Registration Appeals.
- Reports were received from the following non-statutory committees: Standards of Practice; Election; Nominating; Finance and Audit; Governance; Corporations; Titles and Designations; and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
- Council approved revisions to the existing Registration Policy on Language Proficiency.
- Council approved the new Registration Policy on social work programs offered in Canada that are accredited by the National Indigenous Accreditation Board (NIAB).

- Council delegated oversight of a review of the Practice Guidelines on Custody and Access Assessments to the Standards of Practice Committee.
- Council approved the implementation of a voluntary equity and inclusion self-disclosure for Council and committee members.
- Council approved the appointment of Crowe Soberman LLP as the College's auditors for the year ending December 31, 2023.
- Council approved the revised Per Diem and Expense Policy.
- Council reviewed the preliminary work regarding the review of governance policies and next steps.

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS FOR MARCH 6, 2024

- John Fleming, Council Chair, provided his report to Council.
- Denitha Breau, RN, MSN, MBA, Registrar and CEO, presented her report to Council. The report provided updates under each strategic priority in the College's Strategic Plan and included information about the following: an update on the new strategic planning process; ongoing work of the new database and enhancements; upcoming Council elections in Electoral District 4; continued outreach efforts and engagement; overview of the College's student engagement; overall digital communications analytics including website traffic; and the upcoming Annual Meeting and Education Day (AMED).

- Council approved a motion to dissolve the Corporations Committee and the Titles and Designations Committee and transfer the functions of the committees to the Executive Committee.
- Council reviewed the College's Risk Register.
- Council reviewed the Statement of Financial Position as of December 2023.
- Council reviewed the Statement of Operations for December 2023.
- Council discussed and directed staff to come back to Council with a fully developed proposal to implement criminal background checks and vulnerable sector checks as part of the registration process.
- Council approved revisions to the existing Registration Policy on Language Proficiency.
- Reports were received from the following statutory committees: Executive; Complaints; Discipline; Fitness to Practise; and Registration Appeals.
- Reports were received from the following non-statutory committees: Standards of Practice; Election; Nominating; Finance and Audit; Governance; and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

PRACTICE NOTES

WHAT CLIENTS ARE SHARING WITH THE COLLEGE



➤ *Practice Notes is an educational tool designed to help Ontario social workers, social service workers, employers and members of the public gain a better understanding of recurring issues dealt with by the College's Professional Practice Department and Complaints Committee that may affect everyday practice. The notes offer general guidance only and College registrants' with specific practice inquiries should consult the College, since the relevant standards and appropriate course of action will vary depending on the situation.*

The Professional Practice Department provides thousands of practice consultations every year. Most commonly, College registrants contact the Department with practice inquiries; however, employers and clients do so as well. These interactions offer unique opportunities to hear about client experiences and their perspectives on service delivery. These Practice Notes explore several recurring themes that have emerged from the Department's conversations with clients. Clients will reach out to use Professional Practice staff as a sounding board. Clients may contact the Department to express concerns about the services they have received, to provide feedback, or to learn more about common or typical practices when working with College registrants.

When faced with an issue, some clients express that they would prefer to have Professional Practice staff share feedback with registrants on their behalf, rather than file a formal complaint. Professional Practice staff explain that the College does not intervene in how a registrant delivers service outside of a formal complaint process; however, the College offers proactive guidance to help registrants understand their professional and ethical obligations. In addition, the College administers a mandatory Continuing Competence Program (CCP), which promotes quality assurance for the practice of the professions of social work and social service work and encourages registrants to enhance their practice in an ongoing way.

These Practice Notes have been developed to convey common client concerns, which College registrants should consider in their practice and decision-making. While the scenarios below are based mainly on private practice, the lessons can be applied across various practice settings.

⁷ Disclaimer: the term "member" and "registrant" are used interchangeably and synonymously as equivalent to the term "member" as used in the *Social Work and Social Service Work Act, 1998*, and the Regulations.

