

Akin

CODE OF ETHICS

Modified excerpts from the National Association of Social Worker's (NASW) Code of Ethics

Preamble

The primary mission of social services is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social services is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social services is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living. The mission of social services is rooted in a set of core values. These core values, embraced by Akin team members, throughout the profession's history, are the foundation of social services' unique purpose and perspective:

- service
- social justice
- dignity and worth of the person
- importance of human relationships
- integrity
- competence.

This constellation of core values reflects what is unique to the social service professions. Core values, and the principles that flow from them, must be balanced within the context and complexity of the human experience.

Ethical Principles

The following broad ethical principles are based on social services' core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. **These principles set forth ideals to which all Akin team members should aspire.**

Value: Service

Ethical Principle: *Akin team members' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems.*

Akin team members elevate service to others above self-interest. Akin team members draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address social problems. Akin team members are encouraged to volunteer some portion of their professional skills with no expectation of significant financial return (pro bono service).

Value: Social Justice

Ethical Principle: *Akin team members challenge social injustice.*

Akin team members pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Akin team members' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Akin team members strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

Value: *Dignity and Worth of the Person*

Ethical Principle: *Akin team members respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.*

Akin team members treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Akin team members promote participants' socially responsible self-determination. Akin team members seek to enhance participants' capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Akin team members are cognizant of their dual responsibility to participants and to broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between participants' interests and the broader society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession. Akin team members make service decisions in the child's best interest, while seeking parental collaboration or reunification, when not contraindicated. All team members are supportive of and/or provide services in accordance with the Hague Convention principles of preventing the abduction, exploitation, sale, or trafficking of children.

Value: *Importance of Human Relationships*

Ethical Principle: *Akin team members recognize the central importance of human relationships.*

Akin team members understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Akin team members engage people as partners in the helping process. Akin team members seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

Value: *Integrity*

Ethical Principle: *Akin team members behave in a trustworthy manner.*

Akin team members are continually aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Akin team members act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

Value: *Competence*

Ethical Principle: *Akin team members practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.*

Akin team members continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice. Akin team members should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.

Ethical Standards

The following ethical standards are relevant to the professional activities of Akin team members. These standards concern: (1) Akin team members' ethical responsibilities to participants, (2) Akin team members' ethical responsibilities to colleagues, (3) Akin team members' ethical responsibilities in practice settings, (4) Akin team members' ethical responsibilities as professionals, (5) Akin team members' ethical responsibilities to the social service profession, and (6) Akin team members' ethical responsibilities to the broader society.

Some of the standards that follow are enforceable guidelines for professional conduct, and some are aspirational. The extent to which each standard is enforceable is a matter of professional judgment to be exercised by those responsible for reviewing alleged violations of ethical standards.

1. Akin Team members' Ethical Responsibilities to Participants

1.01 Commitment to Participants

Akin team members' primary responsibility is to promote the well-being of participants. In general, participants' interests are primary. However, Akin team members' responsibility to the larger society or specific legal obligations may on limited occasions supersede the loyalty owed participants, and participants should be so advised. (Examples include when a team member is required by law to report that a participant has abused a child or has threatened to harm self or others.)

1.02 Self-determination

Akin team members respect and promote the right of participants to self-determination and assist participants in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals. Akin team members may limit participants' right to self-determination when, in the Akin team members' professional judgment, participants' actions or potential actions pose a serious, foreseeable, and imminent risk to themselves or others.

1.03 Informed Consent

(a) Akin team members should provide services to participants only in the context of a professional relationship based, when appropriate, on valid informed consent. Akin team members should use clear and understandable language to inform participants of the

purpose of the services, risks related to the services, limits to services because of the requirements of a third-party payer, relevant costs, reasonable alternatives, participants' right to refuse or withdraw consent, and the time frame covered by the consent. Akin team members should provide participants with an opportunity to ask questions.

