

# PERSPECTIVE

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## Message from the Registrar and CEO

As we move into the spring season, I want to take a moment to recognize and thank you for the important work you do every day as social workers and social service workers. Across diverse practice settings and communities, your commitment to ethical, compassionate and competent care continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals, families and communities across Ontario.

In my role as the College’s Registrar and CEO, I have the privilege of viewing the profession through a regulatory lens—one that is grounded in public protection, accountability and trust. At the same time, like many, I have experienced firsthand the care and support provided by social workers and social service workers. Together, these perspectives reinforce the importance of the College’s role and the critical responsibility we share in upholding safe, ethical and professional practice.

This commitment to public protection is reflected in several key initiatives currently underway. Recently, the College launched the [Sexual Abuse Prevention Program \(SAPP\)](#) in response to a concerning rise in sexual abuse-related complaints. Sexual abuse is one of the most serious breaches of professional obligations and can have profound and lasting impacts on clients. The SAPP supports registrants in recognizing and preventing boundary violations, understanding abuses of power and identifying “slippery slope” scenarios. As part of the [2026 Continuing Competence Program \(CCP\)](#), all registrants (except those in the retired class) are required to complete the SAPP. This initiative is an important step in strengthening safeguards around public protection, reinforcing public trust in the professions.

The College also continues to monitor trends in practice to ensure that our regulatory approach remains responsive and relevant. The landscape of social work and social service work is constantly evolving, shaped by changing client needs, emerging areas of practice and broader system-level shifts. In recognition of this, we have initiated a comprehensive review of the CCP to better understand how registrants practise across sectors, to identify emerging trends and to ensure that the CCP continues to support professional growth while maintaining its focus on public protection.

Your voice is essential to this process. In the coming months, you will have opportunities to share your experiences and insights through surveys and other engagement activities. I encourage you to participate, as your feedback will help shape the future of the CCP and confirm that it reflects the realities of practice today.

As we move forward, your ongoing engagement remains critical to maintaining a regulatory approach that is ethical, accountable, effective and community-centred. Thank you for the care you provide and for your continued commitment to safe and competent practice.

Sincerely,

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



# Shaping Clinical Readiness:

## A Social Service Worker's Insights on Experience Before Private Practice

For Bianca Stefina, RSSW, becoming a registered social service worker was never about following a single prescribed path. Her journey reflects a commitment to learning through experience, adapting to complexity and building clinical judgment through direct work with people in real-world settings.

Today, Bianca is the owner of a group practice in Windsor, Ontario, specializing in trauma and complex trauma. Throughout her career, she continues to deepen her clinical expertise through advanced training in trauma-informed and somatic approaches, shaping a practice grounded in a non-pathologizing understanding of mental health and behaviour. Her path to private practice was intentional and more importantly, gradual. "I've always wanted to work one-on-one with people and connect with others," Bianca explains. "I didn't know it was possible until I did the research." Bianca emphasizes that her competence and confidence in private practice were built over time through hands-on experience, exposure to diverse client needs and ongoing learning.

### Learning through Experience

Before entering private practice, Bianca spent about five years working across community settings, where each role added to her understanding of people, systems and care. She began in a residential facility supporting adults living with serious and persistent mental health challenges, including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and psychosis. This experience challenged her assumptions and exposed her to systemic gaps in care and stigma. "It really opened my eyes," says Bianca, particularly to how people are treated and how much more there is to understand about lived experience. This early work helped shape her social service work lens into one that is trauma informed, non-pathologizing and looks beyond labels to better understand the context of a person's life.

Bianca then worked in child welfare in a group home supporting youth in care of a Children's Aid Society agency. Here, she developed her understanding of

attachment, developmental trauma and the importance of professional boundaries. "You're working in their home, you're a part of their daily lives," Bianca recalls. "That experience taught me how to balance empathy with strong professional boundaries." It also reinforced the importance of relationship-based care that is both compassionate and grounded in clinical skill.

Bianca's work later expanded into education, respite care and youth justice. Across these roles, she supported children, youth and families navigating behavioural challenges alongside complex systemic factors. In youth justice especially, she began to see how mental health, education and legal systems intersect. "You start to see patterns," Bianca explains. "Trauma, environment and the systems all play a role in someone's life." This systems-based understanding continues to inform her practice today.

### Building Readiness for Private Practice

Bianca's early career across community, education and youth justice settings contributed significantly to her clinical judgment and professional identity. "I would not be the practitioner I am today without that foundation," she says. Skills that Bianca developed in these environments—case management, risk assessment and interdisciplinary collaboration—directly translate into private practice. "An hour in the therapy room is only one hour out of a client's week," she notes. Understanding a client's broader context, including supports and systems involvement, is essential for effective care.

For Bianca, being ready for private practice is not defined by credentials alone. It also includes ongoing self-reflection and personal work. "It was doing my own work, the messy work," she says, including examining biases, boundaries and patterns and understanding how those can show up when working with clients.

Bianca also emphasizes the importance of having key clinical skills such as case conceptualization, cultural competency and dealing with complex issues like

suicidality. "You're working with the whole person," she explains. "You need to understand how trauma presents so you don't risk re-traumatizing someone." Her ongoing training in trauma-informed and somatic approaches supports her ability to understand how experiences are held in the body as well as the mind.

Supervision and mentorship have also been central throughout Bianca's career. She credits this type of guidance along with peer consultation groups and ongoing professional development as key supports in being effectively equipped in private practice. "I didn't have to be the expert at everything, but I needed to know where to go for direction."