SCENARIO 1 – VIRTUAL VS. IN-PERSON PRACTICE

Clients have contacted the Professional Practice Department to explain that they would prefer to receive in-person services but can only find College registrants who offer virtual services. Several clients who contacted the Department were parents who stated they could only find virtual play therapy for their children, which they felt was less effective than in-person services. These parents also expressed that their children had difficulty focusing on the virtual sessions and that limiting their children's screen time was a priority. Many clients asked the College to mandate in-person services. It was explained that this was outside the College's mandate; however, the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice speaks to this issue.

"A College registrant maintains the best interest of the client as the primary professional obligation."⁸ This is the first interpretation of the Code of Ethics, and the client's best interest should be the priority and driving force behind all client interactions. Services should be delivered in a way that supports "the most advantageous outcome for a client."⁹ This includes consideration of whether delivering services in-person or virtually is most beneficial for the client. Factors that College registrants should weigh when deciding whether to deliver virtual services include, but are not limited to, the client's:

- age;
- safety;
- capacity;
- treatment goals and preferences; and
- technological competence.

At times, virtual services may be in the client's best interest. Virtual services provide flexibility and convenience for both client and practitioner and, in many cases, have made receiving care easier and more accessible for clients. Nevertheless, College registrants must review the needs and service delivery preferences with each client. While many clients are comfortable receiving virtual services, alternative options must

be explored for those who are not. Registrants must respect and facilitate client self-determination¹⁰. Solely offering virtual services can limit client choice and, ultimately, be a barrier to service.

Offering virtual services is very common and even essential at times. However, not long ago, virtual services were often considered inferior compared to in-person interactions, which many felt offered the ability to connect more deeply with clients. Registrants must recognize when in-person services are more appropriate and should be mindful to prioritize the needs of their clients over their personal convenience. Registrants "shall distinguish their own needs and interests from those of their clients to ensure that, within professional relationships, clients' needs and interests remain paramount."¹¹ Therefore, if a client requests in-person services, the registrant should accommodate that request as appropriate.

SCENARIO 2 – EXCESSIVE FEES

Clients have contacted Professional Practice staff with questions about fees they are being charged for copies or summaries of their files. Most clients understand there is an administrative cost for College registrants to provide a copy or a summary of their records. However, clients are reporting that they are being charged large sums to access their information without forewarning. Professional Practice staff refer to the Standards of Practice and the College's Privacy Toolkit in these instances.

The Standards of Practice speak to this scenario in the following way:

College registrants shall not charge or accept payment for any fees unless the basis for those fees was fully disclosed to the client before the College registrant began providing the services to which the fees relate. When establishing service contracts with clients, College registrants shall:

⁸ Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW), *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Third Edition, 2023*, Code of Ethics, interpretation 1.

⁹ (OCSWSSW), *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Third Edition, 2023*, Glossary, Best Interest.

¹⁰ (OCSWSSW), *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Third Edition, 2023*, Principle I: Relationship with Clients, interpretation 1.4.

¹¹ (OCSWSSW), *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Third Edition, 2023*, Principle I: Relationship with Clients, interpretation 1.8.

- Explain in advance or at the beginning of service the basis for all charges, giving a reasonable estimate of projected fees, and disbursements, pointing out any uncertainties involved so that clients may make informed decisions with respect to using the registrant's services. Factors which may influence the amount charged include:
 - the time and effort spent;
 - the complexity of the issues; and
 - the skills and expertise required.
- Ensure that they do not charge fees that are excessive in relation to the services performed.
- Discuss and renegotiate the service contract with clients when changes in the fees are anticipated.
- Ensure that contracts for service clearly describe billing procedures, reasonable penalties for missed and cancelled appointments or late payment of fees, the use of collection agencies or legal proceedings to collect unpaid fees and third-party fee payments.¹²

From the above interpretation, it is clear that clients must be fully informed about fees before service provision, and that fees cannot be excessive for the services performed. Excessive fees are "an amount that exceeds what is considered usual, reasonable and customary which may be determined by comparing other registrants' charges for similar services."¹³ Therefore, registrants may want to connect with other service providers to compare what they charge for providing copies or summaries of client files.

