Ethics and Technology

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

This is why we can’t have nice things.

Ok, reporting 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 pokéstops 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 ___________ onyx there. Awesome. So I end up chatting with the guys for a bit, told em where I got my evies, they convinced me to join red team when I hit level five so we could “lock ______ 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 ______ game on his phone and asked us how to get started.

Go red team.
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!!!
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
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

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.


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

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
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
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.

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.
Contact

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