(b) In instances when participants are not literate or have difficulty understanding the primary language used in the practice setting, Akin team members should take steps to ensure participants' comprehension. This may include providing participants with a detailed verbal explanation or arranging for a qualified interpreter or translator whenever possible.

(c) In instances when participants lack the capacity to provide informed consent, Akin team members should protect participants' interests by seeking permission from an appropriate third party, informing participants consistent with the participants' level of understanding. In such instances Akin team members should seek to ensure that the third-party acts in a manner consistent with participants' wishes and interests. Akin team members should take reasonable steps to enhance such participants' ability to give informed consent.

(d) In instances when participants are receiving services involuntarily, Akin team members should provide information about the nature and extent of services and about the extent of participants' right to refuse service.

(e) Akin team members should discuss with participants the Akin policies concerning the use of technology in the provision of professional services.

(f) Akin team members, who use technology to provide services, should obtain informed consent from the individuals using these services during the initial screening or interview and prior to initiating services. Akin team members should assess clients' capacity to provide informed consent and, when using technology to communicate, verify the identity and location of participants.

(g) Akin team members, who use technology to provide services, should assess the participant's suitability and capacity for electronic and remote services. Akin team members should consider the participant's intellectual, emotional, and physical ability to use technology to receive services and ability to understand the potential benefits, risks, and limitations of such services. If participants do not wish to use services provided through technology, Akin team members should help them identify alternate methods of service.

(h) Akin team members should obtain participants' informed consent before making audio or video recordings of participants or permitting observation of services to participants by a third party.

1.04 Competence

- (a) Akin team members should provide services and represent themselves as competent only within the boundaries of their education, training, license, certification, consultation received, supervised experience, or other relevant professional experience.
- (b) Akin team members should provide services in substantive areas or use intervention techniques or approaches that are new to them only after engaging in appropriate study, training, consultation, and supervision from people who are competent in those interventions or techniques.
- (c) When generally recognized standards do not exist with respect to an emerging area of practice, Akin team members should exercise careful judgment and take responsible steps (including appropriate education, research, training, consultation, and supervision) to ensure the competence of their work and to protect participants from harm.
- (d) Akin team members, who use technology in providing services, should have the necessary knowledge and skills to provide such services in a competent manner. This includes an understanding of the special communication challenges when using technology and the ability to implement strategies to address these challenges.
- (e) Akin team members, who use technology in providing services, should comply with the laws governing technology and services practice in the jurisdiction in which they are regulated and located and, as applicable, in the jurisdiction in which the participant is located.

1.05 Cultural Awareness and Social Diversity

- (a) Akin team members should understand culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures.
- (b) Akin team members should have a knowledge base of their participants' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to participants' cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups.
- (c) Akin team members should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status and mental or physical ability.
- (d) Akin team members, who provide electronic services, should be aware of cultural and socioeconomic differences among participants and how they may use electronic technology. Akin team members should assess cultural, environmental, economic, mental or physical ability, linguistic, and other issues that may affect the delivery or use of services.

1.06 Conflicts of Interest

(a) Akin team members should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment. Akin team members should inform participants when a real or potential conflict of interest arises and take reasonable steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes the participants' interests primary and protects participants' interests to the greatest extent possible. In some cases, protecting participants' interests may require termination of the professional relationship with proper referral of the participant.

(b) Akin team members should not take unfair advantage of any professional relationship or exploit others to further their personal, religious, political, or business interests.

(c) Akin team members should not engage in dual or multiple relationships with participants or former participants in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the participant. In instances when dual or multiple relationships are unavoidable, Akin team members should take steps to protect participants and are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. (Dual or multiple relationships occur when Akin team members relate to participants in more than one relationship, whether professional, social, or business. Dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively.)

