



Ethics and Technology

Danielle Smith, MSW, MA, LSW, CAE

NASW Ohio Chapter

Ethical principles remain the same

Practitioner competence

Client privacy and confidentiality

Informed consent

Conflicts of interest

Boundaries and dual relationships

Rules have changed

Technology changes are in the new Code of Ethics, going into effect January 1, 2018

Purpose

Informed Consent (1.03)

Competence and Diversity (1.04 and 1.05)

Conflicts of Interest (1.06)

Privacy and Confidentiality (1.07)

Sexual Relationships (1.09)

Sexual Harassment (1.11)

Interruption of Services (1.15)

Rules have changed

Technology changes are in the new Code of Ethics, going into effect January 1, 2018

Sexual Relationships (2.06)

Sexual Harassment (2.08)

Unethical Conduct of Colleagues (2.11)

Supervision and Consultation (3.01)

Education and Training (3.02)

Client Records (3.04)

Evaluation and Research (5.02)

Technology is a wonderful tool but as social workers we must consider the risk to ourselves, our employers, and our clients.

We need to have:

Abundance of Respect

Abundance of Concern

Is this in the best interest of the client?

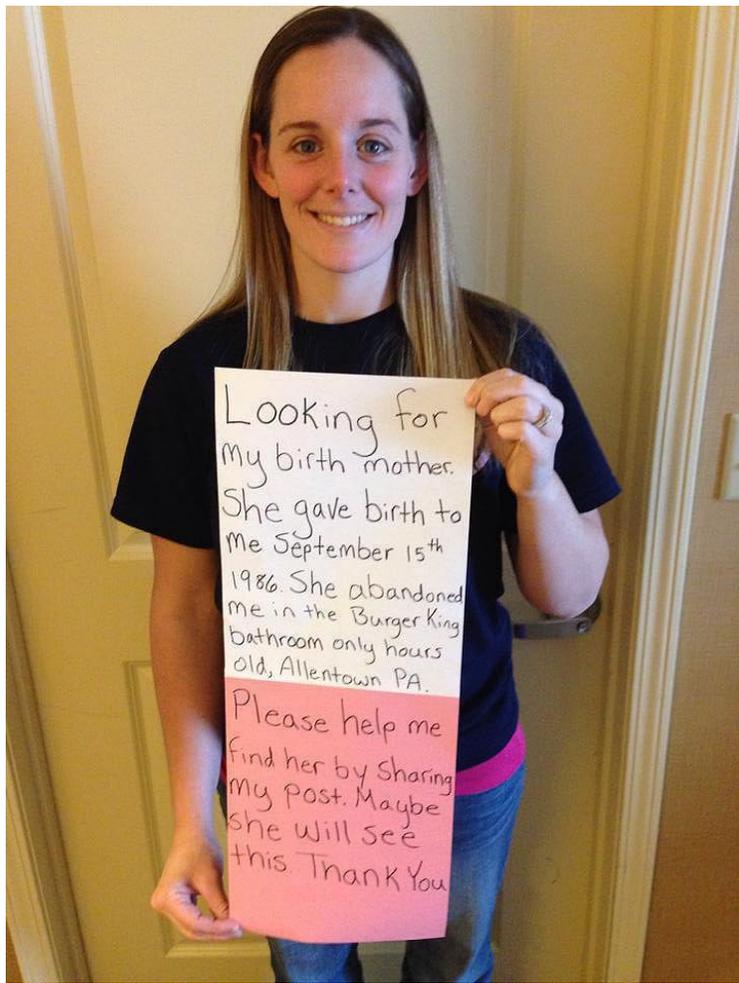
Discussions

How do you use technology (including social media)?

Give an example of technology/internet/social media making a positive impact

Give an example of technology/internet/social media making a negative impact

What policies/procedures currently exist related to technology at your employer?



