



# PERSPECTIVE

PROFESSIONAL • ETHICAL • QUALIFIED • ACCOUNTABLE

## 20,000 STRONG: Looking Back at 18 Years of Regulatory Excellence



OCSWSSW staff Ema Sevdina with OCSWSSW member Celia Denov, RSW

### EVERY MILESTONE BEGINS WITH A FOUNDATION. FIRST STEPS, IF YOU WILL.

Last December, the College increased its membership to over 20,000 registered members – a significant moment in the College’s 18-year history that elevates its profile within the regulatory community. The 20,000 milestone is something to celebrate and about which we are proud. This achievement wouldn’t have been possible without the dedication of College staff as well as our members’ commitment to professional and ethical practice.

The 20,000 milestone has led us to pause and reflect on how far we’ve come and what the future holds for the College and the professions of social work and social service work. This achievement also warrants a moment to reflect

on two individuals who have been with the College from the very beginning: Ema Sevdina and Celia Denov, RSW.

### THE COLLEGE’S FIRST REGISTERED MEMBER

Celia Denov, RSW, didn’t know she would become a social worker. After graduating from university with an English degree, she worked as a high school teacher in Tanzania for Cuso International. However, like many who enter the social work profession, Celia had a strong desire to help people and wanted to make a difference.

“I found social work to be a very fulfilling profession,” she said. “Social work has always been an exciting field; a profession that embraces empathy and holistic solutions to societal issues.”

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# Message from the Registrar – Strengthening Stakeholder and Public Awareness

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Over the past year, the College has made significant progress reaching out to stakeholders and raising awareness of its public protection mandate.

**Strengthening Stakeholder and Public Awareness** is one of the four priorities in the College's [2016-2019 Strategic Plan](#). Achieving this strategic priority is of major importance to the College, as it allows us to better fulfill our primary duty of serving and protecting the public through the regulation of the professions of social work and social service work. It is for this reason that I would like to dedicate this message to the College's recent public awareness and outreach efforts, which include the following initiatives:

### EMPLOYER OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

Last fall, the College launched its inaugural employer outreach campaign. This multi-faceted campaign coincided with the College's [Employer Roundtables](#) in Thunder Bay and Windsor, which gave employers an opportunity to meet with College representatives and learn more about the College, regulation and the value of hiring registered members. The employer outreach campaign, focusing on the theme "Don't Miss Out", featured a digital component including a new [Employers section](#) of our website, an [interactive quiz](#) and online advertising that informed employers of the benefits of hiring registered College members and increased awareness of the College's Online Register. The message to employers is simple: a quick check on the College website before they hire will tell them whether or not their candidate is registered. If the candidate's name is missing from the Register, the employer is missing out. The College also rolled out its new quarterly publication for employers called the [Employer Communiqué](#).

### PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE PRESENTATIONS

The College's Professional Practice Department has been very active in its outreach activity. In 2017, the College delivered **53 Professional Practice presentations** to key stakeholders across the province of Ontario. (This is **more than double** the number of presentations delivered in 2016.) In addition, the College's Professional Practice Department staffed a booth at six career fairs and participated on three discussion panels. To enhance awareness among students and educators, the College developed information packages for academic institutions, which included postcards, posters, and other resources and materials.

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## Message from the Registrar – Strengthening Stakeholder and Public Awareness

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### DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

Enhancing our digital presence continues to play a major role in the College's efforts to strengthen stakeholder and public awareness. Over the last few months, we have improved usability on the College website and member database to better serve members and the public. We have created a new URL, [otsttso.org](http://otsttso.org), for the College's French website to better engage the francophone community. Two of our newsletters, *Perspective* and the new *Employer Communiqué*, are now website-based, which makes it easier for the public to discover these articles – and thus learn more about the College – via Internet search. Last summer, we created a Facebook page, which allows us to reach a wider audience and connect with members in a new way. I am pleased to report that we now have more than 1,200 Facebook followers.

We are happy with the progress that has been made in 2017 and look forward to continuing our work of protecting the public through the regulation of social work and social service work. In the months ahead, we will continue to look for new ways to reach our stakeholders – including members of the public who remain unaware of the College – and better inform and engage members, employers, students and educators.



Lise Betteridge, MSW, RSW  
Registrar

## 20,000 STRONG: Looking Back at 18 Years of Regulatory Excellence

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Celia has the distinction of being the first registered member of the College. Celia entered social work in the late 1960s, long before the passage of the *Social Work and Social Service Work Act, 1998*, and the subsequent creation of the College. An early supporter of the College, she believes that regulation has brought more professionalism and accountability to the professions of social work and social service work.

"When I entered the profession anyone could call herself or himself a social worker or social service worker," she said. "There were few entry-to-practice requirements. The Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, a complaints process for the public, and ongoing learning programs didn't exist."

Celia spent the first five years of her social work career in a clinical setting. Though she enjoyed working on the frontlines, Celia wanted to make an impact at the systemic level. This would lead the mother of three to earn a

master's degree in social work, specializing in policy and administration. She would also go on to enjoy a long and distinguished career in government, most recently as an Assistant Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS).

"In government, I was able to help people at the policy, systemic level," she explained. "My work allowed me to get involved in a lot of initiatives that I believe have benefited society, including helping reform children's services earlier in my career, to addressing women's issues, among many others."

Celia remains busy following her retirement from the MCSS. She has been involved in high-profile public protection inquiries, including the Cornwall Public Inquiry, the Inquiry into Pediatric Forensic Pathology in Ontario, and – most recently – the Motherisk Commission Inquiry. She has also participated on two tribunals with the Health

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Professions Appeal and Review Board and the Child and Family Services Review Board. Celia formerly served in a volunteer capacity as the President of the Board of Directors for St. Stephen's Community House and Social Planning Toronto.

In the future, Celia wants to see the profession of social work continue its role in serving and advocating for the disadvantaged.

"The profession of social work is able to see issues holistically, and to do this from a base of core values," she said. "The urgent societal issues facing us right now, the needs of indigenous and racialized communities, the need for affordable housing and improved youth mental health, the ravages of poverty and substance abuse, immigration and refugee issues, all require the important role and contribution of social work."