This language is echoed in the [Privacy Toolkit](#), which states that a College registrant:

may charge a fee for making the record available, or for providing a copy to the requestor, but you must first give the requestor a fee estimate. The amount of the fee cannot exceed the amount prescribed in regulation or, if no amount is prescribed, the amount of "reasonable cost recovery." As a HIC [Health Information Custodian], you may also waive the fee if, in your opinion, it is "fair and equitable" to do so. For example, several hospitals have chosen to waive

access fees for the homeless, for patients on social assistance and for assault victims.¹⁴

It is important to consider several factors when charging clients for copies or summaries of their files. First, registrants need to establish charges in accordance with standard, reasonable and customary practices. Next, clients must receive comprehensive information about all fees at the outset of service to enable them to make an informed decision regarding their requests for copies or summaries of their files. Lastly, registrants should document the client's request for a copy or summary of their record, the details of the conversation about service fees, and, once complete, that a copy or summary of the file was given to the client as requested.

College registrants must remember that clients are legally entitled to access their information. While a fee to prepare and produce a copy or summary of client files is permitted, registrants must consider if the fee presents a barrier to service and is typical and reasonable. Registrants must also remember that there is an inherent power imbalance within professional relationships – making it difficult for clients to access their files is one of the ways this imbalance can manifest.

SCENARIO 3 – UNETHICAL CONTRACTS

Some clients have raised concerns about their service contracts with registrants, which state that clients are not permitted to file complaints with the College. The clients want clarification on their options and are worried they would be signing away their rights under these types of agreements. Clients are reassured that they are welcome to file a complaint anytime during or after receiving services from a College registrant.

Simply put, College registrants cannot include a clause in their contract that denies clients from filing a complaint with the College. This would not be a legally enforceable contract due to the *Social Work and Social Service Work Act, 1998*, which states that an object of the College is "[t]o receive and investigate complaints against members of the College and to deal with issues

¹² (OCSWSSW), *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Third Edition, 2023*, Principle VI: Fees, interpretation 6.1.

¹³ (OCSWSSW), *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Third Edition, 2023*, Glossary, Excessive Fees.

¹⁴ (OCSWSSW), *Privacy Toolkit for Social Workers and Social Service Workers: Guide to the Personal Health and Information Protection Act, 2004.*, pg. 44.

of discipline, professional misconduct, incompetency and incapacity.”¹⁵

In fact, the College has received complaints about registrants for this very scenario, who were then referred for discipline hearings; more details of one case can be found [here](#). Not permitting clients to file a complaint about services they receive contradicts the College’s public protection mandate, and it is neither professional nor ethical.

CONCLUSION

Client insight is invaluable to service planning and provision. The Professional Practice Department

receives comments and concerns from clients when they are unsure if a registrant’s conduct is appropriate. As discussed above, providing service in a way that ensures a client’s best interest is a College registrant’s primary professional obligation. It should also guide all decision-making and service planning. In addition, registrants must clearly discuss the expectations and limitations of service at the outset of practise, including service fees, to ensure clients have all the necessary information they need to make informed decisions surrounding service. College registrants must remain vigilant in applying relevant legislation and the Standards of Practice so they can provide ethical and professional client services.

DISCIPLINE DECISION SUMMARIES



➤ The College publishes summaries of decisions of the Discipline Committee and/or provides links to full-text, neutralized versions of its decisions. Information that is subject to a publication ban or that could reveal the identity of witnesses or clients, including the name of the facility, has been removed as necessary, or has been anonymized. As of January 2019, decisions are also available via the [Canadian Legal Information Institute \(CanLII\)](#).

By publishing decisions, the College endeavours to:

- Illustrate for social workers, social service workers and members of the public, what does or does not constitute professional misconduct.

- Provide social workers and social service workers with direction about the College’s standards of practice and professional behaviour, to be applied in future, should they find themselves in similar circumstances.
- Implement the Discipline Committee’s decision.
- Provide social workers, social service workers and members of the public with an understanding of the College’s discipline process.