(d) When Akin team members provide services to two or more people, who have a relationship with each other, (for example, couples, family members), Akin team members should clarify with all parties which individuals will be considered participants and the nature of Akin team members' professional obligations to the various individuals who are receiving services. Akin team members, who anticipate a conflict of interest among the individuals receiving services, or who anticipate having to perform in potentially conflicting roles (for example, when a team member is asked to testify in a child custody dispute or divorce proceedings involving participants) should clarify their role with the parties involved and take appropriate action to minimize any conflict of interest.

(e) Akin team members should avoid communication with participants using technology (such as social networking sites, online chat, email, text messages, telephone and video) for personal or non-work-related purposes.

(f) Akin team members should be aware that posting personal information on professional Web sites or other media might cause boundary confusion, inappropriate dual relationships, or harm to participants.

(g) Akin team members should be aware that personal affiliations may increase the likelihood that participants may discover team members' presence on Web sites, social media, and other forms of technology. Team members should be aware that involvement

in electronic communication with groups based on race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, mental or physical ability, religion, immigration status and other personal affiliations may affect their ability to work effectively with particular participants.

(h) Akin team members should avoid accepting requests from or engaging in personal relationships with participants on social networking sites or other electronic media to prevent boundary confusion, inappropriate dual relationships, or harm to participants.

(i) Akin team members should not act as a witness to a participant's personal legal documents. (Team members may witness documents signed when implementing Akin services, such as Informed Consent or other Akin Authorizations.)

(j) Akin team members should not accept, store, or take responsibility for participants' personal possessions under any circumstances.

1.07 Privacy and Confidentiality

(a) Akin team members should respect participants' right to privacy. Akin team members should not solicit private information from participants unless it is essential to providing services or conducting evaluation or research. Once private information is shared, standards of confidentiality apply.

(b) Akin team members may disclose confidential information when appropriate with valid consent from a participant or a person legally authorized to consent on behalf of a participant.

(c) Akin team members should protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional service, except for compelling professional reasons. The general expectation that Akin team members will keep information confidential does not apply when disclosure is necessary to prevent serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to a participant or other identifiable person. In all instances, Akin team members should disclose the least amount of confidential information necessary to achieve the desired purpose; only information that is directly relevant to the purpose for which the disclosure is made should be revealed.

(d) Akin team members should inform participants, to the extent possible, about the disclosure of confidential information and the potential consequences, when feasible, before the disclosure is made. This applies whether Akin team members disclose confidential information based on a legal requirement or participant consent.

(e) Akin team members should discuss with participants and other interested parties the nature of confidentiality and limitations of participants' right to confidentiality. Akin team members should review with participants circumstances where confidential

information may be requested and where disclosure of confidential information may be legally required. This discussion should occur as soon as possible in the service provider-participant relationship and as needed throughout the relationship.

(f) When Akin team members provide counseling services to families, couples, or groups, Akin team members should seek agreement among the parties involved concerning everyone's right to confidentiality and obligation to preserve the confidentiality of information shared by others. This agreement should include consideration of whether confidential information may be exchanged in person or electronically, among participants or with others outside of formal service sessions. Akin team members should inform participants in family, couples, or group counseling that Akin team members cannot guarantee that all participants will honor such agreements.

(g) Akin team members should inform participants, who are involved in family, couples, marital, or group counseling, of Akin's policy concerning confidentiality of information among the parties involved in the counseling services.

(h) Akin team members should not disclose confidential information to third-party payers unless participants have authorized such disclosure.

(i) Akin team members should not discuss confidential information, electronically or in person, in any setting unless privacy can be ensured. Akin team members should not discuss confidential information in public or semipublic areas such as hallways, waiting rooms, elevators, and restaurants.

(j) Akin team members should protect the confidentiality of participants during legal proceedings to the extent permitted by law. When a court of law or other legally authorized body orders Akin team members to disclose confidential or privileged information without a participant's consent and such disclosure could cause harm to the participant, Akin team members should request that the court withdraw the order or limit the order as narrowly as possible or maintain the records under seal, unavailable for public inspection.