### FROM BULGARIA TO THE COLLEGE

Like Celia, Ema Sevdina has been with the College from the beginning. She is a long-time member of the College's Registration Department, a group who deserves a great deal of the recognition for the College's 20,000-member milestone. Her responsibilities in the Registration Department include assessing applications and providing assistance during the registration process.

"When I first started working with the College, it was just me, Glenda McDonald (the College's founding Registrar) and three other staff," she said. "Watching the College grow over the years is like seeing the development of a building from foundation to finish."

Ema immigrated to Canada from Bulgaria with her son in 1995. Though she had a master's degree in economics, Ema had to start from the beginning, working part-time jobs

while taking care of her young son. The College would be Ema's first – and only – full-time job in Canada.

"It was quite the journey and experience," Ema says of her early years in Canada. "We literally had to start from scratch. We had to make it work and, in the end, we did."

Ema possesses a keen attention to detail, which makes her of great value to the College. She remembers everything about the College's history. After 18 years, she still remembers with great clarity the registration of the College's first member, Celia Denov, RSW.



The part of her job Ema enjoys most is connecting with people, whether they are students, members or her fellow staff. Every year she volunteers for the College's Annual Meeting and Education Day and is always ready and willing to meet with stakeholders at College outreach events. Her colleagues enjoy her company and she is a regular contributor to lunchtime discussions.

"I really like helping people," she said, of her work. "Helping new graduates with the registration process, and hearing their excitement as they are about to become registered social workers and registered social service workers, really makes my day."

### THANK YOU!

Every milestone requires first steps. The 20,000-member milestone is no different. We celebrate it as it represents years of hard work and dedication. For this, the College thanks its members and staff for their contributions over the last 18 years – for their critical role in helping the College fulfill its important public protection mandate.

# Terminating Social Work and Social Service Work Services

The Professional Practice Department has received an increase in inquiries from members who wish to better understand their ethical obligations when terminating professional services.

## THE ISSUE

Successful termination of social work and social service work services can be challenging for members and clients. Members may be unclear about how and when to terminate services with clients; there may also be times when members are "...unable or unwilling for appropriate reasons to provide the requested help."<sup>1</sup>

## THE CODE OF ETHICS AND STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

*The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Second Edition, 2008*, Principle III: Responsibility to Clients states that "College members terminate professional services to clients when such services are no longer required or requested. It is professional misconduct to discontinue professional services... unless the client requests the discontinuation, the client withdraws from the service, reasonable efforts are made to arrange alternative or replacement services, (or) the client is given reasonable opportunity to arrange alternative or replacement services."<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, members "who anticipate the termination or interruption of service notify clients promptly and arrange the termination, transfer, referral or continuation of service in accordance with clients' needs and preferences."<sup>3</sup>

## CONSIDERATIONS

- Members must use their professional skill and judgment to successfully terminate client services. Clear and transparent communication with clients is essential throughout the termination process.
- Determining a reasonable termination plan for the client will require the member to review the work that they have accomplished together, the client's progress, any required referrals to other resources, and how to end the relationship appropriately.<sup>4</sup>
- Members must assess how termination sessions will take place and ensure reasonable steps were taken to hold a termination session. What are considered reasonable steps is based on a variety of factors including: the presenting needs and identified goals of the client, the duration of service provided and the concerns outlined by the client at the outset of service provision.<sup>5</sup>
- Members must ensure that they are competent to provide services and that the services are within their scope of practice. They should also keep in mind that "when a client's needs fall outside the College member's usual area of practice, the member informs the client of the option to be referred to another professional."<sup>6</sup>

Members should review the Practice Notes, "[Early Endings – Addressing the Challenges of Termination](#)" when faced with a dilemma related to ethical termination.

*If you have further questions about this issue or other practice concerns, please contact the Professional Practice Department at 416-972-9882 or 1-877-828-9380 or email [practice@ocswssw.org](mailto:practice@ocswssw.org).*

1 Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW). *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Second Edition, 2008*, Principle III: Responsibility to Clients, Interpretation 3.5.

2 Ibid, Interpretation 3.9.

3 Ibid, Interpretation 3.10.

4 Pearson, Quinn M. "Terminating before Counseling has Ended: Counseling implications and strategies for counselor relocation." *Journal of Mental Health Counseling* 20.1 (Jan 1998) 56.

5 Betteridge, Lise, "Practice Notes: 'Early Endings – Addressing the Challenges of Termination'", *Perspective*, Fall 2014. [https://www.ocswssw.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/PN-Early\\_Endings.pdf](https://www.ocswssw.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/PN-Early_Endings.pdf).

6 OCSWSSW. *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Second Edition, 2008*, Principle II, Competence and Integrity, Interpretation 2.1.1.1.

## Mark Your Calendars for AMED 2018!



# Breaking Down Barriers

Annual Meeting & Education Day - **May 24, 2018**  
*Part of the Glenda McDonald Educational Series*

The College invites you to its 2018 Annual Meeting and Education Day (AMED) for what will surely be an engaging day of networking and learning. AMED is part of the [Glenda McDonald Educational Series](#), named in honour of the College's late founding Registrar.

**When:** Thursday, May 24, 2018

**Where:** Metro Toronto Convention Centre,  
North Building (Toronto)

**Who should attend:** OCSWSSW Members

This year's theme is *Breaking Down Barriers*. The morning portion of AMED includes the Annual Meeting, which will feature a keynote presentation and remarks from the College's Registrar, Lise Betteridge, MSW, RSW, and the College's President, Shelley Hale, RSSW. In the afternoon, attendees will have the option of selecting from eight unique breakouts during the education component of the day.

### KEYNOTE SPEAKER: CASANDRA DIAMOND

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the College's previously confirmed keynote speaker Jennifer Richardson, RSW is no longer able to present at this year's AMED. The College is pleased to announce, however, that Casandra Diamond will be this year's keynote speaker. Casandra is the founder and Director of BridgeNorth, a charitable organization working to address and prevent the unique problems faced by victims of sexual exploitation and human trafficking by providing programs to assist with their departure and transition from the sex industry.