### The Value of a Social Service Work Lens

Bianca believes her social service work background brings an important perspective to private practice. "We're trained to look at the whole person," she says, emphasizing the importance of understanding both internal experiences and broader social, economic and cultural contexts. She notes that what are often labelled as "symptoms" can be understandable responses to difficult life circumstances. This perspective supports a more validating, trauma-informed approach that focuses on insight, nervous system regulation and meaningful change.

### Rethinking the Timeline

For those considering private practice, Bianca encourages them to take the time to build experience. "I would be very careful about going straight from school into private practice," she says. It's a massive responsibility, particularly when working with vulnerable clients seeking help for the first time. It can shape

someone's willingness to seek help again." Bianca also highlights practical considerations, including financial stability, administrative responsibilities and sustainable caseload development when it comes to private practice. "A slow build is sustainable," she explains. "Starting part-time can help you grow your practice without operating from stress or scarcity."

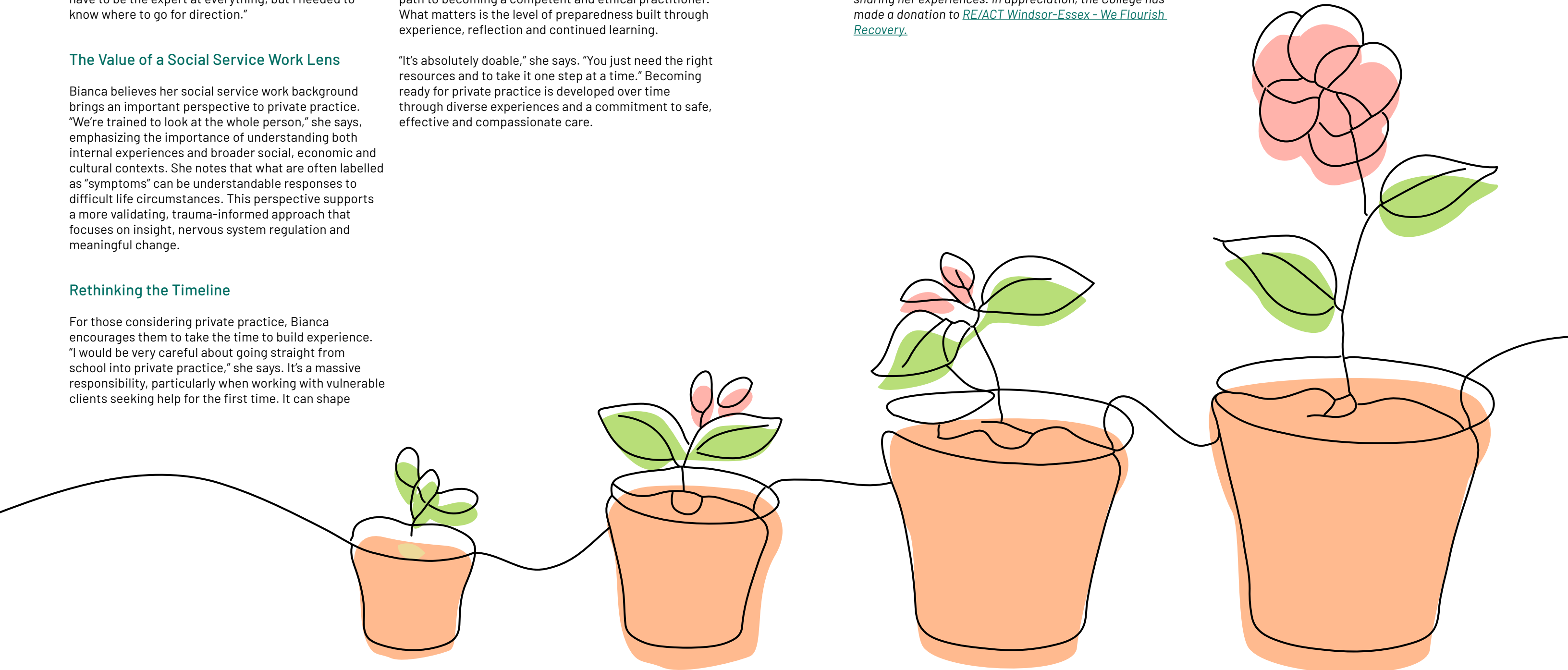
### A Journey, Not a Shortcut

Bianca's story demonstrates that there is no single path to becoming a competent and ethical practitioner. What matters is the level of preparedness built through experience, reflection and continued learning.

"It's absolutely doable," she says. "You just need the right resources and to take it one step at a time." Becoming ready for private practice is developed over time through diverse experiences and a commitment to safe, effective and compassionate care.

*Bianca Stefina is a Registered Social Service Worker (RSSW), Child and Youth Care Practitioner (CYCP), has a Bachelor of Arts in Child Psychology (BA), is a Certified Clinical Trauma Specialist (CCTS-A) and Certified Multichannel Eye-Movement Practitioner - Level 1 (CMEMIP-1). She has also completed training as a Somatic Parts Work Practitioner- Level 1, 2, 3, is a Certified Trauma Support Specialist and a Certified Trauma & Resiliency Life Coach. For more information about Bianca, [visit her website](#).*

*The College thanks Bianca for speaking with us and sharing her experiences. In appreciation, the College has made a donation to [RE/ACT Windsor-Essex - We Flourish Recovery](#).*





# Consent in Practice:

## What Every Registrant Needs to Know

Client consent is a fundamental aspect of ethical social work and social service work practice. At its core, consent is about respecting clients' autonomy, their right to be informed and their ability to make decisions about their own lives.