(k) Akin team members should protect the confidentiality of participants when responding to requests from members of the media.

(l) Akin team members should protect the confidentiality of participants' written and electronic records and other sensitive information. Akin team members should take reasonable steps to ensure that participants' records are stored in a secure location and that participants' records are not available to others, who are not authorized to have access.

(m) Akin team members should take reasonable steps to protect the confidentiality of electronic communications, including information provided to participants or third

parties. Akin team members should use applicable safeguards (such as encryption, firewalls, and passwords) when using electronic communications such as email, online posts, online chat sessions, mobile communication, and text messages.

(n) Akin team members should be familiar with Akin policies and procedures for notifying participants of any breach of confidential information in a timely manner.

(o) In the event of unauthorized access to participant records or information, including any unauthorized access to Akin's electronic communication or storage systems, Akin team members should follow Akin's breach assessment and notification policies and procedures which are consistent with applicable laws and professional standards.

(p) Akin team members should inform participants about Akin policies, consistent with prevailing social services ethical standards, on the use of electronic technology, including Internet-based search engines, to gather information about participants.

(q) Akin team members should avoid searching or gathering participant information electronically unless there are compelling professional reasons, and when appropriate, with the participant's informed consent.

(r) Akin team members are prohibited from using or posting any current participant information on professional Web sites or other forms of social media

(s) Akin team members should transfer or dispose of participants' records in a manner that protects participants' confidentiality and is consistent with state statutes governing records and licensure.

(t) Akin team members should take reasonable precautions to protect participant confidentiality in the event of the team member's termination of practice, incapacitation, or death.

(u) Akin team members should not disclose identifying information when discussing participants for teaching or training purposes unless the participant has consented to disclose confidential information.

(v) Akin team members should not disclose identifying information when discussing participants with consultants unless the participant has consented to disclosure of confidential information or there is a compelling need for such disclosure.

(w) Akin team members should protect the confidentiality of deceased participants consistent with the preceding standards.

1.08 Access to Records

(a) Akin team members should provide participants with reasonable access to records concerning the participants. Akin team members, who are concerned that participants'

access to their records could cause serious misunderstanding or harm to the participant, should aid in interpreting the records and consultation with the participant regarding the records. Akin team members should limit participants' access to their records, or portions of their records, only in exceptional circumstances when there is compelling evidence that such access would cause serious harm to the participant. Both participants' requests and the rationale for withholding some or all of the record should be documented in participants' files.

(b) Akin team members, as appropriate to their job functions, should inform participants about Akin policies on the use of technology in providing participants with access to their records, consistent with prevailing ethical standards.

(c) When providing participants with access to their records, Akin team members should take steps to protect the confidentiality of other individuals identified or discussed in such records.

1.09 Sexual Relationships

(a) Akin team members should under no circumstances engage in sexual activities, inappropriate sexual communications through the use of technology or in person, or sexual contact with current participants, whether such contact is consensual or forced.

(b) Akin team members should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with participants' relatives or other individuals with whom participants maintain a close personal relationship when there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the participant. Sexual activity or sexual contact with participants' relatives or other individuals with whom participants maintain a personal relationship has the potential to be harmful to the participant and may make it difficult for the team members and participant to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Akin team members--not their participants, their participants' relatives, or other individuals with whom the participant maintains a personal relationship--assume the full burden for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

(c) Akin team members should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with former participants because of the potential for harm to the participant. If any Akin team members engage in conduct contrary to this prohibition or claim that an exception to this prohibition is warranted because of extraordinary circumstances, it is Akin team members--not their participants--who assume the full burden of demonstrating that the former participant has not been exploited, coerced, or manipulated, intentionally or unintentionally.

(d) Akin team members should not provide services to individuals with whom they have had a prior sexual relationship. Providing services to a former sexual partner has the potential to be harmful to the individual and is likely to make it difficult for the service provider and individual to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

1.10 Physical Contact

Akin team members should not engage in physical contact with participants when there is a possibility of psychological harm to the participant as a result of the contact (such as cradling or caressing participants). Akin team members, who engage in appropriate physical contact with participants, are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern such physical contact.