In her keynote address, Casandra will draw on previous lived experience and her current role to discuss indicators of human trafficking as they relate to children and youth. Casandra will share how having a better understanding of the unique subculture of the sex trade will assist social workers and social service workers in recognizing human trafficking situations and allow them to be more effective in their own practice.

### EDUCATIONAL BREAKOUT SESSIONS

For information regarding this year's educational sessions, please visit the [AMED webpage](#).

### CAN'T ATTEND IN PERSON? CONNECT WITH US ONLINE!

Once again this year, the Annual Meeting portion of the day as well as the keynote presentation will be available via livestream. For more information regarding the livestreaming feature, [click here](#).

The College will also be live-tweeting AMED on its Twitter feed and encourages members to connect with us on Twitter during the event, using the #AMED2018 hashtag.

We look forward to seeing you at AMED 2018 – in person and virtually!

*For more information about the 2018 Annual Meeting and Education Day, please contact [amed@ocswww.org](mailto:amed@ocswww.org).*

# Educational Forums Bring the College to Sudbury and Kitchener



In the fall of 2017, the College successfully ran its eighth series of Educational Forums in Sudbury and Kitchener.

The Educational Forums included a College update, keynote address and buffet lunch. The events provided learning and networking opportunities for members as well as local social work and social service work students.

Part of the Glenda McDonald Educational Series, the Educational Forums began in response to members who wanted to stay connected to the College but were unable to attend the Annual Meeting and Education Day (AMED) in Toronto. The objectives of the forums are to give members an opportunity to:

- Touch base with the College.
- Learn valuable skills to help them in their practice.
- Network with colleagues and make new contacts.

The Educational Forums increase the College's visibility with, and connection to, its membership.

## SUDBURY EDUCATIONAL FORUM

On October 19th, approximately 70 members and students came to participate in the Sudbury Education Forum.

Keynote speaker Steven Solomon, MSW, PhD, RSW presented on the prevalence of homophobic name calling in middle schools and its interlocking relationship to sexist language. In his presentation, entitled "*As Common as Saying Hello*" – *Middle School Students' Perceptions of Homophobic Language – What I know so far...*, Steven offered insights and strategies for addressing anti-gay language among children and youth.

Steven's presentation in Sudbury was beneficial to attendees and extremely well-received. An attendee had the following to say about Steven's presentation:

"I found his research – and his personal life experience – to be quite interesting and informative!"

## KITCHENER EDUCATIONAL FORUM

The Kitchener Educational Forum was held on October 26th, 2017. The event was very popular for both members and students, with a total of 102 attendees.

David Burnes, MSW, PhD, RSW gave the keynote address. His presentation, *Elder Mistreatment: What Does It Mean? How Should I Respond To It?*, provided current knowledge about elder mistreatment, including an understanding of its meaning, prevalence and risk factors.

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# Educational Forums Bring the College to Sudbury and Kitchener

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OCSWSSW Registrar Lise Betteridge, MSW, RSW, Steven Solomon, MSW, PhD, RSW, and OCSWSSW President Shelley Hale, RSSW at the Sudbury Educational Forum



OCSWSSW Vice-President Thomas Horn, MSW, RSW, David Burnes, MSW, PhD, RSW and OCSWSSW Registrar Lise Betteridge, MSW, RSW at the Kitchener Educational Forum

David presented a conceptual practice model to help social workers and social service workers think about how to assist victims of elder mistreatment. Those who responded to the post-event survey agreed that David's presentation was extremely valuable.

## EDUCATIONAL FORUMS HELPFUL IN FULFILLING CCP LEARNING GOALS

The post-event survey results showed that almost 70% of members found the forums to be helpful in fulfilling their [Continuing Competence Program](#) (CCP) learning goals.

A member wrote: "It gives me great pleasure to attend these events and recognize more deeply the value of social work and the need for lifelong education in the field. I

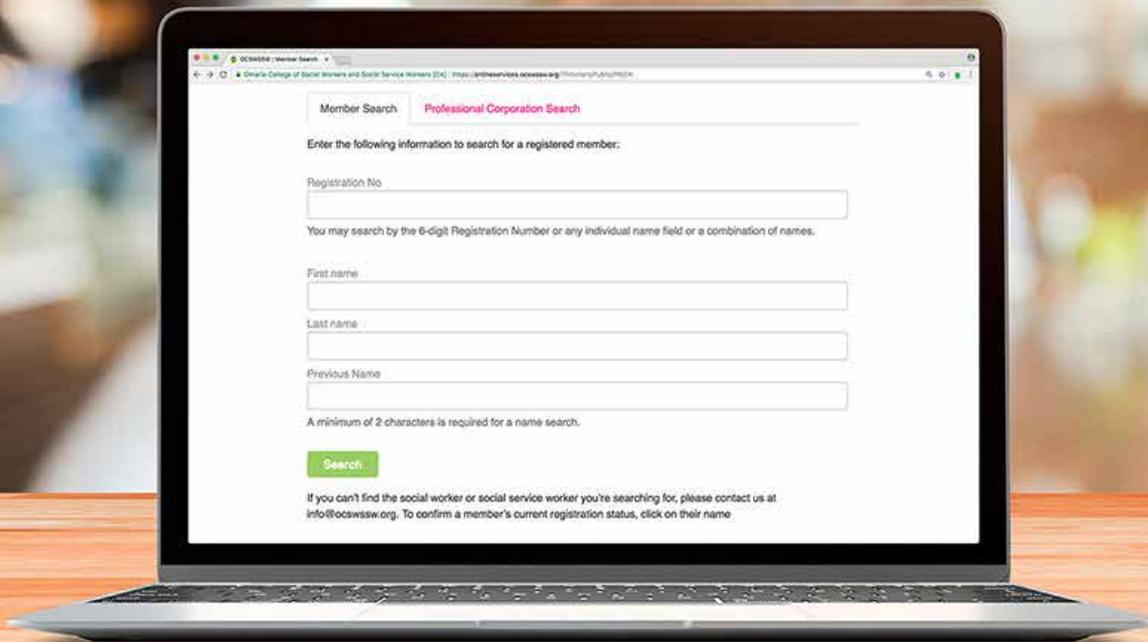
appreciate learning about broad problems/populations/solutions etc. and sometimes things can be generalized. I value learning for learning as well as practical application."