In most practice contexts, consent is guided by common law principles, such as those found in Ontario's [Health Care and Consent Act, 1996](#). While exceptions exist, these principles help registrants navigate consent and capacity across a wide range of scenarios.

Below is a practical overview to support registrants in their day-to-day work with clients.

### What Makes Consent Valid?

Unless legislation states otherwise, if the client is capable of giving consent, it is their consent that is required. Consent from a family member or next-of-kin only becomes relevant if the client is incapable of consenting.

For consent to be valid, it must be:

1. **Voluntary** –the client's decision is the product of their conscious mind.
2. **Informed** – the client understands nature of the service, along with its potential risks and benefits.
3. **Given by a capable person** – the client understands the information relevant to the specific social work/social service work intervention and can understand the reasonable consequences of consenting or refusing to consent.

Capacity is not "all or nothing." The client may be capable of consenting to some services but not others. Capacity can also change over time. Clients are presumed to be capable unless there is evidence to suggest otherwise.

Determining capacity is the registrant's responsibility when offering services. While the perspectives of colleagues or others may be helpful, registrants are expected to rely on their professional judgment, based on the specific decision and circumstances.

### Capacity Considerations in Practice

The same test of capacity applies to all clients, regardless of age, cognitive impairment, if they are under the influence of drugs, intoxicated, mentally unwell or an involuntarily detained psychiatric patient.

Some key reminders:

- **Capacity is decision-specific and time-specific.** For example, the client with a developmental disability or Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) may be capable of making certain counselling decisions but not others. Capacity decisions must be made one decision at a time, at one point in time, one client at a time.
- **Capacity can fluctuate.** This is particularly relevant when working with clients experiencing dementia or age-related cognitive impairments. Clients may have varying degrees of capacity, and the focus must be on specific decisions or kinds of decisions to be made at any given time. Capacity may fluctuate, increase or decrease. Capacity to consent must be analyzed in terms of the client and the specific decision and issue.
- **Capacity is not about agreeing with the client's choice.** A capable client has the right to make decisions others may see as unwise. The focus is on how the decision is made, not what decision is made.

### Practice Tip

When determining capacity, slow the conversation down. Use plain language, check for understanding and revisit consent as circumstances change. This is especially relevant when working with clients whose capacity may fluctuate.

## When Substitute Consent is Required

Substitute consent only arises when a registrant determines that the client is incapable of making the decision or legislation explicitly authorizes another person to make the decision.

Under the [Health Care Consent Act, 1996](#), a substitute decision-maker must:

1. follow the client's known wishes of consent expressed while capable and is 16 years of age or older; or
2. if no prior relevant wish is known or it is impossible to follow, make decisions of consent based on the client's best interests.

The term "best interests" is defined broadly to include the client's values and beliefs when capable, current wishes while incapable, general wellbeing and medical risks and benefits. Substitute decision-makers are entitled to all information necessary to make an informed decision.

## Final Reflections

Capacity is fluid and context-dependent. Registrants are well-advised to visit the topic of consent regularly with their clients to ensure the client's capacity for understanding their decision related to services they are receiving. If the client does disagree with a registrant's determination of incapacity, they may challenge that decision through the Consent and Capacity Board.

Registrants are encouraged to refer to the below Standards of Practice to guide actions and decisions:

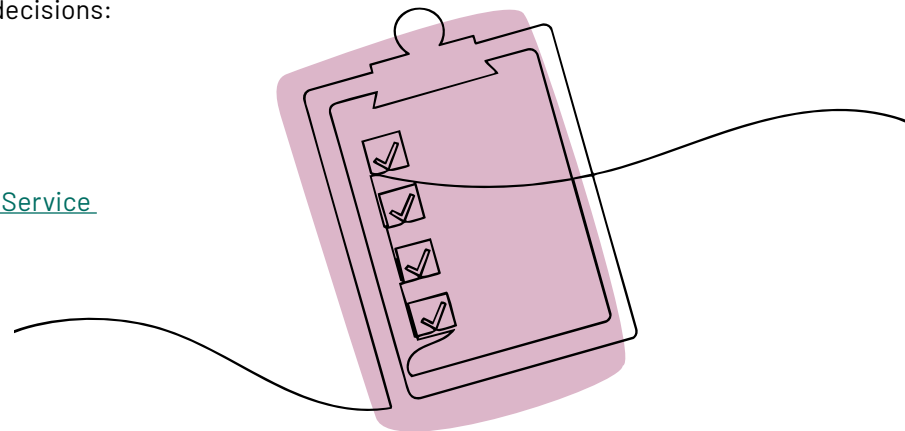
- [Principle II: Competence and Integrity](#)
- [Principle III: Responsibility to Clients](#)
- [Principle IV: The Social Work and Social Service Work Record](#)

The following College resources also provide helpful information on this topic:

- [PHIPA Privacy Toolkit for Social Workers and Social Service Workers](#)
- [Practice Notes: "Setting the Table" – Issues to Consider When Initiating Client Conversations](#)
- [Practice Notes: Meeting Professional Obligations and Protecting Clients' Privacy: Disclosure of Information Without Consent](#)
- [Practice Notes: Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information without Client Consent](#)

Registrants may book a practice consultation with the College's Professional Practice team or email [practice@ocswssw.org](mailto:practice@ocswssw.org) with any questions.

