THE SWRB TEN CORE COMPETENCE STANDARDS

The SWRB recognises core competencies that reflect practice standards accepted in social work in New Zealand. The core competence standards apply to all competence assessment processes that are set and approved by the SWRB. The requirements of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003, the International Federation of Social Workers' definition of social work and the ANZASW standards of practice have informed the SWRB in determining these standards.

These competence standards are to be read in conjunction with the SWRB Code of Conduct and the ANZASW Code of Ethics. These standards identify minimum standards of practice for the social work profession in New Zealand. They are not intended to describe all of the possible knowledge and practice skills required by social workers. They are the 'core' competencies for social work.

THESE COMPETENCE STANDARDS ARE DEMONSTRATED BY THE SOCIAL WORKER AS THEY ENGAGE IN PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, WHĀNAU, AIGA, GROUPS AND INSTITUTIONS WITH WHOM THEY WORK.

A COMPETENT SOCIAL WORKER'S PRACTICE MUST DEMONSTRATE THE FOLLOWING IN ALL PRACTICE CONTEXTS:

1. Competence to practise social work with Māori

The social worker demonstrates this competence by:
- demonstrating knowledge of the Treaty of Waitangi, te reo Māori and tikanga Māori;
- articulating how the wider context of Aotearoa New Zealand both historically and currently can impact on practice;
- Te Rangatiratanga: Maintaining relationships that are Mana enhancing, self-determining, respectful, mindful of cultural uniqueness, and acknowledge cultural identity.
- Te Manaakitanga: Utilising practice behaviours that ensure mauri ora by ensuring safe space, being mana enhancing and respectful, acknowledge boundaries and meet obligations.
- Te Whanaungatanga: Engaging in practice that is culturally sustaining, strengthens relationships, is mutually contributing and connecting and encourages warmth.

2. Competence to practise social work with different ethnic and cultural groups in Aotearoa New Zealand

The social worker:
- acknowledges and values a range of world views including divergent views within and between ethnic and cultural groups;
- understands that culture is not static but changes over time;
- demonstrates awareness and self-critique of their own cultural beliefs, values and historical positioning and how this impacts on their social work practice with their clients from other cultural backgrounds;
- critically analyses how the culture and social work approaches and policies of their employing organisation may compromise culturally safe practice;
- demonstrates knowledge of culturally relevant assessments, intervention strategies and techniques;
- engages with people groups and communities in ways that respect family, language, cultural, spiritual and relational markers.

3. Competence to work respectfully and inclusively with diversity and difference in practice

The social worker:
- demonstrates knowledge of diversity between and within different cultures, including ethnicity, disability, social and economic status, age, sexuality, gender and transgender, faiths and beliefs;
- demonstrates sufficient self-awareness and is able to critically reflect on own personal values, cultures, knowledge and beliefs to manage the influences of personal biases when practising;
- can respectfully and effectively communicate and engage with a diverse range of people.

4. Competence to promote the principles of human rights and social and economic justice

The social worker:
- understands, has a commitment to, and advocates for human, legal and civil rights, social and economic justice, and self-determination;
- understands and challenges mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and also has the knowledge, skills and an understanding of how to appropriately leverage those which enhance power and privilege;

- respects and upholds the rights, dignity, values and autonomy of people and creates an environment of respect and understanding.

5.   Competence to engage in practice which promotes social change

The social worker:
- critically analyses policies, systems and structures and understands how they impact on people, groups, communities and wider society;
- advocates the need for social change to provide equity and fairness for all;
- collaborates with others to generate new knowledge that will contribute to the improvement of peoples' lives, communities and wider society;
- contributes to policy making to make systems and structures responsive to those who use them.

6.   Competence to understand and articulate social work theories, indigenous practice knowledge, other relevant theories, and social work practice methods and models

The social worker:
- demonstrates a critical understanding of specific social work theories and other relevant theories and integrates this into bi-cultural social work practice;
- demonstrates an understanding of human behaviour and integrates this into social work practice;
- demonstrates an understanding of and is able to utilise a variety of social work practice methods, models and interventions whilst drawing upon a wider theoretical framework;
- critically reflects on practice and utilises relevant theories and methods of practice.

7.   Competence to apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments

The social worker:
- can distinguish, appraise and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including new information and communication technology, research based knowledge and practice wisdom;
- engages in research-informed practice and practice-informed research;
- demonstrates the ability to work autonomously and make independent judgments from a well-informed social work position and seeks guidance when necessary;
- demonstrates effective oral, written and electronic communication.

8. Competence to promote empowerment of people and communities to enable positive change

The social worker:
- is compassionate, empathetic and respectful and seeks to understand others to adequately assess their needs;
- demonstrates resilience and the ability to manage interpersonal conflict and challenges that arise in social work practice;
- facilitates and promotes clients' active participation in decision making;
- effectively collaborates and engages with others and works in partnership with clients to gain access to resources;
- reflects on their own social work practice to enable people to realise their potential and participate in their communities.

9. Competence to practice within legal and ethical boundaries of the social work profession

The social worker:
- adheres to the SWRB Code of Conduct, any workplace code of conduct and the professional Code of Ethics;
- identifies and manages ethical dilemmas and issues that arise in practice and seeks supervision or guidance;
- recognises and responds appropriately to actual or potential conflicts of interest;
- demonstrates an understanding of relevant legislation, policies and systems which govern practice and performs any statutory duties with diligence and care;
- upholds the right to privacy and confidentiality of personal information and informs clients of the situations where the information may need to be disclosed;
- keeps clear and accurate records and ensures these records are made at the same time as the events being recorded or as soon as possible afterwards.

10. Represents the social work profession with integrity and professionalism

The social worker:
- demonstrates active promotion and support of the social work profession, acts with integrity and ensures accountability;
- attends to professional roles and responsibilities with diligence, timeliness and care, acknowledges that social work positions carry power and uses authority responsibly;
- behaves in a professional manner, maintains personal and professional boundaries and is accountable for all actions and decisions;
- knows the limits of their own practice and experience, practices appropriate self-care and seeks advice where necessary;
- actively participates in supervision, continual professional development and career-long learning.