## THANK YOU

The College would like to thank all those who participated in the Sudbury and Kitchener events. We extend a special thank you to our keynote speakers, Steven Solomon, MSW, PhD, RSW and David Burnes, MSW, PhD, RSW.

We look forward to connecting with members at new locations in 2018.

# The Importance of Keeping Your Membership Information Up to Date



In order to help the College serve and protect the public, members must ensure that they keep their information up to date. Such information – including a member’s name and employer – ensures the integrity of the College’s [Public Register](#).

*The Social Work and Social Service Work Act, 1998* (the “Act”) requires that the College maintain a public register. The College’s Public Register can be accessed from the College website and lists all registered social workers and registered social service workers in Ontario.

If you change your name, you must advise the College of both your former name(s) and your new name(s) in writing – within 30 days of the effective date of the change – and include a copy of the change of name certificate, marriage certificate, driver’s licence or passport for our records.

## The information can be sent:

- by fax to 416-972-1512;
- by email with attachment(s) to [info@ocswssw.org](mailto:info@ocswssw.org); or
- by mail to 250 Bloor Street East, Suite 1000, Toronto, Ontario M4W 1E6, to the attention of the Membership Department.

Please be aware that the name listed on the Public Register must be the name that you are using in the course of practising the profession. It is an act of professional misconduct to use a name in the course of practising the profession other than the name set out in the Public Register.

If you change employers or move, you must advise the College online or in writing within 30 days. The College is required to make the current business name and business address of members available to the public on the Public Register.

Registration with the College demonstrates to employers and the public that you are professional, ethical, qualified and accountable. When a member of the public or an employer is searching the Public Register, ensure the membership information they access is up to date!

*Please note that members can only change their name on the Public Register by first contacting the College. For more information on membership, please contact Paul Cucci, Membership Manager, at [pcucci@ocswssw.org](mailto:pcucci@ocswssw.org).*

## Council Highlights for December 8, 2017

- Lise Betteridge, RSW, Registrar, and Laura Sheehan, Deputy Registrar, presented their report to Council. The report provided updates on the College website and social media; employer outreach campaign, including the Employer Roundtables and launch of the inaugural *Employer Communiqué*; Registration Regulation; membership and registration; and database upgrade.
- Council reviewed the Statement of Financial Position and Statement of Operations for October 2017.
- Council reviewed and approved the Registration Policy of the College Regarding Academic Qualifications and Practice Experience Substantially Equivalent to a Degree in Social Work.
- Council reviewed and approved the 2018 Budget and Work Plan.
- The Registrar provided an update regarding the regulation of psychotherapy.
- Reports were received from the following statutory committees: Executive; Complaints; Discipline; Registration Appeals; and Fitness to Practise.
- The Registrar provided an update on the professional development plan for Council for 2017/18.
- Reports were received from the following non-statutory committees: Standards of Practice; Election; Nominating; Finance; Governance; Corporations; and Titles and Designations.
- Council reviewed and approved an application from the Community Worker Outreach and Development (CWOD) Program at Sheridan College as equivalent to a social service work program offered in Ontario at a college of applied arts and technology.
- Council member Frances Keogh, RSW presented her professional development report on board member training provided by ASWB.
- Council reviewed and approved draft Bylaw No. 104, which amends Bylaw No. 1 – General Bylaw.
- Council reviewed and approved draft Bylaw No. 105, which amends Bylaw No. 21 – Statutory Committees Bylaw.
- Council reviewed and approved draft Bylaw No. 106, which amends Bylaw No. 36 – Election Bylaw.
- Council reviewed and approved draft Bylaw No. 107, which amends Bylaw No. 66 – Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Bylaw.
- Council reviewed and approved draft Bylaw No. 108, which amends and replaces Bylaw No. 66 and passed a resolution approving the *Practice Guidelines for Performing the Controlled Act of Psychotherapy*.

## Council Highlights for March 8, 2018

- Shelley Hale, RSSW, President, provided her report to Council.
- Lise Betteridge, RSW, Registrar, and Laura Sheehan, Deputy Registrar, presented their report to Council. The report provided updates on the implementation of the amendments to the Registration Regulation; the upcoming Annual Meeting and Education Day (AMED); the success of the College's Continuing Competence Program video resource; the continued increase in practice inquiries handled by the Professional Practice Department; the adoption of processes by the Complaints and Discipline Department in response to the Complaints Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey; upcoming Council elections in District No. 4; the appointment of the Honourable Minister Michael Coteau as Minister of Community and Social Services; membership and registration updates including a growing interest for registration in the new retired class of certificate of registration; and the College's ongoing database upgrade.
- Council reviewed the Statement of Financial Position and Statement of Operations for December 2017.
- The Registrar provided an update regarding its submission to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services in response to proposed regulations under the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*.
- The Registrar updated Council on the proclamation of the controlled act of psychotherapy and the College's communication with members in relation to this change.
- The Registrar also gave an update on implementation of the amendments to the Registration Regulation.
- 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; Governance; Corporations; and Titles and Designations.

## 2018 Election to Council in District No. 4 – Don't Forget to Vote!



The election for Council members in Electoral District No. 4 will take place on **Thursday, May 31, 2018**. All College members who practise in District No. 4 are encouraged to participate in this important process to elect two social workers and two social service workers.

### WHAT IS THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA FOR ELECTORAL DISTRICT NO. 4?

The College's Electoral District No. 4 is composed of the geographic area within the territorial boundaries of the Regional Municipalities of Halton, Hamilton-Wentworth, Niagara, Waterloo and Haldimand-Norfolk, the Counties of Dufferin and Wellington and the County of Brant.