Joseph Pinckney, #819455

The Discipline Committee of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers found that Joseph Pinckney is guilty of professional misconduct in

¹⁵ *Social Work and Social Service Work Act, 1998.*

that the registrant violated sections 2.2, 2.5, 2.6, 2.28, and 2.36 of O. Reg. 384/00 (Professional Misconduct) to the *Social Work and Social Service Work Act*, Principles I, II, III and VIII of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook* (Standards of Practice), as commented on in Interpretations 1.5, 1.6, 2.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.8, 3.2, 3.7, 3.8, 8.1, 8.2.1, 8.2.3, 8.6 and 8.7.

[Joseph Pinckney, #819455 \(Discipline Decision Summary and Reasons\)](#)

Krystal Fortier, #833813

The Discipline Committee of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers found that Krystal Fortier is guilty of professional misconduct in that the registrant violated sections 2.2, 2.6, 2.10 and 2.36 of O. Reg. 384/00 (Professional Misconduct) to the *Social Work and Social Service Work Act*, Principles I, II and III of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook* (Standards of Practice), as commented on in Interpretations 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 2.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.3, 2.2.4, 2.2.8 and 3.7.

[Krystal Fortier, #833813 \(Discipline Decision Summary and Reasons\)](#)

Maryana St. Hiliare, #830023

The Discipline Committee of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers found that Maryana St. Hiliare is guilty of professional misconduct in that the registrant violated sections 2.2, 2.6, 2.24, 2.25 and 2.36 of O. Reg. 384/00 (Professional Misconduct) to the *Social Work and Social Service Work Act*, Principles I, II, III and IV and sections 3 & 5 of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook* (Standards of Practice), as commented on in Interpretations 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 2.2.1, 2.1.3, 2.1.4, 2.2, 2.2.1(ii), 2.2.3, 2.2.4, 2.2.8, 3.1, 3.8 and 4.1.2.

[Maryana St. Hiliare, #830023 \(Discipline Decision Summary and Reasons\)](#)

Damien Delaney #839700

The Discipline Committee of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers found that Damien Delaney is guilty of professional misconduct in that the registrant violated sections 2.15, 2.28 and 2.36 of O. Reg. 384/00 (Professional Misconduct) to the

Social Work and Social Service Work Act and violated section 47(1) and/or (2) of the *Social Work and Social Service Work Act*, 1998, S.O. 1998, c. 31.

[Damien Delaney #839700 \(Discipline Decision Summary and Reasons\)](#)

Jeremy Mayer #801648

The Discipline Committee of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers found that Jeremy Mayer is guilty of professional misconduct in that the registrant violated sections 2.2, 2.11, 2.21, 2.29 and 2.36 of O. Reg. 384/00 (Professional Misconduct) to the *Social Work and Social Service Work Act*, Principles I, II, IV and V of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook* (Standards of Practice), as commented on in Interpretations 1.5, 1.6, 2.2.8, 4.1.2, 5.1, 5.3 and 5.3.6.

[Jeremy Mayer, #801648 \(Discipline Decision Summary and Reasons\)](#)

[Jeremy Mayer #801648 \(Reprimand\)](#)

Patrick Sweet #820725

The Discipline Committee of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers found that Patrick Sweet is guilty of professional misconduct in that the registrant violated sections 2.2, 2.6 and 2.36 of O. Reg. 384/00 (Professional Misconduct) to the *Social Work and Social Service Work Act*, and Principles I, II, III and VIII of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook* (Standards of Practice), as commented on in Interpretations 1.5, 1.6, 2.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.8, 3.7, 8.1 and 8.8.

[Patrick Sweet #820725 \(Discipline Decision Summary and Reasons\)](#)

Alexandra Burden #828364

The Discipline Committee of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers found that Alexandra Burden is guilty of professional misconduct in that the registrant violated sections 2.2, 2.9, 2.10, 2.20, 2.28 and 2.36 of O. Reg. 384/00 (Professional Misconduct) to the *Social Work and Social Service Work Act*, and Principles I, II, III and IV of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook* (Standards of Practice), as commented on in Interpretations 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 2.1.5, 2.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.6, 2.2.8, 3.7, 3.8, 4.1.1, 8.4, 8.4.1.