In some acrimonious situations when capacity is unclear, registrants may wish to obtain legal consultation. The College does not provide legal advice or interpret the law.



\*This article draws on the *Legal Guide for Social Workers and Social Service Workers* by Robert Solomon, developed in consultation with the author.



# FAQs on Reporting Charges and Convictions

## What registrants need to know about charges and self-reports regarding findings of guilt

### Are registrants required to report findings of guilt to the College?

Yes. Registrants are required to report every finding of guilt in relation to a criminal offence, an offence under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* (Canada) or the *Food and Drugs Act* (Canada) and any offence that could be relevant to practice. For example, if a registrant is charged with a provincial offence under the *Personal Health Information Protection Act* for unauthorized access of personal health information.

### I got a parking or speeding ticket. Do I need to report that to the College?

No. Speeding and parking tickets do not need to be reported to the College. These offences are not related to a registrant's suitability to practise social work or social service work. Registrants should use their judgment and knowledge of the profession and the Standards of Practice when considering whether a finding of guilt is one that may impact their suitability to practise and therefore should be reported.

### Does the College investigate every self-report regarding a finding of guilt?

No. Although the College does review all self-reports received, we do not investigate everyone. After reviewing the self-report, the College determines what level of risk may be posed to the public and makes a

decision about the appropriate regulatory response. There are options available to the College that do not involve a formal investigation. For example, a registrant may be asked to review practice standards and/or other resources. In some cases, they may be asked to meet with a College representative to discuss the matter.

### What happens if a registrant does not self-report a finding of guilt?

A registrant who does not comply with their self-reporting obligation could be investigated and may face professional misconduct allegations.

### How does the College learn about charges or findings of guilt?

The College receives information from a wide variety of sources. Some of these sources include employers, the police, the public and the news media.

### If I have been charged and/or convicted, will the College make the charges/conviction public?

In some cases, yes. As of June 4, 2025, the College bylaws require that matters assessed as relevant to a registrant's suitability to practise be posted to the registrant's profile on the College's Online Register. This includes the posting of charges, convictions and terms of release. Posting this information is consistent with the practices of other regulatory bodies, including health professionals regulated under the *Regulated Health Professions Act*.