1.11 Sexual Harassment

Akin team members should not sexually harass participants. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, sexual solicitation, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, written, electronic or physical contact of a sexual nature.

1.12 Derogatory Language

Akin team members should not use derogatory language in their written or verbal communications to or about participants. Akin team members should use accurate and respectful language in all communications to and about participants.

1.13 Payment for Services

(a) When setting fees, Akin team members should ensure that the fees are fair, reasonable, and commensurate with the services performed. Consideration should be given to participants' ability to pay.

(b) Akin team members should avoid accepting goods or services from participants as payment for professional services. Bartering arrangements, particularly involving services, create the potential for conflicts of interest, exploitation, and inappropriate boundaries in Akin team members' relationships with participants. Akin team members should explore and may participate in bartering only in very limited circumstances when it can be demonstrated that such arrangements are an accepted practice among professionals in the local community, considered to be essential for the provision of services, negotiated without coercion, and entered into at the participant's initiative and with the participant's informed consent. Akin team members, who accept goods or services from participants as payment for professional services, assume the full burden of demonstrating that this arrangement will not be detrimental to the participant or the professional relationship.

(c) Akin team members should not solicit a private fee or other remuneration for providing services to participants who are entitled to such available services through the Akin team members' employer or Akin.

(d) Offers of contributions to any Akin programs are handled through appropriate Resource Development team members responsible for the ethical management of donations.

1.14 Participants Who Lack Decision-Making Capacity

When Akin team members act on behalf of participants who lack the capacity to make informed decisions, Akin team members should take reasonable steps to safeguard the interests and rights of those participants.

1.15 Interruption of Services

Akin team members should make reasonable efforts to ensure continuity of services if services are interrupted by factors such as unavailability, disruptions in electronic communication, relocation, illness, mental or physical ability, or death.

1.16 Referral for Services(a) Akin team members should refer participants to other professionals when the other professionals' specialized knowledge or expertise is needed to serve participants fully or when Akin team members believe that they are not being effective or making reasonable progress with participants and that other services are required.

(b) Akin team members, who refer participants to other professionals, should take appropriate steps to facilitate an orderly transfer of responsibility. Akin team members, who refer participants to other professionals, should disclose, with participants' consent, all pertinent information to the new service providers.

(c) Akin team members are prohibited from giving or receiving payment for a referral when no professional service is provided by the referring team members.

1.17 Termination of Services

(a) Akin team members should terminate services to participants and professional relationships with them when such services and relationships are no longer required or no longer serve the participants' needs or interests.

Akin team members should take reasonable steps to avoid abandoning participants still in need of services. Akin team members should withdraw services precipitously only under unusual circumstances, considering all factors in the situation and taking care to minimize possible adverse effects. Akin team members should help make appropriate arrangements for the continuation of services when needed.

(c) Akin team members in fee-for-service settings may terminate services to participants who are not paying an overdue balance if the financial contractual arrangements have been made clear to the participant, if the participant does not pose an imminent danger to self or others, and if the clinical and other consequences of the current nonpayment have been addressed and discussed with the participant.

(d) Akin team members should not terminate services to pursue a social, financial, or sexual relationship with a participant.

(e) Akin team members, who anticipate the termination or interruption of services to participants, should notify participants promptly and seek the transfer, referral, or continuation of services in relation to the participants' needs and preferences.

(f) Akin team members, who are leaving an employment setting, should inform participants of appropriate options for the continuation of services and of the benefits and risks of the options.

2. Akin Team members' Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues

2.01 Respect

(a) Akin team members should treat colleagues with respect and should represent accurately and fairly the qualifications, views, and obligations of colleagues.