### WHAT IS COUNCIL'S ROLE?

The Council is the 21-member governing body and board of directors that manages and administers the College's affairs. Council oversees the policy direction of the College as it fulfills its mandate to protect the public interest. This includes:

- Developing policies to regulate the practice of social work and social service work which reflect the College's public protection mandate.
- Governing and managing the affairs of the College.
- Attending and participating in Council meetings and statutory committees.

Council members are responsible for governing and managing the affairs of the College and for developing

policies that regulate the professions of social work and social service work. Council members play a leadership role in the regulation of social workers and social service workers, reflecting the College's primary duty to serve and protect the public interest while promoting high standards of practice.

### WHO ARE THE CANDIDATES RUNNING?

College members interested in running for Council completed a Call for Nominations package which was completed and submitted to the College by March 2, 2018. Information on all eligible candidates is now available on the College website.

To learn more about the candidates for Electoral District No. 4, visit the [College's website](#).

### HOW DO I VOTE?

Members will be able to vote online. The voting system is designed to be secure and to protect the confidentiality of members' votes. It is one that has been used successfully by other Ontario regulatory colleges. This online election process improves efficiency and reduces paper, printing and mailing costs associated with the election.

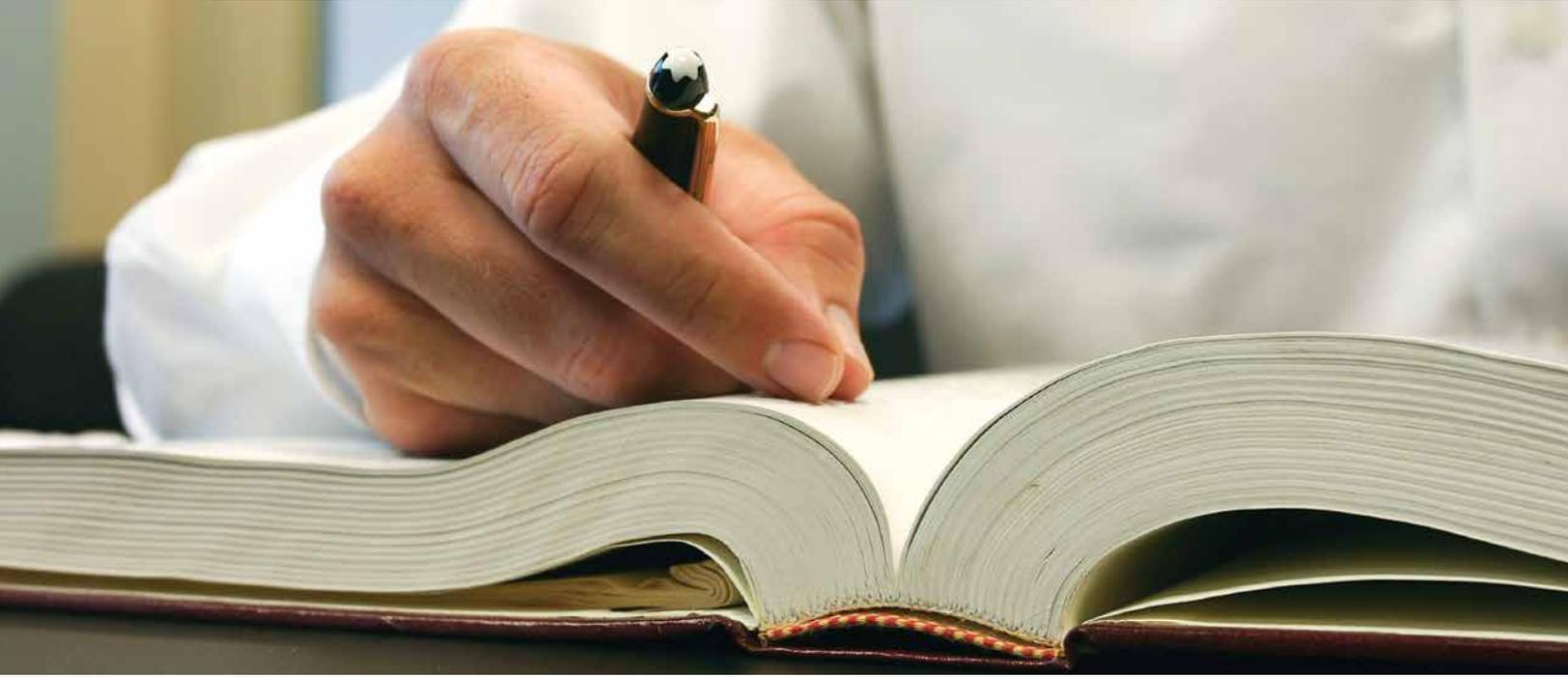
Members will be able to vote as of **May 1, 2018**.

### HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT THE ELECTIONS?

Contact Pat Lieberman by phone at 416-972-9882 ext. 207 (or toll-free at 1-877-828-9380 ext. 207) or by email at [plieberman@ocswww.org](mailto:plieberman@ocswww.org).

# Practice Notes: But “They” Told Me To! Owning Your Professional Accountability

CHRISTINA VAN SICKLE, BSW, MSW, RSW, DIRECTOR, PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE



**Practice Notes is designed as an educational tool 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 Professional Practice Department and the Complaints Committee that may affect everyday practice. The notes offer general guidance only and College members with specific practice inquiries should consult the College, since the relevant standards and appropriate course of action will vary depending on the situation.**

**W**hen you join the College, you become a part of a dedicated community of peers who practise according to a code of ethics and professional standards. Through your registration, you demonstrate that you have met the threshold academic requirements, experience and other registration criteria to become a College member. By participating in the Continuing Competence Program (CCP) and committing to ongoing professional development, you work to remain competent to practise throughout your career. College members commit to delivering professional services ethically and competently, including providing recommendations and opinions that are appropriately substantiated by evidence and supported by credible professional knowledge.