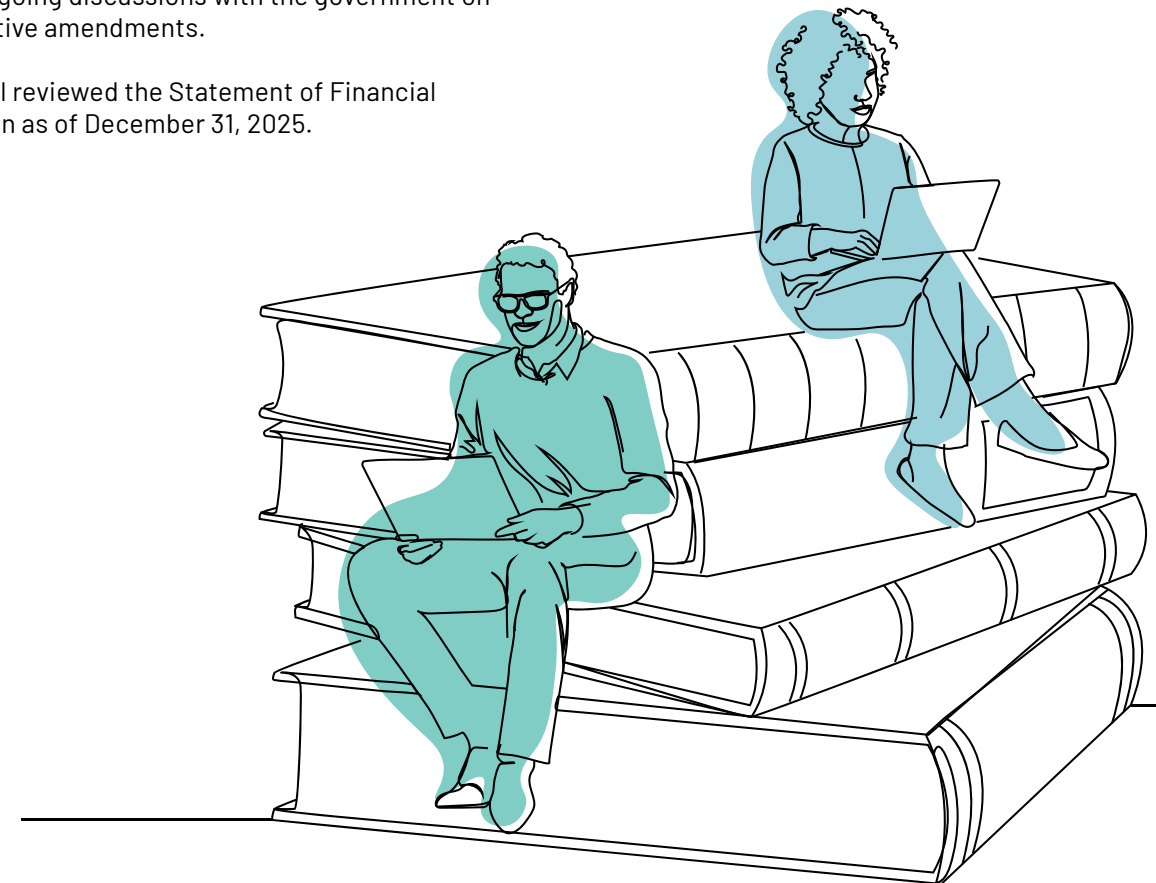
# Council Meeting Highlights

## November 27, 2025

- Senior consultant Sheena Prasad from Diversio presented the identified trends from year two of the College's Equity and Inclusion Data Initiative.
- 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: updates around engagement and outreach opportunities with Professional Practice including the latest Coffee with the College series; the recent Educational Forum which focused on private practice and psychotherapy; an overview of current renewal of registration period; and the College's public awareness campaign and its partnership with AfroToronto.
- Council reviewed the Statement of Financial Position as of September 30, 2025.
- Council reviewed the Statement of Operations from January 1, 2025 to September 30, 2025.
- Council reviewed the College's Risk Register and Key Performance Indicators.
- Council approved a motion to appoint a social service worker Council member position to committees on Council.
- Council approved the appointment of mentors to new Council members.
- Council approved the revisions to equivalency registration policies and directed College staff to consider guidance provided by the Chair of the Registration Appeals Committee.
- Council approved in principle the draft Acceptable Alternatives to Official Documents Policy pending approval by the Ontario Fairness Commissioner.
- Council approved the Council and Committee Governance Manual Part II: Policies.
- Council approved the revised Practice Guidelines for Consent and Confidentiality with Children and Youth.
- Council received an update on the College's sexual abuse risk mitigation strategy including the funding for therapy initiative and an overview of the Sexual Abuse Prevention Program modules.
- 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: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; Standards of Practice; Election; Nominating; Finance and Audit; and Governance.

## March 4, 2026

- Guests from the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) presented updates around their organization and entry-to-practice exams for College applicants.
- Council was provided with updates and discussed the College's phased approach to implementing entry-to-practice exams for College applicants.
- Council made a motion directing College staff to commit to outlining an approach to support research gaps, barriers, evaluation of outcomes and effectiveness related to entry-to-practice initiatives.
- Sanjay Govindaraj, 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: engagement and outreach opportunities with Professional Practice staff; updates around the College's renewal period; and ongoing discussions with the government on legislative amendments.
- Council reviewed the Statement of Financial Position as of December 31, 2025.
- Council reviewed the Statement of Operations from January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025.
- Council reviewed the College's 2025-2026 Risk Register.
- Council approved a motion to fill vacant public member positions on committees.
- Council reviewed and approved a Chosen Name Recognition Policy.
- Council approved the revisions to equivalency registration policies.
- 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: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; Standards of Practice; Election; Nominating; Finance and Audit; and Governance.





# Practice Notes

## The Many Sides to Supervision

**Practice Notes is an educational tool designed to help Ontario social workers, social service workers, supervisees, students, 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 receives numerous requests for consultation regarding supervision. This is unsurprising as supervision is an essential component of professional practice throughout a registrant's career. Although the need for supervision does not end after a certain period in practice, supervision evolves and may look different depending on where a registrant is in their career, their practice setting or the client group being served. Registrants' inquiries about supervision reveal that it is a multifaceted process with different dimensions that must be considered.

When discussing supervision, it is important to note that supervisees are clients – to whom registrants have professional responsibilities.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, it is necessary to understand the difference between consultation and supervision. For the purposes of these Practice Notes, a supervisee is considered a client whenever a registrant provides a formal supervisory service, including where the supervisee is a professional from another discipline, provided the registrant is competent to provide that service and the work being supervised falls within the registrant's scope of practice.

Supervision<sup>2</sup> is a formal process, one in which the supervisor takes notes and stores them in accordance with the Standards of Practice. A supervisee is a client, as they are "provided with either direct or indirect professional services, as detailed in the Scopes of Practice."<sup>3</sup> As a client, supervisees must be informed by the supervisor of the limits of confidentiality and that information may be shared with and by a supervisor where the circumstances require disclosure (for example, mandatory reporting). In addition, clients of the supervisee must be informed about the limits of confidentiality. It is also important to note that it is an act of professional misconduct to provide inadequate supervision.<sup>4</sup>

Consultation<sup>5</sup> is a less formal process. An example is having a conversation with a colleague to assist in gathering resources and discussing ideas that can be used to support a client. No identifying information or names are shared during a consultation. It is an informal process of discussing client supports or resources where client information is kept confidential by the registrant seeking advice or guidance. The individual with whom the registrant consults is not in a position of authority and is not held accountable for the guidance they offer. On the other hand, supervision is a formal process that is required throughout a registrant's career. During supervision sessions, the supervisee discusses their client's private information with their supervisor, and the supervisee is considered a client.

Registrants should also note that other regulatory bodies may have different definitions for consultation and supervision than the College. If registrants are looking to engage in consultation or supervision with an individual registered with another regulatory body, they should ensure that they understand the definitions used by that particular regulatory body.

<sup>1</sup>Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW), *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Third Edition, 2023*, Glossary, "Client."

<sup>2</sup>OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Third Edition, 2023*, Glossary, "Supervision."

<sup>3</sup>OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Third Edition, 2023*, Glossary, "Client."

<sup>4</sup>Professional Misconduct Regulation, O Reg 384/00, e-Laws, <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/000384>.

<sup>5</sup>OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Third Edition, 2023*, Glossary, "Consultation."