(b) Akin team members should avoid unwarranted negative criticism of colleagues in verbal, written, and electronic communications with participants and with other professionals. Unwarranted negative criticism may include demeaning comments that refer to colleagues' level of competence or to individuals' attributes such as race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical ability.

(c) Akin team members should cooperate with work colleagues and with colleagues of other professions when such cooperation serves the well-being of participants.

2.02 Confidentiality

Akin team members should respect confidential information shared by colleagues in their professional relationships and transactions. Akin team members should ensure that such colleagues understand Akin team members' obligation to respect confidentiality, and any exceptions related to it.

2.03 Interdisciplinary Collaboration

(a) Akin team members, members of an interdisciplinary team, should participate in and contribute to decisions that affect participants' well-being by drawing on the perspectives, values, and experiences of the profession. Professional and ethical obligations of the interdisciplinary team and of its individual members should be established.

(b) Akin team members, for whom a team decision raises ethical concerns, should attempt to resolve the disagreement through appropriate channels. If the disagreement cannot be

resolved, Akin team members should pursue other avenues to address their concerns consistent with participant well-being.

2.04 Disputes Involving Colleagues

(a) Akin team members should not take advantage of a dispute between a colleague and an employer to obtain a position or otherwise advance the Akin team members' own interests.

(b) Akin team members should not exploit participants in disputes with colleagues or engage participants in any inappropriate discussion of conflicts between Akin team members and their colleagues.

2.05 Consultation

(a) Akin team members should seek the advice and counsel of colleagues whenever such consultation is in the best interests of participants.

(b) Akin team members should keep themselves informed about colleagues' areas of expertise and competencies. Akin team members should seek consultation only from colleagues who have demonstrated knowledge, expertise, and competence related to the subject of the consultation.

(c) When consulting with colleagues about participants, Akin team members should disclose the least amount of information necessary to achieve the purposes of the consultation.

2.06 Sexual Relationships

(a) Akin team members, who function as supervisors or educators, should not engage in sexual activities or contact with supervisees, students, trainees, or other colleagues over whom they exercise professional authority.

(b) Akin team members should avoid engaging in sexual relationships with colleagues when there is potential for a conflict of interest. Akin team members, who become involved in or anticipate becoming involved in, a sexual relationship with a colleague, have a duty to transfer professional responsibilities, when necessary, to avoid a conflict of interest.

2.07 Sexual Harassment

(a) Akin team members should not sexually harass supervisees, students, trainees, or colleagues. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, sexual solicitation, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

2.08 Impairment of Colleagues

(a) Akin team members, who have direct knowledge of a colleague's impairment that is due to personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties and that interferes with practice effectiveness, should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.

(b) Akin team members, who believe that a colleague's impairment interferes with practice effectiveness and that the colleague has not taken adequate steps to address the impairment, should take action through appropriate channels established by Akin, agencies, NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, and other professional organizations.

2.9 Incompetence of Colleagues

(a) Akin team members, who have direct knowledge of a colleague's incompetence, should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.

(b) Akin team members, who believe that a colleague is incompetent and has not taken adequate steps to address the incompetence, should take action through appropriate channels established by Akin, agencies, NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, and other professional organizations.

2.10 Unethical Conduct of Colleagues

(a) Akin team members should take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, expose, and correct the unethical conduct of colleagues, including unethical conduct using technology.

(b) Akin team members should be knowledgeable about established policies and procedures for handling concerns about colleagues' unethical behavior. Akin team members should be familiar with national, state, and local procedures for handling ethics complaints. These include policies and procedures created by, licensing and regulatory bodies, Akin, and other professional organizations.

(c) Akin team members, who believe that a colleague has acted unethically, should seek resolution by discussing their concerns with the colleague when feasible and when such discussion is likely to be productive.

(d) When necessary, Akin team members, who believe that a colleague has acted unethically, should take action through appropriate formal channels (such as contacting a state licensing board or regulatory body, an NASW National Ethics Committee, or other professional ethics committees).