[Alexandra Burden #828364 \(Discipline Decision Summary and Reasons\)](#)

Erin Nolan #828920

The Discipline Committee of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers found that Erin Nolan is guilty of professional misconduct in that the registrant violated sections 2.2, 2.29 and 2.36 of O. Reg. 384/00 (Professional Misconduct) to the *Social Work and Social Service Work Act*, and Principles II, IV and V of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*

Handbook (Standards of Practice), as commented on in Interpretations 2.2.8, 4.3.1, 5.1 and 5.2.

[Erin Nolan #828920 \(Discipline Decision Summary and Reasons\)](#)

COLLEGE UPDATES AND REMINDERS



➤ SAVE THE DATE FOR AMED 2024

The College is happy to announce that it will be holding its Annual Meeting & Education Day (AMED) on Tuesday, June 4, 2024. AMED is part of the Glenda McDonald Educational Series.

This year's theme is [Engage and Evolve: Collaborative Approaches to Care](#). The Annual Meeting, keynote address and afternoon educational sessions will be hosted entirely virtual via an online conference platform.

Registration for this year's event will open in early May. Stay tuned for more information!

Please contact us at amed@ocswssw.org if you have any questions.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT – 2023 EDUCATIONAL FORUM VIDEOS NOW AVAILABLE

The College held its annual virtual Educational Forum on November 30, 2023. The recording of this year's event is available by visiting the [College website](#) or [YouTube channel](#).

In addition to a short College Update from Registrar and CEO Denitha Breau, RN, MSN, MBA, the Forum included a panel discussion titled *Supporting Clients with Care and Competence Through Intimate Partner Violence*, facilitated by the College's Director of Professional Practice, Christina Van Sickle, MSW, RSW. The expert panel explored intimate partner violence and ways in which registrants can support their clients through competent and ethical care. The panel session highlighted key strategies for social workers and social service workers in supporting clients who have experienced or are experiencing intimate partner violence.

College registrants can also use viewing this recording towards the completion of their 2024 Continuing Competence Program (CCP).

For more information on the Educational Forum, please contact the College's Communications Department at communications@ocswssw.org.

COUNCIL ELECTION

The 2024 Council Election will take place in Electoral District No. 4 on Thursday, May 30, 2024. All College registrants who practise in District No. 4 are encouraged to participate in this important process. Registrants can access further information about Council elections, including the voting process, by visiting the [College website](#) or by contacting elections@ocswssw.org.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE COLLEGE'S NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

The College has partnered with Optimus SBR, an independent consulting firm, to develop its next Strategic Plan. In March, registrants and other engagement groups were invited to share their insights through an online survey. This process presented a valuable opportunity to shape our future alongside our key engagement groups, including social workers and social service workers. This engagement also ensures that the development of our new Strategic Plan is informed by the perspectives of all our engagement groups and partners, who bring different lenses and lived experiences.

We want to thank all those who participated and provided their feedback. We look forward to sharing more information in the coming months!

REMINDER: PARTICIPATE IN THE ASWB SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL SERVICE WORK CENSUS

As mentioned in an [eBulletin](#) sent to registrants on March 1, 2024, the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) is inviting feedback from registered social workers and social service workers through their newly launched Social Work and Social Service Work Census.

The data obtained from the census will be used to build the blueprint for the next iteration of the social work exams, as well as in the development of the new social service work exams. These will be the versions of the exams that the College will be using when the entry-to-practice exam requirement is implemented in 2027.

The ASWB is committed to ensuring that the exams reflect the diversity of Ontario and the clients that registrants serve. Although current registrants will not have to take the exams once implemented, we encourage all registrants to participate so their voices can be heard and they can help inform the exams of future College applicants.

The census can be accessed until the end of May 2024. Complete the census [here](#).