Lastly, it is important to understand the differences between group supervision and peer or group consultation. Group supervision is a form of supervision where a supervisor supports a group of supervisees, under the definition of supervision. A group of peers providing consultation, support and advice to each other, while often called group or peer supervision, is considered consultation and not supervision – meaning that client information must be kept confidential.

For additional information, registrants may want to read the [Practice Notes: Supervision At the Core of Competent and Ethical Practice](#) or watch the [Webinar: Supervision: The Cornerstone of Competence](#). The [Practice Guidelines for Performing the Controlled Act of Psychotherapy](#) also contain a chapter on supervision.

## Scenario 1 – Supervision Outside the Scope of Practice

*Registrants have contacted the Professional Practice Department to share that they have received cold calls from individuals who state they are lactation consultants and to ask if the registrant can supervise them for billing purposes. These registrants consulted the College to gain clarification because they did not feel that lactation consultation was part of their scope of practice and were confused by the request.*

Lactation consulting is not part of the social work<sup>6</sup> or social service work<sup>7</sup> scopes of practice. It would therefore not be appropriate for a registrant to supervise a lactation consultant, as they would not have the requisite skills, knowledge and judgment to advise the individual. If a lactation consultant invoiced their client indicating that a registrant was their supervisor, an insurance company could (and has) called the College to confirm whether lactation consultation services are in the social work or social service work scopes of practice. When the insurance company discovers that lactation consulting is not part of a registrant's scope of practice, they could (and have) determined that a registrant has committed insurance fraud.

There are times when registrants can provide supervision services to other professionals. In these situations, the professionals bill their clients while indicating that a College registrant is their supervisor. The clients can then submit the bill for these services through their employee benefits programs. This is called [third-party billing](#).<sup>8</sup> Registrants can only provide supervision services to other professionals if they have competence in the other professional's role, function and client group, and the work of the other professional falls under the registrant's scope of practice. Examples of professionals who may use third-party billing include, but aren't limited to:

- Child and Youth Workers
- Disability Support Workers
- Community Support Workers
- Addiction Counsellors

As discussed in previous [Practice Notes](#)<sup>9</sup>, some professions **do not** fall within the College's scopes of practice and may not be used for third-party billing, including, but not limited to:

- Sleep consultants
- Wellness or other coaches
- Doulas
- Trauma-informed yoga instructors
- Early Childhood Education instructors

In addition to the factors discussed above, registrants must ensure they are [competent](#)<sup>10</sup> to provide supervision, as this is a specific skill set that requires honing and training. Most importantly, registrants must consider whether providing supervision to other professionals for third-party billing is being done in the client's best interests – to remove barriers and increase access to insured services. As the first interpretation in the Code of Ethics states, “[a] College registrant maintains the best interest of the client as the primary

professional obligation.”<sup>11</sup> If a registrant were to engage in third-party billing with the primary motivation to increase their business and revenue, this would not be in the client's best interest and would create a conflict of interest.<sup>12</sup>

## Scenario 2

*The Professional Practice Department was contacted by a registrant who specializes in a specific modality and who was asked to provide supervision to a social worker in another province. The registrant stated that the supervisee was an Ontario resident who was living temporarily in another province, and they would meet virtually to discuss the supervisee's clients and the application of the treatment modality.*

As supervision is a professional service, and a supervisee is a client, the registrant was informed that they would need to contact the regulatory body where the supervisee was located to determine the regulatory requirements in that [jurisdiction](#). The fact that the supervisee was an Ontario resident was irrelevant; service occurs where the client is located.

Some regulatory bodies may require registration to provide supervision services to a registrant in their jurisdiction, even if supervision is provided virtually. It is important to note that the College cannot authorize registrants to practise anywhere but Ontario. Additionally, while professional liability insurance is not a College requirement, registrants providing supervision services are strongly encouraged to have appropriate coverage. The registrant was advised to contact their professional liability insurance to ensure they are covered to practise in other jurisdictions, including virtual practice. They were also encouraged to obtain a legal consultation to determine if there are any legislative requirements they should know about before providing services in the other jurisdiction. In addition to the jurisdictional issues, registrants should always be mindful of their obligation to provide adequate supervision to a supervisee, and whether they can do so in virtual or distance context. As previously noted, it is an act of misconduct to fail to provide adequate supervision.

Another factor to consider is whether the registrant will be supervising someone who is performing the controlled act of psychotherapy. The regulation of

the controlled act of psychotherapy differs across jurisdictions. In some areas, psychotherapy is not regulated and is not a controlled act. Additionally, in some jurisdictions, the controlled act of psychotherapy is not regulated by the social work regulatory body, and registrants will have to consult with another regulatory body to determine if they are permitted to provide this service. If a registrant is considering providing supervision for someone performing the controlled act of psychotherapy who is located in another jurisdiction, the registrant will likely need to contact more than one regulatory body.

Another complexity with cross-jurisdictional supervision depends on whether the supervisee is a social service worker. Ontario is one of the few jurisdictions in Canada that regulates social service workers. While the potential supervisor must take the same steps and contact the regulatory body where the social service worker supervisee is located to determine the requirements in that jurisdiction, the response on how to navigate this practice will vary.

Registrants considering providing supervision in other jurisdictions should consider:

- What are the regulatory requirements of providing supervision services to someone in another jurisdiction?
- Does the registrant have professional liability insurance and does it cover practising in another jurisdiction?
- Are there other laws the registrant should be familiar with when practising in another jurisdiction, such as mandatory reporting obligations?
- Is the registrant knowledgeable of resources in the other jurisdiction, and can they adequately and ethically assist with crisis management of the supervisees' clients in that jurisdiction?
- Is psychotherapy a controlled act in the jurisdiction, and if so, who regulates this practice?
- Is social service work regulated in the jurisdiction, and if not, what are the implications of providing supervision?

