SOCIAL WORK ETHICS AND TECHNOLOGY

ZOOM CHAT TRAINING FOR NASW- FL STUDENT DISCUSSION

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Social Work 'Cyber Coffeehouse' Thrives

She says synchronous participation creates a form of online intimacy.

Probably the nation's oldest, most consistent and largest online chat room for social workers is America OnLine's Social Work Forum, run from Miami by Susan Mankita.

Three nights weekly, AOL subscribers can join colleagues from around the country for real-time discussions of social work issues. The forum provides an "intimate" way for social workers to connect, share information and solve problems without ever leaving their homes, says Mankita, 40, who recently quit her job as a hospital social worker to finish a doctorate and to promote online communication.

In AOL chat rooms, a list of participants by online name is shown on the monitors of those in the room, allowing participants to come to know each other over time, said Mankita.

The forum was begun on AOL by dents, but faculty members and practitioners found it and all use it now. For years, the only chat was on Thursdays from 9 p.m to 10:30 p.m., Eastern. In 1998, chats were added on Sundays from 9 to 10 p.m. and Mondays from 9:30 to 10:30 p.m.

The Sunday chats are exclusively on clinical topics. The first Monday of each month, the chat is about medical social work; second Monday, marketing private practice; third, aging; fourth, student social work; and if there is a fifth Monday they "wing it," said Mankita. Thursday chats are on requested topics.

The forum can be found by typing sssocialwork as a key word. Only AOL subscribers can gain entry, although the forum has a World Wide Web page where social work information can be found.

Mankita's responsibilities include maintaining links to other social work sites on the Web, keeping bulletin boards free of commercial messages and producing a monthly newsletter for 1,300 online sub-

AOL forum's Susan Mankita

be advised in advance of chat topics.

Mankita compares being an online chat moderator to being a social work group leader. Both involve soliciting participation and demonstrating empathy, warmth and openness. She and guest moderators also have the job of keeping the discussions on track while filtering out people who are disruptive.

"The Internet is a huge, scary place," said Mankita. "Our job is to give social workers a comfortable place to begin their exploration, knowing they can return to the forum to share and process what they find." The forum provides a way of building relationships that is more intimate than being on a mailing list or posting on a bulletin board, she said.

There are theories about intimacy that say that the degree to which personal relationships can develop is directly related to how much people feel others are on their side, said Mankita. "Chatting, because it is synchronous, gives you the actual sense that there are people there with you."

Chat rooms are especially useful for the person in a rural area without many colleagues, the social worker like Mankita with a young child who doesn't get to socialize much and the person who might be the only social worker in a multidisciplinary setting and who needs

support advocating social work values, she said.

For a typical Thursday chat, Mankita will email information on the topic in advance, along with Web links so participants can study before chat time. Recent topics have covered schizophrenia and social work and religion. Ten to 30 people typically participate in chats.

The forum maintains a list of volunteer "experts," or mentors, in various social work practice areas from whom practitioners can get counsel by e-mail. Transcripts of actual forum chats are not made public because of confidentiality concerns.

Many good connections have been made through the forum, said Mankita. People have gotten jobs, advice, and met and made professional contacts and friendships. It has been best of all for Mankita, the former undergraduate theatre major, who has gotten to write articles and speak before many groups. "It is the 'funnest' thing I have done in my professional career — rich, textured and exciting," she said.

It's time to "lean in"

M. Jenise Comer, LCSW, MSW, ACSW

ASWB President

When I arrived at the Westin in Henderson, Nevada, my first reaction was WOW! The 2017 ASWB Education Conference was being held in a beautiful venue that some attendees referred to as an oasis, far from the Las Vegas Strip. The landscape was so beautiful, and the weather so perfect, that lunch was set up outdoors on Saturday afternoon. The isolation contributed to the success of the meeting, while the program kept participants engaged from beginning to end.

We met ASWB's new meetings manager, Jeanie Crane, who had just joined the Volunteer Engagement and Outreach (VEO) department

conferences that have had themes related to Mobility, starting with the 2001 Spring Education Meeting keynoted by Susan Mankita of Florida. That conference opened with a full day focused on electronic practice. During her keynote address, Susan identified that electronic practice was not a wave of the future: "It's already happening!" She gave examples of existing online group treatment approaches with cancer patients and clients in rural communities.