CRISIS TEXT LINE |

™

Text START to 741-741

[The Boston Globe](#) reported this week that 31 percent of people met their last date online, opposed to the 25 percent who met their last date with help of a friend and the 6 percent who met someone at a bar



The Internet Saved My Life: 10 Stories Of Miraculous Survival (SLIDESHOW)

TOP POST
597,098 VIEWS



A Group Of Teens Allegedly Robbed People They Found On Pokémon Go

This is why we can't have nice things.



[...]

2922 points 13 hours ago 🗨️

Ok, reportingb in. Couldn't sleep so I downloaded the game and took a 3am walk. There is a little park a few blocks from me that had like three pokestops and a gym, so I wandered over there to see what the game could offer. Picked up an Eevee outside my house and a couple of trash pokes on the way to the park.

So I get there and wander around a little checking out the stops and rustling around in the tall grass, then decide to go a few blocks away to see a couple more stops when I hear from the darkness a "Yo, my man!"

Turning I see two sketchy looking dudes sitting on a bench in the dark. I must have walked right past them without noticing them Great. One of them waves "My man, check over by the blue truck over there we got an onyx earlier."

So I wander over by the truck and sure enough there's a [REDACTED] onyx there. Awesome. So I end up chatting with the guys for a bit, told em where I got my eevee, they convinced me to join red team when I hit level five so we could "lock [REDACTED] down" in the neighbourhood.

Then the cop shows up.

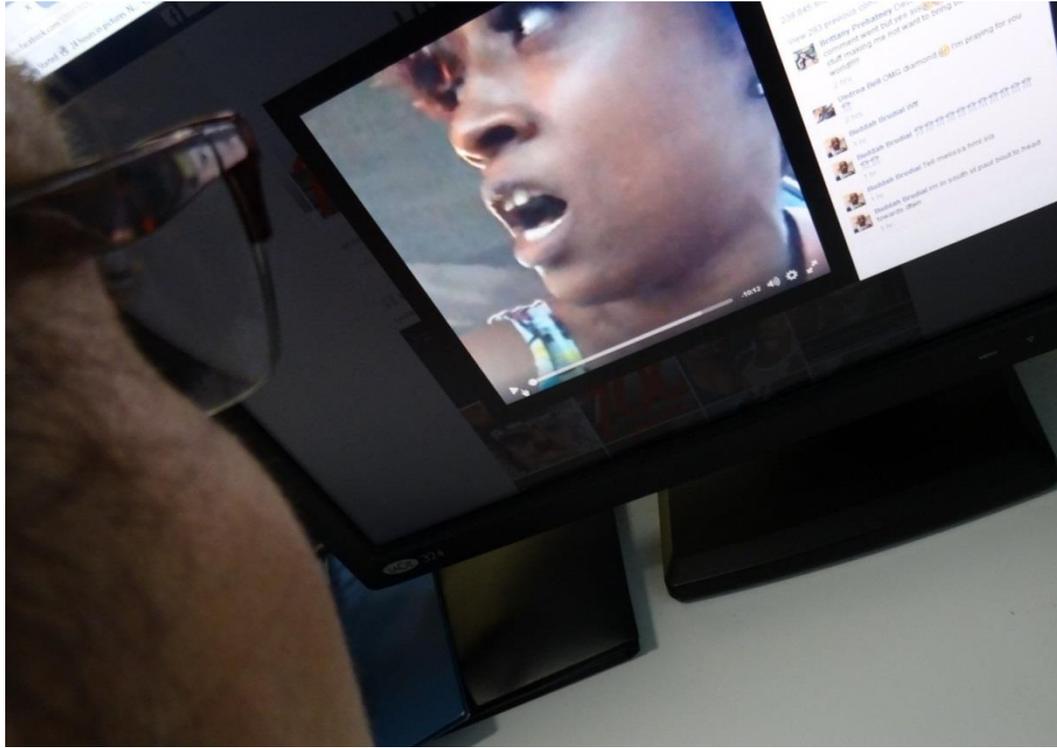
Yeah, so it turns out two twentysomething black dudes and a forty year old white guy chilling in the park at 3am looks strange. It took a bit of talking to convince the cop we weren't doing a drug deal, and a bit longer to explain the game. Then the cop downloaded the [REDACTED] game on his phone and asked us how to get started.