(e) Akin team members should defend and assist colleagues who are unjustly charged with unethical conduct.

3. Akin Team members' Ethical Responsibilities in Practice Settings

3.01 Supervision and Consultation

- (a) Akin team members, who provide supervision or consultation (whether in-person or remotely), should have the necessary knowledge and skill to supervise or consult appropriately and should do so only within their areas of knowledge and competence.
- (b) Akin team members, who provide supervision or consultation, are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.
- (c) Akin team members should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with supervisees in which there is a risk of exploitation of or potential harm to the supervisee, including dual relationships that may arise while using social networking sites or other electronic media.
- (d) Akin team members, who provide supervision, should evaluate supervisees' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.

3.02 Education and Training

- (a) Akin team members, who function as educators, field instructors for students, or trainers, should provide instruction only within their areas of knowledge and competence and should provide instruction based on the most current information and knowledge available in the profession.
- (b) Akin team members, who function as educators or field instructors for students, should evaluate students' performance fairly and respectfully.
- (c) Akin team members, who function as educators or field instructors for students, should take reasonable steps to ensure that participants are routinely informed when services are being provided by students.
- (d) Akin team members, who function as educators or field instructors for students, should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with students in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the student, including dual relationships that may arise while using social networking sites or other electronic media. Educators and field instructors are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

3.03 Performance Evaluation

Akin team members, who have responsibility for evaluating the performance of others, should fulfill such responsibility in a fair and considerate manner and based on clearly stated criteria.

3.04 Participant Records

- (a) Akin team members should take reasonable steps to ensure that documentation in electronic and paper records is accurate, and reflects the services provided.
- (b) Akin team members should include sufficient and timely documentation in their records to facilitate the delivery of services and to ensure the continuity of services provided to participants in the future.
- (c) Akin team members' documentation should protect participants' privacy to the extent that is possible and appropriate and should include only information that is directly relevant to the delivery of services.
- (d) Akin team members should store records following the termination of services to ensure reasonable future access. Records should be maintained for the number of years required by relevant laws, Akin policies, and contracts.

3.05 Billing

Akin team members should establish and maintain billing practices that accurately reflect the nature and extent of services provided and that identify who provided the service in the practice setting.

3.06 Participant Transfer

- (a) When an individual, who is receiving services from another agency or colleague, contacts Akin for services, the service provider should carefully consider the participant's needs before agreeing to provide services. To minimize confusion and conflict, Akin team members should discuss with potential participants the nature of the participants' current relationship with other service providers and the implications, including benefits or risks, of entering a relationship with a new service provider.
- (b) If a new participant has been served by another agency or colleague, Akin team members should discuss with the participant whether consultation with the previous service provider is in the participant's best interest.

3.07 Administration

- (a) Social services administrators should advocate within and outside Akin for adequate resources to meet participants' needs.
- (b) Akin team members should advocate for resource allocation procedures that are open and fair. When not all participants' needs can be met, an allocation procedure should be developed that is nondiscriminatory and based on appropriate and consistently applied principles.

(c) Akin team members, who are administrators, should take reasonable steps to ensure that adequate Akin or organizational resources are available to provide appropriate team members supervision.

(d) Social service administrators should take reasonable steps to ensure that the working environment for which they are responsible is consistent with and encourages compliance with the NASW Code of Ethics. Social service administrators should take reasonable steps to eliminate any conditions in their organizations that violate, interfere with, or discourage compliance with this Code.

3.08 Continuing Education and Team members Development

Social services administrators and supervisors should take reasonable steps to provide or arrange for continuing education and team members development for all team members for whom they are responsible.

Continuing education and team members development should address current knowledge and emerging developments related to social services practice and ethics.

3.09 Commitments to Employers

(a) Akin team members should adhere to commitments made to Akin.

(b) Akin team members should work to improve Akin's policies and procedures and the efficiency and effectiveness of their services.