At the 2012 Spring Education Meeting, Ric Reamer of Rhode Island University impressed attendees with information

NA SW

CODE OF ETHICS

(Adopted by the Delegate Assembly of the National Association of Social Workers, October 13, 1960)

Social work is based on humanitarian, democratic ideals. Professional social workers are dedicated to service for the welfare of mankind; to the disciplined use of a recognized body of knowledge about human beings and their interactions; and to the marshaling of community resources to promote the well-being of all without discrimination.

Social work practice is a public trust that requires of its practitioners integrity, compassion, belief in the dignity and worth of human beings, respect for individual differences, a commitment to service, and a dedication to truth. It requires mastery of a body of knowledge and skill gained through professional education and experience. It requires also recognition of the limitations of present knowledge and skill and of the services we are now equipped to give. The end sought is the performance of a service with integrity and competence.

Each member of the profession carries responsibility to maintain and improve social work service; constantly to examine, use, and increase the knowledge upon which practice and social policy are based; and to develop further the philosophy and skills of the profession.

This Code of Ethics embodies certain standards of behavior for the social worker in his professional relationships with those he serves, with his colleagues, with his employing agency, with other professions, and with the community. In abiding by the code, the social worker views his obligations in as wide a context as the situation requires, takes all of the principles into consideration, and chooses a course of action consistent with the code's spirit and intent.

As a member of the National Association of Social Workers I commit myself to conduct my professional relationships in accord with the code and subscribe to the following statements:

- I regard as my primary obligation the welfare of the individual or group served which includes action for improving social conditions.
- I give precedence to my professional responsibility over my personal interests.
- I hold myself responsible for the quality and extent of the service I perform.
- I respect the privacy of the people I serve.
- I use in a responsible manner information gained in professional relationships.
- I treat with respect the findings, views, and actions of colleagues, and use appropriate channels to express judgment on these matters.
- I practice social work within the recognized knowledge and competence of the profession.
- I recognize my professional responsibility to add my ideas and findings to the body of social work knowledge and practice.
- I accept responsibility to help protect the community against unethical practice by any individuals or organizations engaged in social welfare activities.
- I stand ready to give appropriate professional service in public emergencies.
- I distinguish clearly, in public, between my statements and actions as an individual and as a representative of an organization.
- I support the principle that professional practice requires professional education.
- I accept responsibility for working toward the creation and maintenance of conditions within agencies which enable social workers to conduct themselves in keeping with this code.
- I contribute my knowledge, skills, and support to programs of human welfare.

(Reprinted from the NASW NEWS for February 1961.)

OCTOBER, 1960 NASW DELEGATE ASSEMBLY CREATED OUR FIRST CODE OF ETHICS

OUR EVOLVING CODE OF ETHICS

1967 The **first revision** of the original 1-page Code - added non-discrimination.

1979 2nd Revision was **significant**

- **6 sections of standards, consisting of 82 principles and a preamble**.

- Set forth principles related to the social workers' **ethical responsibility to clients, colleagues, employers and employing organizations, the social work profession and society.**

- Introduced the **enforcement of ethical practices** among social workers using the Code as a basis and standard for the everyday conduct of social workers.

1990, Modified following an inquiry by the US Federal Trade Commission. This revision focused on principles related to **solicitation of clients, fee setting and accepting compensation for referrals.**

1993, **five new principles** were added. They included principles related to social worker impairment and dual relationships.

1996 The last major revision until recently included wider understanding of ethical issues not addressed in the 1979 Code. Developments in health care**, litigations**, publicity in the media all forced the profession to pay more attention to ethics.

1999 minor revision clarified circumstances in which social workers may need to **disclose confidential information without a client's consent.**

2008 revision **incorporated sexual orientation**, **gender identity and immigration status** into the existing non-discrimination standards. (27 pages)

WHAT DID THE NASW CODE OF ETHICS SAY SPECIFICALLY ABOUT TECHNOLOGY PRIOR TO JANUARY, 2018?

- Not Much!

