

## **21 NCAC 63 .0505            RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES**

Social workers shall act with integrity in their relationships with colleagues and other professionals. They shall consider the practice areas and knowledge or expertise of other professionals to whom they make referrals and with whom they collaborate in serving clients.

- (1) When expressing judgment on the views, qualifications and findings of colleagues, social workers shall not misrepresent the colleague's license level, degree, or other professional qualification in any written or oral communication and shall avoid the use of demeaning or derogatory language.
- (2) Social workers shall maintain knowledge of the professional and community resources available to the client population they serve and when referring clients, social workers shall refer to professionals and community resources that are able to provide the services required.
- (3) If a social worker's services are sought by an individual who is already receiving similar services from another professional, the client's welfare shall be the primary consideration before agreeing to provide services. To minimize confusion and conflict, social workers shall discuss with the prospective client the nature of the existing professional relationship, the client's needs, the therapeutic issues involved, and the benefits and risks associated with entering into a relationship with a new service provider.
- (4) Social workers shall provide competent professional guidance to colleagues, employees, supervisees, and students. They shall foster working conditions that provide fairness, privacy and protection from physical or mental harm. Social workers supervising associate licensees shall evaluate without bias, the work performance of those under their supervision, and share evaluations with supervisees. Social workers shall not engage in sexual relationships with supervisees, students, trainees, or other colleagues over whom they exercise professional authority. They shall not abuse the power inherent in their supervisory position for personal or financial gain.
- (5) A social worker certified or licensed under this Chapter who has knowledge of conduct that would constitute grounds for disciplinary action under this Chapter, or the Chapter governing the practice of another licensed healthcare provider, shall report the conduct to the licensing authority that oversees the healthcare provider believed to be engaged in misconduct. Social workers shall provide information to assist colleagues defending themselves against allegations of unethical or incompetent practice.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 90B-6; 90B-11;  
Eff. March 1, 1994;  
Readopted Eff. February 1, 2017;  
Amended Eff. October 1, 2021.*