Go red team.

**We are paying you to work,
not chase fictional video
game characters with your
cell phone all day.**



**Save it for your break time or
lunch. Otherwise you'll have
plenty of time unemployed to
"Catch them all".**



Facebook activates Safety Check service after sniper attack on Dallas police



NC deputy suspended for Facebook comment about Black Lives Matter movement



Benefits of Technology

Written document

Able to reach clients in new ways (especially in disaster relief!)

Networking to other practitioners, able to collaborate and consult

Market ourselves as professionals

Market organizations (Cultivate donors)

Recruit staff/volunteers

Raise awareness about issues

Personal connections (family, friends, etc.)- self care

The Risks of Social Media

Ethical considerations

- Confidentiality

- Boundaries

- Records

Legal Issues

Safety issues

Questionable behavior

Site-specific risks

“What are the potential ethical mistakes I could make if I use any of this technology, mistakes that might harm my client and might expose me to some risk if a client becomes angry with me and chooses to file the licensing board complaint, the complaint with NASW, the lawsuit?” - Frederick Reamer

Technology and Identity

Your Online Identity

What does yours look like?

What do you want it to look like?

How do you know?

“Google” yourself- Need to know what is out there in order to respond and to have some control

The message is not always received the way you intended

Mobile technology

You should expect that everything is being recorded- any situation can be documented

What's the problem?



John Quincy

Love them! My job is the best.

Like · Comment · Share · 20 minutes ago · 🌐

👍 3 people like this.



What's the problem?



Cathy Williams

Today my client's mom gave me this sweet thank you note! I'm so grateful to work with clients that bring me so much joy.

Like · Comment · Share · 20 minutes ago · 🌐

👍 3 people like this.



What's the problem?



Sam Jones

This week has been so long- looking forward to the weekend!!!

[Like](#) · [Comment](#) · [Share](#) · 20 minutes ago · 

 3 people like this.

Ethical Practice with Social Media

Should you “Google” your clients?

Informed Consent

Documentation

Your Clients will probably Google you...

Plan for this

Ethics- Confidentiality

Confidentiality can easily be breached

A social worker in an emergency room posts on Facebook: “Had a crazy day. One of my clients who was intoxicated and suicidal drank a vial of his own blood.”

Do not post anything about clients- even as a broad statement.

Video

Ethics- Confidentiality of Records

Ethical standard 1.07: (c) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients' written and electronic records and other sensitive information.

Electronic File security- must report all breaches

Encryption

Security of the internet connection and device

Lock your computer- both physically and with passwords

Have a password protection if your computer is idle for a certain amount of minutes

Lock your computer every time you leave it



Privacy

Nearly impossible to guarantee

Privacy Settings

Devices can be shared

Use of Basic Technology

E-mails

HIPPA allows when risk is disclosed

Phone

Text messages

Should not use SMS for health data



If you use
them you
need policies

Informed Consent & Technology

What does your informed consent include?

What should it include?

- All forms of communication (texts, e-mails, voicemails, etc.)

- If and how you will share information

- Disruption in electronic communication (texts, e-mails, voicemails, and technology failure)

- If internet searches can be conducted and the conditions that need to be in place

Ethics- Boundaries and Dual Relationships

Boundaries are there to protect the work- protect, ground, and guide the relationship

Boundary violations versus crossings

Boundary violations and crossings can range from insignificant to devastating

Dual Relationships and Social Media

Boundaries with Clients

Discuss social media use and boundaries throughout relationship as you would any other boundary conflicts. Develop a plan with the client.

Have a plan for how you will address social media issues

Document

Boundaries with Colleagues

Managing Dual Relationships

Be vigilant to recognize conflicts

Get more information

Design a plan of action

Document

Monitoring

Safety Issues

Clients can find your personal information

Is your cell phone number on your Facebook profile?

Location Information

Do not post that you are going on vacation/leaving your home

Be extremely careful about posting where you are currently

Do not post that you are somewhere alone

Questionable Behavior

Aggravated employee

Discussing clients in broad terms

“I need a drink after my clients today!”