- 1.07
  - (l) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients' written and electronic records and other sensitive information. Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients' records are stored in a secure location and that clients' records are not available to others who are not authorized to have access.
  - (m) Social workers should take precautions to ensure and maintain the confidentiality of information transmitted to other parties **through the use of computers, electronic mail, facsimile machines, telephones and telephone answering machines, and other electronic or computer technology**. Disclosure of identifying information should be avoided whenever possible.

NASW CODE OF ETHICS

- Biggest changes since 1996
- Effective since January 1, 2018
- Code now has 172 standards (30 pages long)
- 19 are brand new -19 have revisions
- Most are in Section 1: Ethical Responsibilities to Clients (Informed consent, competence, cultural awareness/diversity, conflicts of interest, privacy and confidentiality)
- Most are about technology
- https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Highlighted-Revisions-to-the-Code-of-Ethics

ETHICAL ASPIRATIONS RE: TECHNOLOGY USE

- **Awareness of unique challenges that technology creates in relation to:**
  - **Confidentiality**
  - **Informed consent**
  - **Professional boundaries**
  - **Professional competence**
  - **Record keeping… and other ethical considerations**

THE ETHICAL DILEMMA OF COVID-19

6.03 Public Emergencies

- Social workers should provide appropriate professional services in public emergencies to the greatest extent possible.

Vs…. Almost the whole rest of the Code of Ethics

Ethical Exceptions for Social Workers in Light of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Physical Distancing. by Allan Barsky https://www.socialworker.com/feature-articles/ethics-articles/ethical-exceptions-social-workers-in-light-of-covid-19-pandemic-physical-distancing/.

He asks the question, that the rest of this presentation is based on – because to manage the exceptional – we MUST consider the RULES

He asks…

"Under what circumstances, if any, is it ethical for social workers to breach particular ethical standards, agency policies, or regulatory laws? And if we do breach any of these guidelines, what can we do to minimize the risk of harm to our clients, ourselves, and our practice settings?"

FAILURE TO PROVIDE SERVICES IN A PROFESSIONAL MANNER AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH KNOWN STANDARDS OF CARE

- You fail to get informed consent, or you provide substandard treatment. You don't show up for appointments

Then

- Giving up on your online office (Abandonment)
- Failure to obtain training in online provision of services

Now

Failing to get informed consent that is thorough Poor technology connections – without alternative method of speaking

Now

PROFESSIONAL PARAMETERS: YOUR ACTIONS CAN BE JUDGED BY….

Professional regulations, ethics & standards

Community Standards of good reputation

Accreditation Standards i.e. JCAHO

Your sense of How you should perform

Agency policies & procedures

March 7, 2003

NEW ETHICAL ASPIRATIONS: IF YOU ARE A SOCIAL WORKER, THIS MEANS YOU!

Technology-assisted social work services encompass **all aspects of social work practice,** *including psychotherapy; individual, family, or group counseling; community organization; administration; advocacy; mediation; education; supervision; research; evaluation; and other social work services.*

Social workers should **keep apprised** of emerging technological developments that may be used in social work practice and how various ethical standards apply to them"

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS & HOW DIFFERENT CODES DO TECHNOLOGY

APA	AAMFT	ACA	AMHCA	NBCC
(2016) Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct Plus Telepsychology Guidelines (2013)	(2013) Added Standard VI: Technology Assisted Professional Services	(2014) Added Section H: Distance Counseling, Technology and Social Media	(2015) Principle 6: Telehealth, Distance Counseling and the Use of Social Media	(2016) Code of Ethics Plus The NBCC Policy Regarding the Provision of Distance Professional Services
States that the Code applies to these activities across a variety of contexts; includes obligations for confidentiality. Plus, 23 pages of guidelines	6 broad sections. covering basic ethical requirements for therapy, supervision & other professional services	6 standards with multiple subsections covering counselor guidelines	9 broad sections with multiple subsections covering technology assisted and or virtual counseling	Code addresses encryption and password security Plus Policy has 20 specific standards

STANDARDS & HIGHLIGHT OF CHANGES

CHANGES BY SECTION RELATED TO TECH USE

- Responsibilities to Clients 18 NS's, 10 R's
- Responsibilities to Colleagues 3 R's
- Responsibilities in Practice Settings 4 R's
- Responsibilities as Professionals
- Responsibilities to the Profession
- Responsibilities to Broader Society