Many members consult the College’s Professional Practice Department about situations in which their professional judgment and obligations may conflict with ideas, directions and policies sought to be imposed by employers or others. Members must remember that they are required

to follow the Standards of Practice and, as professionals and members of the College, are held accountable by the College for their practice and decision-making, which can have critical outcomes for clients.

**Consider the following:**

## **SCENARIO 1**

A member works at an addiction services centre. The centre serves people in all stages of recovery, including clients who are still using substances. A member is meeting with a client and in the course of their session the client reveals that she is currently in possession of illegal substances. After the session the member debriefs with his colleagues at a regular team meeting and several colleagues feel strongly that the member has to report this incident to the police, for the protection of other clients and because the client had broken the law. There is no workplace policy that states clients will be reported if they are in possession of illegal substances

# Practice Notes: But “They” Told Me To! Owning Your Professional Accountability

CHRISTINA VAN SICKLE, BSW, MSW, RSW, DIRECTOR, PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

and the client has not consented to such reporting as a condition of receiving services from the centre. The member feels under a lot of pressure to report but believes that this would be a violation of the client's trust.

## In this scenario the member should consider:

- What principles in the Standards of Practice (including Principle I: Relationship with Clients and Principle V: Confidentiality) are relevant?
- What is the applicable legislation regarding the release of client information?

The member contacted the Professional Practice Department to consult as he felt conflicted. He thought that the values and judgments of his team members were driving them to apply pressure to him to contact the police. He was aware that he did not have the client's permission to disclose to the police the information revealed during the session. He determined that other clients were not at risk. The member stated that an uncomfortable working environment had resulted because of this situation, and that he was feeling stuck between two bad choices.

It was acknowledged during the consultation that members can often encounter challenging practice situations and that *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook* must be consulted to aid in decision-making as it sets out the minimum standards of professional practice and conduct. All professional practice consultations explore what standards of practice apply to the practice issues presented by members.

Principle I: Relationship with Clients, which indicates that members must be “aware of their values, attitudes and needs and how these impact on their professional relationships with clients”,<sup>1</sup> was reviewed. While the member felt that his values and attitudes were not

impacting client care, he identified that this standard may be relevant with respect to how he could be influenced by his colleague's values. Additionally, the member reflected on his own desire to resolve the conflict on his team. The member identified that he needed to distinguish between his “needs and interests from those of their clients to ensure that, within professional relationships, clients' needs and interests remain paramount.”<sup>2</sup>

It was further discussed with the member that the Standards of Practice require members to “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.”<sup>3</sup> The member knew that he did not have consent to disclose client information to the police, but he was unsure if he was required under the law to report that his client had committed a crime.

After his call to the College, the member retained a lawyer and sought a legal consult, after which he determined that he did not have a reporting obligation. The member applied his clinical judgment and determined that he was not permitted to disclose client information, and that his team would benefit from reflection on and processing of the strong opinions and values that were expressed in regard to this scenario.

## Consider the following:

### SCENARIO 2

A member works on a community mental health team. Her client has been meeting with her regularly, keeping appointments with her psychiatrist, and following her recommended treatment. The client then experiences an unexpected loss and her mental health appears to deteriorate quickly. The client's young son lives with her, and on the member's home visits, there is evidence to suggest that the house is not being kept up and that there

1 The Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW), *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Second Edition, 2008*, Principle I: Relationship with Clients, Interpretation 1.5.

2 OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Second Edition, 2008*, Principle I: Relationship with Clients, Interpretation 1.6.

3 OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Second Edition, 2008*, Principle V: Confidentiality, Interpretation 5.1.

# Practice Notes: But “They” Told Me To! Owning Your Professional Accountability

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is no food in the kitchen. Due to escalating concerns, the member does a subsequent home visit to the client with the team psychiatrist. While on the visit the client reveals that she has been leaving her son alone in the house at night while she has gone out with her friends. Her son has also been missing a lot of school. The client is tearful and remorseful and asks the member and the psychiatrist not to inform the Children’s Aid Society (CAS). The psychiatrist agrees as long as the client stays home at night, returns to her recommended treatment, and attends more frequent appointments at the office. Upon leaving the home visit the psychiatrist explains that he thinks a report to CAS would be detrimental to the therapeutic relationship, and could further exacerbate the client’s deterioration. The psychiatrist instructs the member to revisit the need to report to CAS in two weeks’ time.

## In this scenario the member should consider:

- What principles in the Standards of Practice (including Principle II: Competence and Integrity and Principle V: Confidentiality) are relevant?
- What is the applicable legislation and what does that legislation require?

The member contacted the Professional Practice Department to consult. She stated that she felt compelled to follow the psychiatrist’s instructions due to the inherent power imbalance between their two positions on the team. She stated that the psychiatrist told her that he was ultimately responsible for the client’s care, and that he held responsibility for any treatment decision outcomes.

It was acknowledged that power imbalances do exist on teams and in organizations. Nonetheless, College members are accountable for their own conduct and professional judgment. The Standards of Practice prescribe the basis on which professional practice is conducted

in a sound and ethical manner<sup>4</sup>, and therefore must be consulted.

The Standards indicate that “College members maintain current knowledge of policies, legislation, programs and issues related to the community, its institutions and services in their areas of practice.”<sup>5</sup> The member was aware that relevant legislation in this scenario was the *Child and Family Services Act* (CFSA), which outlined the member’s mandatory reporting obligations.<sup>6</sup>

The member stated that, as required in the Standards of Practice, the client had been informed of the limits of confidentiality early in the therapeutic relationship<sup>7</sup>, and was aware of the member’s reporting obligations under the CFSA. The member was reminded that, “College members respect the privacy of clients by holding in strict confidence all information about clients and by complying with any applicable privacy and other legislation. College members disclose such information only when required or allowed by law to do so or when clients have consented to disclosure.”<sup>8</sup>

The member reflected that the child was currently at risk and that if she were to wait two weeks before reporting as suggested by the psychiatrist, there was a greater risk of harm to the client’s child. Knowing this, the member could not justify a decision to not report. The member decided that she would need to make a report immediately under the requirements of the CFSA, and that she would have to reconcile this decision with the psychiatrist on her team.