Off-work activities (drinking, partying, etc.)

All of these things contribute to one's online identity. What do you want your identity to reflect?

Ethical Decision Making Framework

DECISIONS Approach

D- Determine the facts.

E- Ethical considerations? If so, what ethical standards apply?

C- Consider the impact of values involved.

I- Impact of self (how is who I am and my personal experiences, influencing my thoughts about this dilemma?).

S- Stakeholders, who are they?

I- Incorporate professional literature review.

O- Other considerations: standards of practice, agency policies, regulatory and/or legal considerations, consultation.

N- Narration of your decision: Be prepared to articulate your decisions. Do some critical thinking and be confident.

S- Secure and support your decision with thorough documentation and evaluation of the outcome of the decision.

Supervision and Technology

Consider

You can use technology to provide training supervision BUT

Are you comfortable? Is the supervisee comfortable? Do you need to reply on things you might not be able to see/hear/feel?

Technology needs to be a component of supervision

Expectations, rules, policies

Boundaries, dual relationships, confidentiality

Need to have a contract/agreement

Things we need to Learn

What social interactions are ideal for text messaging? Chat? Email? Which are not?

When does an interaction need to move from a text-based platform, to one that involves voice? Images? Face to face?

What is appropriate to share about your workplace on your blog/Facebook/Twitter? About your life?

What work tasks are best completed when connected to the Internet? Disconnected?

How can we set up our work areas/screens so we can maximize our ability to focus?

What evening routines (relative to technology/electronics) promote relaxation and restful sleep?

What's the right balance between technology and non-technology-based activities for free time? What combination will result a true feeling of fulfillment at the end of the day?

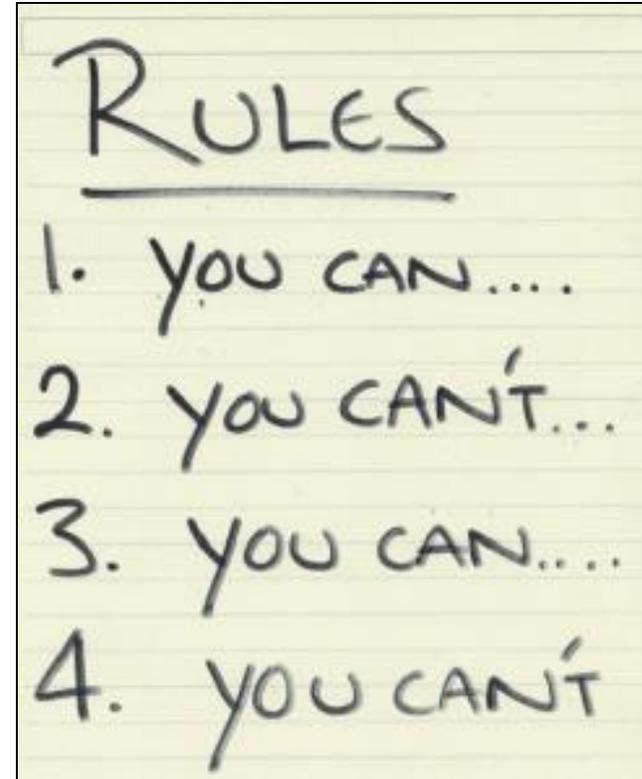
Suggestions

All organizations- regardless of size or client group served- must have a social media policy.

Have an informed consent policy that includes online communications

Train employees on internet use

Personal e-mail is a public record while at work and discussing work topics



Writing an Organizational Social Media Policy

Things to consider

1. Identify himself/herself as an employee of the company?
2. Use the company name/logo, photos?
3. Discuss residents/employees/vendors?
4. Offer recommendations to other employees or non-employees (on LinkedIn)?
5. Not divulging confidential information
6. Not discuss competitors
7. No racial slurs, vulgar words.

The policy should state the consequences of violations of the policy, including that the offender's employment may be terminated.