Today's Focus

I. RESPONSIBILITIES TO CLIENTS

- Commitment to clients
- Self determination
- Informed consent
- Competence
- Cultural awareness and social diversity
- Conflicts of interest
- Privacy and confidentiality
- Access to records

- Sexual relationships
- Physical contact
- Sexual harassment
- Derogatory language
- Payment for services
- Clients who lack decision making capacity
- Interruption of services
- Referral for services
- Termination of services

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY TO CLIENTS: SECTION 1.03: **INFORMED CONSENT**

(e) Discuss policies concerning the use of technology in services with clients.

If you use technology to provide services:

(f) obtain informed consent during the initial screening or interview and prior to initiating services.

(f) Assess clients' capacity to provide informed consent and, when using technology to communicate, verify the identity and location of clients.

(g) Assess clients' suitability and capacity for electronic and remote services. Consider intellectual, emotional, and physical ability to use technology to receive services and ability to understand potential benefits, risks, and limitations of such services.

(g) Help clients who do not wish to use technology to identify alternate methods of service.

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY TO CLIENTS: SECTION 1.03: **INFORMED CONSENT**

Obtain clients' informed consent:

(h) before making audio or video recordings of clients or permitting observation of service provision by a third party.

(i) before conducting an electronic search on the client.

(ii) Exceptions may arise when the search is for purposes of protecting the client or other people from serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm, or for other compelling professional reasons.

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO CLIENTS: SECTION 1.04 **COMPETENCE**

- Social workers who use technology in the provision of social work services should:
  - (d)ensure that they have the necessary knowledge/skills to provide services with competence, including an understanding of the special communication challenges when using technology and the ability to implement strategies to address these challenges.
  - (e) comply with the laws governing technology and social work practice in the jurisdiction in which they are regulated and located and, as applicable, in the jurisdiction in which the client is located.

INCORRECT TREATMENT, INACCURATE DIAGNOSIS OR ASSESSMENT.

Then You select an intervention that is not well tested and/or controversial

You miss important details and misdiagnose your client

Now You use online assessment tools that are readily available and misinterpret them

Now You "see" a client in your virtual office and miss critical clues because you cannot actually see their body language.

Now You accept client online that is too high risk to work with online – ie: psychiatric disorder that needs immediate attention,

FAILURE TO CONSULT OR REFER

- You neglect to refer a client who states their psychiatric medication is causing symptoms to their psychiatrist and help them wean off medication yourself

Then

- A client asks to work with you via Skype and you agree despite the fact you are not familiar with the technology

Now

- You set up a site to provide online counseling and see clients at a distance without awareness of a referral network in their area

Now

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO CLIENTS: SECTION 1.05: **CULTURAL AWARENESS AND SOCIAL DIVERSITY**

- (d) Be aware of cultural and socioeconomic differences among clients and how they may use electronic technology.

- (d) Assess cultural, environmental, economic, mental or physical ability, linguistic, and other issues that may affect the delivery or use of these services.

PRIVATE CONDUCT COMPROMISES PROFESSIONAL ROLE

Then
- Your behavior leads to your arrest
- Your Facebook overuse interferes with getting enough sleep

Now
- Your client learns something about you online that interferes with their treatment for example…

Now
You maintain a blog & share your strong value based views on abortion
Friends post a Facebook picture of you, drunk at a party

DUAL RELATIONSHIPS – CLIENT EXPLOITED?

Then	Now	Now
• Client offers to fix your roof in exchange for therapy • Your child and your client's child are classmates	• Asking your client to recommend you on Linkedin • Accept/expect something of value for making referral - Klout?	• Your client is also a "follower" of your blog • Your client "friends" you on facebook

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO CLIENTS: SECTION 1.06: **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

- (e) Avoid communication with clients using technology (ie: social networking sites, chat, e-mail, texts, phone, video) for personal/non-work-related purposes.

- (f) Be aware that: posting personal information on professional websites or other media might cause boundary confusion, inappropriate dual relationships, or harm to clients.

- (g) Your personal affiliations may increase the likelihood that clients may see you online

- Be aware that: involvement in online 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 clients.