## Consider the following:

### SCENARIO 3

A member works for a religious organization that provides support to people at the end of life. The organization has created a policy that they will not

4 OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Second Edition, 2008*, Explanatory Note.

5 OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Second Edition, 2008*, Principle II: Competence and Integrity, Interpretation 2.1.3.

6 *Child and Family Services Act, R.S.O. 1990*, c. C.11. The *Child and Family Services Act* will be repealed on April 30, 2018. Many of the provisions of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*, S.O. 2017, c. 14, Sched. 1 (including section 125 regarding the duty to report a child in need of protection) will come into force on April 30, 2018.

7 OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Second Edition, 2008*, Principle V: Confidentiality, Interpretation 5.4.

8 OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Second Edition, 2008*, Principle V: Confidentiality, explanatory paragraph.

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provide their clients with medical assistance in dying (MAID). A member is asked by a client about information on MAID. The member informs the client that this is not a treatment option at her organization, but provides the client with information on where they can find MAID resources. During supervision the member informs her manager about this client interaction, and the manager instructs the member not to document this intervention in the client’s chart as it goes against organizational policy.

## In this scenario the member should consider:

- What principles in the Standards of Practice (including Principle II: Competence and Integrity, Principle III: Responsibility to Clients and Principle IV: The Social Work and Social Service Work Record) are relevant?
- What is the applicable legislation or policy?

The member contacted the Professional Practice Department unsure of how to proceed. She was confused as she had made it clear to the client that the organization’s policy was not to provide MAID treatment. She instead provided the client with the requested information, but was now being told not to document her actions. Understandably, the situation did not sit well with her.

The member had read the College article, [“Medical Assistance in Dying: What Are My Professional Obligations”](#) and was aware that Bill C-14 had been passed and changes had been made to the criminal code allowing for the legal provision of MAID.<sup>9</sup> She understood that other regulated professionals had policies in which they were required to refer the patient to a non-objecting, available and accessible practitioner, if they objected to the provision of MAID.<sup>10</sup>

The member was aware of her responsibilities as outlined in the Standards of Practice, to “assist clients to access necessary information, services and resources wherever possible”<sup>11</sup> and “provide clients with accurate and complete information regarding the extent, nature, and limitations of any services available to them.”<sup>12</sup> She had discussed with her manager that she had an obligation to refer clients elsewhere if she was not able to provide the requested professional help.<sup>13</sup>

It was also clear to the member that in her documentation, she needed to account for and provide evidence of the services she had provided.<sup>14</sup> She had reviewed the Standards of Practice and was able to cite that “an accurate record will document the client’s situation/problem exactly and contain only information that is appropriate and useful to the understanding of the situation and the management of the case”.<sup>15</sup> The member shared that she felt torn between what she understood were her professional obligations, and what she was being told to do by her superior.

Principle II: Competence and Integrity, indicates “[i]f there is a conflict between College standards of practice and a College member’s work environment, the College member’s obligation is to the “Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers Code of Ethics” and the “Standards of Practice Handbook.””<sup>16</sup> While the member stated that she was relieved to hear this, she also expressed the burden of having to present this information to her manager.

The member could equip herself with the relevant standards and practice resources to address this issue with her manager, in order to demonstrate her rationale for needing to document her actions and provide requested information to her client. In addition, the member was

9 OCSWSSW, “Medical Assistance in Dying: What Are My Professional Obligations”, Guidance for Members of the OCSWSSW, page 1.

10 OCSWSSW, “Medical Assistance in Dying: What Are My Professional Obligations”, Guidance for Members of the OCSWSSW, page 2.

11 OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Second Edition, 2008*, Principle II: Competence and Integrity, Interpretation 2.2.9.

12 OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Second Edition, 2008*, Principle III: Responsibility to Clients, Interpretation 3.1.

13 OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Second Edition, 2008*, Principle III: Responsibility to Clients, Interpretation 3.5

14 OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Second Edition, 2008*, Principle IV: The Social Work and Social Service Work Record, explanatory paragraph.

15 OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Second Edition, 2008*, Principle IV: The Social Work and Social Service Work Record, footnote 2.

16 OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, Second Edition, 2008*, Principle II: Competence and Integrity, Interpretation 2.2.10.

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informed that the Professional Practice Department offers consultations with employers and the public to provide information on members’ professional obligations. At the end of the consultation the member felt better prepared to discuss with her manager what is required for her to practise in a way that is professional, ethical and accountable.

## CONCLUSION

This article has discussed the challenges that members face when they feel conflicted between the demands of their workplace or pressure from their colleagues and their professional accountability. In these instances *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook* must be consulted to aid in decision making, as it sets out the minimum

standards of professional practice and conduct. The relevant legislation and policy that applies to a member’s workplace must also be explored.

The [Professional Practice page](#) on the College website has many resources that will support members in their decision making, and members may also consult with the Professional Practice Department. Additionally, when grappling with difficult practice issues, members should consider consulting more widely – with colleagues, a manager or supervisor, or a lawyer.

*For more information about this or other practice issues, please contact the Professional Practice Department at [practice@ocswssw.org](mailto:practice@ocswssw.org).*

## Access the College’s **NEW** Continuing Competence Program (CCP) Video for OCSWSSW Members!

VIEW NOW



## Q&A: Can I Call Myself a “Psychotherapist”?

I am a member of the OCSWSSW who provides psychotherapy services as part of my practice. Can I call myself a “psychotherapist”?

Yes. A provision of the *Social Work and Social Service Work Act* (s. 47.2) which was proclaimed in force on December 30, 2017 permits members of the OCSWSSW to use the title “psychotherapist” if the member complies with the following conditions, as applicable:

- When describing himself or herself orally as a psychotherapist, the member must also mention that they are a member of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers, or identify themselves using the title restricted to them as a member of the College.
- When identifying themselves in writing as a psychotherapist on a name tag, business card or any document, the member must set out their full name, immediately followed by at least one of the following, followed in turn by “psychotherapist”.
  - i. Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers,
  - ii. the title that the member may use under this Act.