Human Resources Legal Issues

Discrimination Claims

Retaliation Claims

Fair Credit Reporting Act

Invasion of Privacy Claims

First Amendment



What will you do with the information once you find it?

Suggestions for HR and social media

Have a non-decision maker conduct the research and only provide the relevant information

Remain skeptical of information found online

Keep screen captures and search logs

Do not circumvent privacy measures

If you reject a candidate because of information found on the web:

Record this information

Using Technology to Provide Services

Consider

Technology has a lot of benefit and utility

The different issues that can happen

- How would you deal with someone walking in to the session?

- How would you deal with someone harming themselves in front of you?

Not all clients are appropriate for electronic delivery of services

Ground Rules

You have to have an informed consent policy that is comprehensive

You have to know the licensing rules, location, and identity of the client. All of this should be in the informed consent policy

Electronic Service Delivery

4757-3-01 (CSMFT Board) Definitions - (EE) "electronic service delivery" (electronic therapy, cyber therapy, e-therapy. etc.) means counseling, social work or marriage and family therapy in any form offered or rendered primarily by electronic or technology-assisted approaches when the counselor, social worker or marriage and family therapist and the client are not located in the same place during delivery of services.

Electronic Service Delivery

4757-5-13 Standards of practice and professional conduct: electronic service delivery (internet, email, teleconference, etc.).

(1) All practitioners shall be licensed in Ohio.

All licensees providing services to clients outside the state of Ohio shall comply with the laws and rules of that jurisdiction.

Electronic service delivery shall require an initial face-to-face meeting, which may be via video/audio electronically, to verify the identity of the electronic service delivery client. At that meeting steps shall be taken to address impostor concerns, such as by using passwords to identify the client in future electronic contacts.

Informed consent shall include information defining electronic service delivery as practiced by the licensee and the potential risks and ethical considerations (a) Licensees shall obtain written informed consent.

Licensees shall identify an appropriately trained professional who can provide local assistance, including crisis intervention, if needed. Licensees shall provide electronic service delivery clients the local crisis hotline telephone number and the local emergency mental health telephone number.

Confidentiality in electronic service delivery shall be maintained by the licensee:

*Licensees shall use encryption methods for electronic service delivery; and
Shall inform electronic service delivery clients details of data record storage.*

New Terminology

Interventions

Web-based therapy

E-interventions

Computer mediated interventions

Online therapy/counseling

Technology assisted distance counseling otherwise known as TADC

E-therapy/E-counseling

Cyber therapy/cyber counseling

E-health

Psycho technology

Tele-health

Internet counseling

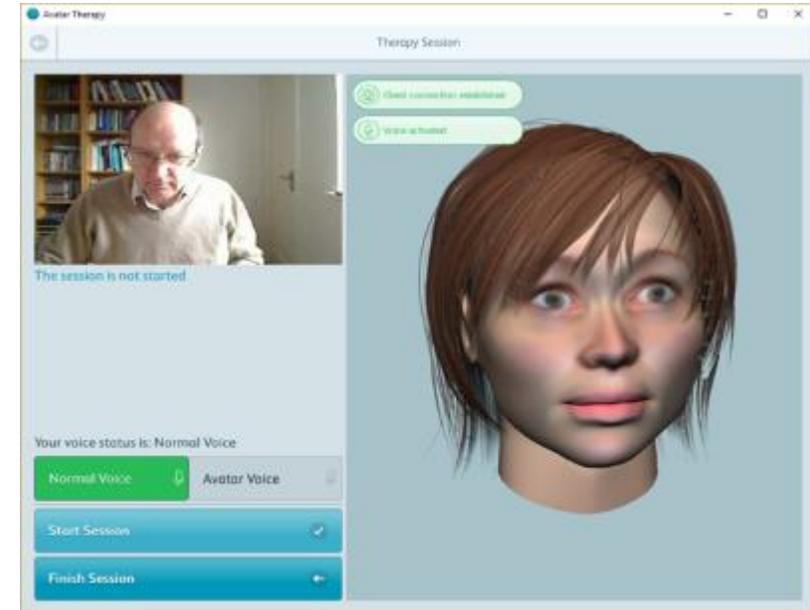
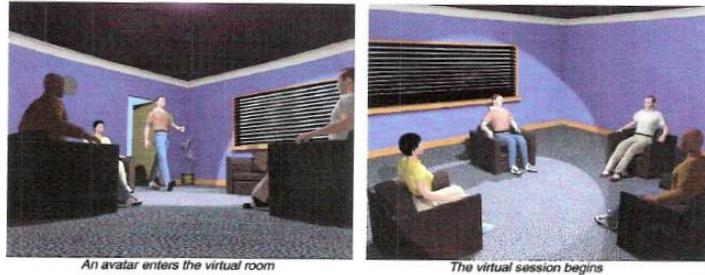
Therapy through electronic mail.