<sup>6</sup>OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Third Edition, 2023*, Scope of Practice for Social Work.

<sup>7</sup>OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Third Edition, 2023*, Scope of Practice for Social Service Work.

<sup>8</sup>Betteridge, Lise. "Practice Notes: The Question of Third-Party Billing." *Perspective*, Spring 2015. [https://www.ocswssw.org/wp-content/uploads/PN-The\\_Question\\_of\\_Third-Party\\_Billing.pdf](https://www.ocswssw.org/wp-content/uploads/PN-The_Question_of_Third-Party_Billing.pdf)

<sup>9</sup>Practice Notes: Are You Practicing in Scope? *Perspective*, Spring 2025. [https://www.ocswssw.org/wp-content/uploads/PN-Are\\_You\\_Practising\\_In\\_Scope-EN.pdf](https://www.ocswssw.org/wp-content/uploads/PN-Are_You_Practising_In_Scope-EN.pdf)

<sup>10</sup>Betteridge, Lise. "Practice Notes: But How Do I Know if I'm Competent – Issues to Consider." *Perspective*, Fall 2013. [https://www.ocswssw.org/wp-content/uploads/PN-How\\_Do\\_I\\_Know.pdf](https://www.ocswssw.org/wp-content/uploads/PN-How_Do_I_Know.pdf)

<sup>11</sup>OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Third Edition, 2023*, Code of Ethics, interpretation 1.

<sup>12</sup>OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Third Edition, 2023*, Glossary, "Conflict of Interest."

### Scenario 3

A registrant contacted the Professional Practice Department to inquire about finding a supervisor. The registrant will be performing the controlled act of psychotherapy and was curious who they could receive supervision from. The registrant also asked if the College had a list or any recommendations of where they could find a supervisor. They also wanted to know if supervision services were HST-exempt.

The registrant was informed they could receive supervision for the controlled act of psychotherapy by a regulated professional who:

- Is competent in the provision of supervision and in performing the controlled act;
- Who understands the registrant's scope of practice; and
- Who is a registrant in good standing in one of the [six regulatory bodies](#) that are authorized to perform the controlled act of psychotherapy in Ontario.

The registrant then asked if they could receive supervision from a social worker in another province. They were directed to information on the College website about how social workers in other provinces can apply to [practise electronically in Ontario](#).

The registrant was informed that the College does not make recommendations or keep a roster of supervisors. It was suggested that the registrant contact their professional association to see if they could provide guidance in this area. The registrant was also encouraged to reach out through their professional networks for suggestions and to explore online therapy information sites where professionals advertise their services, such as *Psychology Today*, to review the profiles of providers who offer supervision services.

Lastly, it was explained to the registrant that as the regulatory body for social workers and social service workers, the College cannot give tax advice. Registrants should obtain advice from an accountant, lawyer and/or the Canada Revenue Agency HST Rulings Department at 1-800-959-8287.

### Conclusion

Registrants must remember, “[t]he need for supervision does not end after a certain period in practice but evolves and continues throughout a [registrant’s] career.”<sup>13</sup> When a registrant is starting their career or changing roles, client groups or practice settings, they will require more frequent and formal supervision. As a registrant progresses in their practice, their supervision needs may change, and they may seek out different forms of check-in and consultation, with ad hoc formal supervision always available. Whatever the case, “College registrants shall engage in the ongoing process of self-reflection and evaluation of their practice and shall seek supervision and consultation when appropriate.”<sup>14</sup>

Additionally, registrants must remember there is a difference between formal supervision and peer consultation. While peer consultation is important for numerous reasons, it is not a substitute for formal supervision. Also, a supervisee meets the definition of a client, and a supervisor must provide safe, ethical and competent service within the supervisory relationship.

There are many different elements to consider when providing or seeking supervision. An effective supervisor is competent in providing supervision, understands their own and their supervisee’s scope of practice, as well as the regulatory and policy implications which may limit or impact practice. Finally, recognizing that supervision is a career-long professional obligation supports safe and competent practice and demonstrates care and accountability to clients.

If you have questions about supervision, please contact the Professional Practice Department at [practice@ocswssw.org](mailto:practice@ocswssw.org).



## 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.

#### **Stephanie Brash #840959**

The Discipline Committee of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers found that Stephanie Brash is guilty of professional misconduct. View the decision here: [Stephanie Brash #840959 \(Discipline Decision Summary and Reasons\)](#)

#### **Yujia Zhu #834316**

The Discipline Committee of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers found that Yujia Zhu is guilty of professional misconduct. View the decision here: [Yujia Zhu #834316 \(Discipline Decision Summary and Reasons\)](#)

#### **Emma Clarkson #835057**

The Discipline Committee of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers found that Emma Clarkson is guilty of professional misconduct. View the decision here: [Emma Clarkson #835057 \(Discipline Decision Summary and Reasons\)](#)

<sup>13</sup>OCSWSSW. *The Practice Guidelines for Performing the Controlled Act of Psychotherapy*. 2017.

<sup>14</sup>OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Third Edition, 2023*, Principle II: Competence and Integrity, interpretation 2.1.8.