### EXAMPLES:

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Your Name, MSW, RSW<br/>Social Worker, Psychotherapist</p>  | <p>Your Name, MSW, RSW<br/>Registered Social Worker,<br/>Psychotherapist</p>  | <p>Your Name, MSW, RSW,<br/>Ontario College of Social Workers<br/>and Social Service Workers,<br/>Psychotherapist</p>  |
|---|--|---|

The *Psychotherapy Act* restricts the use of the title “registered psychotherapist” and “registered mental health therapist” to members of the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO).

For further information, please contact the Professional Practice Department at [practice@ocswssw.org](mailto:practice@ocswssw.org).

# Discipline Decision Summaries



**T**he Discipline Committee's Decision and Reason for Decision is published pursuant to the Discipline Committee's penalty order. The College publishes summaries of decisions 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 or has been anonymized.

## BY PUBLISHING THIS SUMMARY, 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.

### LYNDA CULLAIN MEMBER #128040

The Discipline Committee of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers found that

Lynda Cullain, a former social work member, is guilty of professional misconduct in that she violated sections 2.2, 2.10, 2.11, 2.28, 2.29 and 2.36 of O. Reg. 384/00 (Professional Misconduct) to the *Social Work and Social Service Work Act*, Principles II and V of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook* (Standards of Practice), and Interpretations 2.2, 2.2.1 (i), (ii) and (iii) and footnotes 6&7, 5.1, 5.3 and 5.6 of the College's Standards of Practice.

Read the College Discipline Committee's decision summary at: [https://www.ocswssw.org/complaints-discipline/cd\\_discipline\\_decisions/](https://www.ocswssw.org/complaints-discipline/cd_discipline_decisions/)

### KARLA FORGAARD-PULLEN MEMBER #809841

The Discipline Committee of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers found that Karla Forgaard-Pullen, a social work member, is guilty of professional misconduct in that she violated sections 2.2, 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), and Interpretations 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 2.1.1, 2.1.5, 2.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.3, 2.2.8 and 3.7 of the College's Standards of Practice.

Read the College Discipline Committee's decision summary at: [https://www.ocswssw.org/complaints-discipline/cd\\_discipline\\_decisions/](https://www.ocswssw.org/complaints-discipline/cd_discipline_decisions/)

### JOANN LEE MEMBER #321090

The Discipline Committee of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers found that JoAnn Lee is guilty of professional misconduct in that she violated sections 2.2, 2.5, 2.6 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

# Discipline Decision Summaries

Practice), and Interpretations 1.1, 1.5, 1.6, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.5, 2.2.8, 3.7, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.6 and 8.7 of the College's Standards of Practice. The Discipline Committee found the member not guilty of professional misconduct with respect to section 2.11 of O. Reg. 384/00 (Professional Misconduct) to the *Social Work and Social Service Work Act*.

Read the College Discipline Committee's decision summary at: [https://www.ocswssw.org/complaints-discipline/cd\\_discipline\\_decisions/](https://www.ocswssw.org/complaints-discipline/cd_discipline_decisions/)

## CALVIN MCCONNELL

MEMBER #427231

The Discipline Committee of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers found that Calvin McConnell, a social work member, is guilty of professional misconduct in that he violated sections 2.2, 2.6, 2.9 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), and Interpretations 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.1.4, 2.1.5, 2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.8, 3.2, 3.7 and 3.8 of the College's Standards of Practice.

Read the College Discipline Committee's decision summary at: [https://www.ocswssw.org/complaints-discipline/cd\\_discipline\\_decisions/](https://www.ocswssw.org/complaints-discipline/cd_discipline_decisions/)

## JOSEPH VAZ

MEMBER #804193

The Discipline Committee of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers found that Joseph Vaz, a social work member, is guilty of professional misconduct in that he violated sections 2.2, 2.5, 2.20 and 2.36 of O. Reg. 384/00 (Professional Misconduct) to the *Social Work and Social Service Work Act*, Principles II, III, IV and VIII of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook* (Standards of Practice), and Interpretations 1.5, 1.6, 2.1.5, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.8, 3.7, 4.1.1, 4.1.3, 8.1, 8.2 and 8.6 of the College's Standards of Practice.

Read the College Discipline Committee's decision summary at: [https://www.ocswssw.org/complaints-discipline/cd\\_discipline\\_decisions/](https://www.ocswssw.org/complaints-discipline/cd_discipline_decisions/)

# 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 members available to the public. Notification of change of address can be done through the website at [ocswssw.org](http://ocswssw.org), emailed to [info@ocswssw.org](mailto:info@ocswssw.org), faxed to 416-972-1512 or mailed to the College office address. In addition to providing your new address, please also provide your old address and College registration number.

If you **change your name**, 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 for our records. The information may be sent by fax to 416-972-1512 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 OCSWSSW.

## PARTICIPATION IN THE WORK OF THE COLLEGE

If you are interested in volunteering for one of the College's committees or task groups, please email Monique Guibert at [mguibert@ocswssw.org](mailto:mguibert@ocswssw.org) to receive an application form. The College welcomes all applications, however, the number of available positions for non-Council members is limited by the statutory committee requirements in the *Social Work and Social Service Work Act* as well as the bylaws and policies of the College.

## COUNCIL MEETINGS

College Council meetings are open to the public and are held at the College office in Toronto. Visitors attend as observers only. Seating at Council meetings is limited. To reserve a seat, please fax your request to the College at 416-972-1512 or email [mguibert@ocswssw.org](mailto:mguibert@ocswssw.org). Please visit the College's website for the dates and times of upcoming meetings.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers protects the interest of the public by regulating the practice of social workers and social service workers and promoting ethical and professional practice.

## VISION STATEMENT

The Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers strives for organizational excellence in its mandate in order to: serve the public interest; regulate its members; and be accountable and accessible to the community.





Ontario College of  
Social Workers and  
Social Service Workers

## HOW TO REACH US:

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For general registration inquiries, please email: [registration@ocswssw.org](mailto:registration@ocswssw.org).

### COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINE

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