(c) Akin team members should take reasonable steps to ensure that others within Akin are aware of Akin team members' ethical obligations as set forth in the NASW Code of Ethics and of the implications of those obligations for their practice.

(d) Akin team members should not allow Akin's policies, procedures, regulations, or administrative orders to interfere with their ethical practice of providing social services. Akin team members should take reasonable steps to ensure that Akin's practices are consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics.

(e) Akin team members should act to prevent and eliminate discrimination in Akin work assignments and in its employment policies and practices.

(f) Akin team members should accept employment or arrange student field placements only in organizations that exercise fair personnel practices.

(g) Akin team members should be diligent stewards of the resources of Akin's resources, wisely conserving funds where appropriate and never misappropriate funds or using them for unintended purposes.

4. Akin Team members' Ethical Responsibilities as Professionals

4.01 Discrimination

Akin team members should not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, color, race, religion, creed, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, age, the presence of any physical, mental, or sensory disability, the use of a trained service animal by a person with a disability, marital status, honorably discharged veteran or military status, familial status and source of income, status as a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, harassment or stalking, political ideology, genetic information, ancestry, caste, and actual, potential, perceived, or alleged pregnancy outcomes or any other status or characteristic protected by local, state, or federal law.

4.02 Private Conduct

Akin team members should not permit their private conduct to interfere with their ability to fulfill their professional responsibilities.

4.03 Dishonesty, Fraud, and Deception

Akin team members should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, or deception.

4.04 Impairment

(a) Akin team members should not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere with their professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility.

(b) Akin team members, whose personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties interfere with their professional judgment and performance, should immediately seek consultation and take appropriate remedial action by seeking professional help, making adjustments in workload, terminating practice, or taking any other steps necessary to protect participants and others.

4.05 Misrepresentation

(a) Akin team members should make clear distinctions between statements made and actions engaged in as a private individual and as a representative of Akin.

(b) Akin team members, who speak on behalf of professional social service organizations, should accurately represent the official and authorized positions of the organizations.

(c) Akin team members should ensure that their representations to participants, agencies, and the public of professional qualifications, credentials, education, competence, affiliations, services provided or results to be achieved are accurate. Akin team members

should claim only those relevant professional credentials they possess and take steps to correct any inaccuracies or misrepresentations of their credentials by others.

4.06 Solicitations

(a) Akin team members should not engage in uninvited solicitation of potential participants who, because of their circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence, manipulation, or coercion.

(b) Akin team members should not engage in solicitation of testimonial endorsements (including solicitation of consent to use a participant's prior statement as a testimonial endorsement) from current participants or from other people who, because of their circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence.

4.07 Acknowledging Credit

Akin team members should take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for the work they have performed and to which they have contributed.

(b) Akin team members should honestly acknowledge the work of, and the contributions made by others.

Code of Ethics Acknowledgement

Akin team members, program volunteers, student interns and peer support counselors, sign this form as a part of New Employee Orientation, in compliance with national accreditation standards, licensing, and the Akin “Code of Ethics” policy. Additional professional Codes listed below are maintained by People & Culture and provided to new team members as appropriate to their job classification.

I, _____, have received, read, and agree to abide by the Akin “Code of Ethics” modified from the National Association of Social Workers (NASW).

IN ADDITION

I also acknowledge and abide by the following work-specific Code of Ethics related to my Akin job classification, as provided to me by People & Culture:

- ☐ Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) Code of Ethical & Professional Standards
- ☐ Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) Code of Ethical Principles & Standards

- ☐ American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) Code of Ethics
- ☐ National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethics
- ☐ Acts of Unprofessional Conduct – Behavioral Health
- ☐ Family Support Principles
- ☐ Public Relations Society of America
- ☐ National Practice Guidelines for Peer Support Counselors
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ No other code of ethics is required.

Signature

Date

Form: #0188-101-3/99 ATTACHMENT to Code of Ethics
Last Revision: April 2025