Avatar Therapy

The client as avatar and the therapist as avatar meet in a virtual location. This could look like anything, depending on what the therapist has created—a calming office with mood lighting, a beachside location with lapping waves and seals gently playing, a dynamic play room with beanbags to sit on...clients...may choose whatever part of their psyche they wish to represent, from aardvarks to muscle-bound sexual warriors. This in itself presents a dynamic way of exploring one's psyche or that of the clients and, with careful management and titrating of emotions, many life scenarios can be explored.

Avatar Therapy

Figure 7. A virtual group therapy session using avatars¹²



For example, I will sometimes have a small child who is experiencing bullying play a strong avatar in the AM to help prepare for school and feel and extend their confidence.

Avatar Therapy



Video Games

We continue to set up sticker charts and give out stars when we could be using Chore Wars (<http://www.chorewars.com/>) or the WoW Achievement Generator (<http://thetural.com/wow/>). We could help adolescent patients problem-solve and learn how to use Facebook to enhance their social skills or use Twitter for school projects.

Ben's Game—Developed with the Make-A-Wish Foundation and Ben Duskin, this game empowers children with cancer to fight cancer in a game environment:
<http://www.sfwish.org/site/pp.asp?c=bdJLITMAE&b=81924>

Online game Foldit helps anti-AIDS drugs quest (BBC News),
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-14986013>

Gee, J. P. (2003). What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan. Related blog: <http://www.jamespaulgee.com/>

Resources

American Distance Counseling Association

International Society for Mental Health Online

Association for Counseling and Therapy Online

Online Counseling Handbook for Mental Health Professionals

Things to do

Safety of clients

Code words

Marketing and Technology

Testimonials

Social Media

LinkedIn

Instagram

Facebook

Twitter

Other resources

NASW

Helpstartshere

Psychology Today

Social Media & Clients

Understanding social media and its effect on practice



LIFE AS DEPICTED ON FACEBOOK:



Ethical Responsibilities to Clients

Ethical Principle: Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.

Social networking plays a major role in today's relationships.

Social workers also need to understand that many relationships develop and may occur exclusively online.

Understand positive and negative effects on clients



Ethical Responsibilities to Clients

Potential Problems

Some divorce attorneys report that 1 in 5 cases cite issues associated with Facebook

Understanding differences in communication to provide guidance to clients

Domestic violence and stalking issues

Bullying issues

Foster/adoptive photos

Racy screen names

Trolling

Internet addiction/Social Isolation

Death

Scams/Viruses

Ethical Responsibilities to Clients

Suggestions:

Ask about social media use during assessment and throughout relationship

Clarify actual nature of client's relationship (is this person an actual friend?)

Inform clients about risks of using social media and how to be careful

Ask client to comply to social media policy

facebook



Hi Gerald, a friend thinks you might be going through something difficult and asked us to look at your recent post.



Only you can see this. Anything you do there will be kept private.

See Post

Continue

facebook

What would you like to do?

You matter to us, so we want to offer support if you need it. You're not alone—we do this for many people every month. What would you like to do?

Talk to someone

Reach out to a friend or helpline worker.



Get tips and support

Learn how to work through this using some simple tips.



Skip This

Next

Contact

Danielle Smith

dsmith.naswoh@socialworkers.org

614-461-4484