REMINDER - SUBSCRIBE TO EMPLOYER COMMUNIQUÉ

The College encourages social work and social service work employers to subscribe to the [Employer Communiqué!](#)

The *Employer Communiqué* is the College's official quarterly publication for employers of social workers and social service workers.

The College invites registrants to share this publication with their employers. Please [click here](#) to sign up.

BULLETIN BOARD

➤ CHANGE OF INFORMATION NOTIFICATION

If you change employers or move, please advise the College in writing within 30 days. The College is required to have the current business address of its registrants available to the public. Notification of change of address can be done by accessing the Online Portal or by sending the new employer address to the College by email to info@ocswssw.org. Please provide your College registration number when you communicate with us.

If you change your name or use a different name other than the one you registered with when providing social work or social service work services, you must advise the College of both your former name(s) and your new name(s) in writing and include a copy of the change of name certificate or marriage certificate or other official government document for our records. The information may be sent by email to info@ocswssw.org or by mail to the College office address.

If you wish to update your education, you must ask your academic institution to forward an official transcript with the institution seal and/or stamp directly to the College, by mail, or by email to info@ocswssw.org. We also accept transcripts that are shared directly with us through third party platforms (such as MyCreds™ or Parchment) by email to info@ocswssw.org.

If your information changes, please advise the College in writing within 30 days. This includes:

CHANGE OF PREFERRED EMAIL ADDRESS:

The College requires all registrants to provide a valid, unique email address. It is essential that you keep your email address up to date to ensure you receive important updates or information from us. To access the Online Portal and manage your registrant account, please use the preferred email address on file.

CHANGE OF BUSINESS ADDRESS

The College is required to have the current business address of its registrants available to the public. Notification of change of address can be done by accessing the Online Portal or by sending the new employer address to the College by email to info@ocswssw.org. Please provide your College registration number when you communicate with us.

CHANGE OF NAME

If you change your name or use a different name other than the one you registered with when providing social work or social service work services, you must advise the College of both your former name(s) and your new name(s) in writing and include a copy of the change of name certificate or marriage certificate or other official government document for our records. The information may be sent by email to info@ocswssw.org or by mail to the College office address.

UPDATES TO ACADEMIC INFORMATION

If you wish to update the academic information on file, you must ask your academic institution to forward an official transcript with the institution seal and/or stamp directly to the College, by mail, or by email to info@ocswssw.org. We also accept transcripts that are shared directly with us through third party platforms (such as MyCreds™ or Parchment) by email to info@ocswssw.org.

Perspective is the official registrant publication of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers.

HOW TO REACH US

The College is open Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

250 Bloor Street East Suite 1000
Toronto, Ontario M4W 1E6

Telephone: 416-972-9882
Toll-Free: 1-877-828-9380
Fax: 416-972-1512
Email: info@ocswssw.org
Website: ocswssw.org

FOLLOW US

LinkedIn: Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers

X: @OCSWSSW
Facebook: @OCSWSSW
YouTube: OCSWSSW / IOTSTTSO
Instagram: @ocswssw_otsttso

If you require this publication in an alternate format, contact the College at 1-877-828-9380 or communications@ocswssw.org

WHO TO CONTACT AT THE COLLEGE REGISTRATION AND RENEWALS

For general and renewal inquiries, please email: info@ocswssw.org.

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR

If you wish to contact the Office of the Registrar, or are seeking information related to the College Council, please email oor@ocswssw.org.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

For professional practice inquiries, please email: practice@ocswssw.org.

For inquiries related to the Continuing Competence Program (CCP), please email: ccp@ocswssw.org.

COMMUNICATIONS

For inquiries regarding the College's website, newsletter, Annual Report and other publications, please email: communications@ocswssw.org.

COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINE

For information on complaints, discipline and mandatory reporting, please email: investigations@ocswssw.org.

If you are aware of any individual who is illegally using a protected title and/or holding themselves out as a social worker or a social service worker, you may report this information to the College at titleprotection@ocswssw.org.