# College Updates and Reminders

## Save the Date! Registration for AMED 2026 Opening Soon!

The College is pleased to announce that it will be holding its Annual Meeting and Education Day (AMED) on **Tuesday, June 9, 2026**.

Stay tuned - registration will open in early May!

For questions or inquiries about AMED, contact the Communications Department at [AMED@ocswssw.org](mailto:AMED@ocswssw.org).

## Register for Coffee with the College

The College is pleased to invite registrants to join the next dates in our interactive series, Coffee with the College. Register via the links below!

Upcoming session dates:

- [Wednesday, April 22, 2026](#)
- [Wednesday, May 27, 2026](#)
- [Wednesday, June 24, 2026](#)

Hosted by the Professional Practice Team, this engaging lunch and learn discussion explores some of the most common ethical and practice dilemmas that registrants encounter. Registrants will also be able to ask questions and engage in live consultations with the Professional Practice staff.

Please note: Coffee with the College sessions are meant to offer live consultations and will not be recorded.

For questions regarding Coffee with the College, contact the Professional Practice Department at [practice@ocswssw.org](mailto:practice@ocswssw.org).

## CCP Required Resources and the Resource Room

The [Continuing Competence Program \(CCP\)](#) is a mandatory requirement for all College registrants except those in the [retired class of registration](#). This includes registrants who are not currently practising, those in the inactive class and registrants on maternity, parental or sick leave. Annual participation in the CCP is one of the ways that registrants stay current in their practice.

To complete the CCP, registrants are required to:

- Review the [Standards of Practice](#) every year.
- Complete a self-assessment.
- Set goals and carry out learning activities based on their self-assessment.

As part of the 2026 CCP, registrants are required to review the following resources:

- [The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice](#)
- [Practice Guidelines for Consent and Confidentiality with Children and Youth](#)
- [Practice Notes: Online Footprint – Professional Integrity Matters](#)
- [Practice Notes: Are You Practising in Scope?](#)
- [Sexual Abuse Prevention Program \(SAPP\)](#)

We encourage registrants to check out the Practice Resources section of our website's [Resource Room](#). Here, registrants can access guidance, tools and practice supports to help uphold ethical, competent and professional practice in their work.

For questions or inquiries, contact the Professional Practice Department at [practice@ocswssw.org](mailto:practice@ocswssw.org).

## Council Election in Electoral District No. 3

On Friday, June 19, 2026, two social workers and two social service workers from Electoral District No. 3 will be elected to join the 2026-2027 College Council. The term will begin in September 2026.

We encourage pertinent registrants to participate in this important process. Voting begins on Wednesday, May 20, 2026.

More information about Council elections, including the voting process, can be found on the [College's website](#).

For questions or inquiries about Council elections, contact [elections@ocswssw.org](mailto:elections@ocswssw.org).

## In Case You Missed It (ICYMI): 2025 Educational Forum Video Recording

The 2025 Educational Forum recording is now available to watch on the [College website](#) or [YouTube channel](#).

The College's Director of Professional Practice, Christina Van Sickle, MSW, RSW, facilitated a panel discussion entitled *The Greatest Risk Requires the Greatest Competence – Private Practice and Psychotherapy*. The expert panel explored what competencies are needed to perform the controlled act of psychotherapy, and why this competence is required before engaging in a counselling or mental health support private practice. The panel session also provided insights to registrants on the different skills and resources required before beginning a private practice, including how to stay current in their practice.

For questions or inquiries about the Educational Forum, contact the Communications Department [communications@ocswssw.org](mailto:communications@ocswssw.org).

## Coming Soon! Year Two Results from the Equity and Inclusion Data Initiative

The College is pleased to announce that we will be sharing insights and trends from the second year of the [Equity and Inclusion Data Initiative](#) in the upcoming Annual Report.

Reporting on this initiative is an important step towards equity and inclusion as we aim to establish a benchmark and provide insight into the degree to which the diversity of the Ontario public is reflected in College registration. The Annual Report will be published in late May.

For questions or inquiries about the Equity and Inclusion Data Initiative, contact [inclusion@ocswssw.org](mailto:inclusion@ocswssw.org).

## Reminder to Sign Up for the 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. [Click on this link 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](mailto: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, marriage certificate, marriage licence or other official government document showing both your previous and new name(s) for our records. You can submit your name change request through the [Online Portal](#) under the "Request" tab. This information can also be sent by email to [info@ocswssw.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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. If your home address is also your business address, it will be publicly visible on the Online Register. If you do not want this information to be published on the

Online Register, you must provide the College with an alternate address such as a P.O. Box that can be listed instead. 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](mailto: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, marriage certificate, marriage licence or other official government document showing both your previous and new name(s) for our records. You can submit your name change request through the [Online Portal](#) under the "Request" tab. This information may be sent by email to [info@ocswssw.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:info@ocswssw.org)  
Website: [ocswssw.org](http://ocswssw.org)

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

## Who to Contact at the College

### Registration and Renewals

For general and renewal inquiries, please email [info@ocswssw.org](mailto: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](mailto:oor@ocswssw.org).

### Professional Practice

For professional practice inquiries, please email: [practice@ocswssw.org](mailto:practice@ocswssw.org).

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

### Communications

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

### Professional Conduct

For information on complaints, discipline and mandatory reporting, please email: [investigations@ocswssw.org](mailto: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](mailto:titleprotection@ocswssw.org).



Ontario College of  
Social Workers and  
Social Service Workers

Professional  
Ethical  
Qualified  
Accountable