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO CLIENTS: SECTION 1.06: **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

- (h) Social workers should avoid accepting requests from or engaging in personal relationships with clients on social networking sites or other electronic media to prevent boundary confusion, inappropriate dual relationships, or harm to clients.

BREACH OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Then	Now	Now	Now
• You leave a client record open on your desk • You talk about a client where others overhear	• You chat about clients in a professional chat room • You email documents with client info to your supervisor	• You work from home and let your kids use your computer • You set up a FB page where clients go…	• Your Facebook status reveals too much information detail about your 4 PM appt

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO CLIENTS: SECTION 1.07: **PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY**

- (n) Develop and disclose policies and procedures for notifying clients of any breach of confidential information in a timely manner.

- (o) In the event of unauthorized access to client records or information, including any unauthorized access to the social worker's electronic communication or storage systems, social workers should inform clients of such disclosures, consistent with applicable laws and professional standards.

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO CLIENTS: SECTION 1.07: **PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY**

- (p) Develop and inform clients about their policies, consistent with prevailing social work ethical standards, on the use of electronic technology, including Internet-based search engines, to gather information about clients.

- (q) Avoid searching or gathering client information electronically unless there are compelling professional reasons, and when appropriate, with the client's informed consent.

- (r) Social workers should avoid posting any identifying or confidential information about clients on professional websites or other forms of social media.

- If we send sensitive client data electronically, HIPAA requires us to notify clients if there is a breach in our records
- Holds agencies that we do business with accountable as well…

CONFIDENTIALITY

o Do not share client information online on purpose
  o It is not enough to leave out identifying information
o Consult with your IT department to insure you do not share it inadvertently
  o Wireless network is protected by firewall
  o Client information protected on many levels
  o Encryption Password protection – use numbers and letters mix it up

SMART PHONES

| Best Practices | Maintain personal AND professional devices
Understand your phone
Use caution when recommending apps
Include in policies – discuss use with clients and educate re: security, privacy, content, confidentiality
Password protect/ use high security settings
Antiviral and malware programs |

SECURE EMAIL PROGRAMS

- 4securemail
- healthBI
- Hushmail
- Luxsci
- SendInc
- What else?
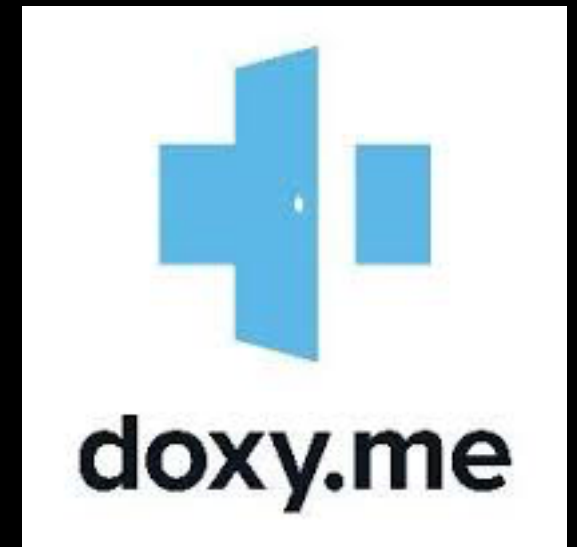
| Best Practices	Understand your phone Make texts part of your records Informed consent - discuss use with clients and educate re: security, privacy, content, confidentiality Password protect/ use high security settings Use antivirus and malware programs

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO CLIENTS: SECTION 1.08: **ACCESS TO RECORDS**

- (b) Develop and inform clients about their policies, consistent with prevailing social work ethical standards, on the use of technology to provide clients with access to their records.
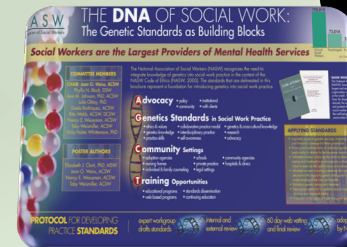
TOOLKIT FOR ETHICAL PRACTICE

FLORIDA STATUTES CHAPTER 491 AND
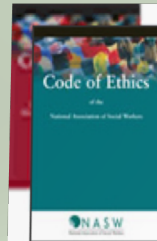
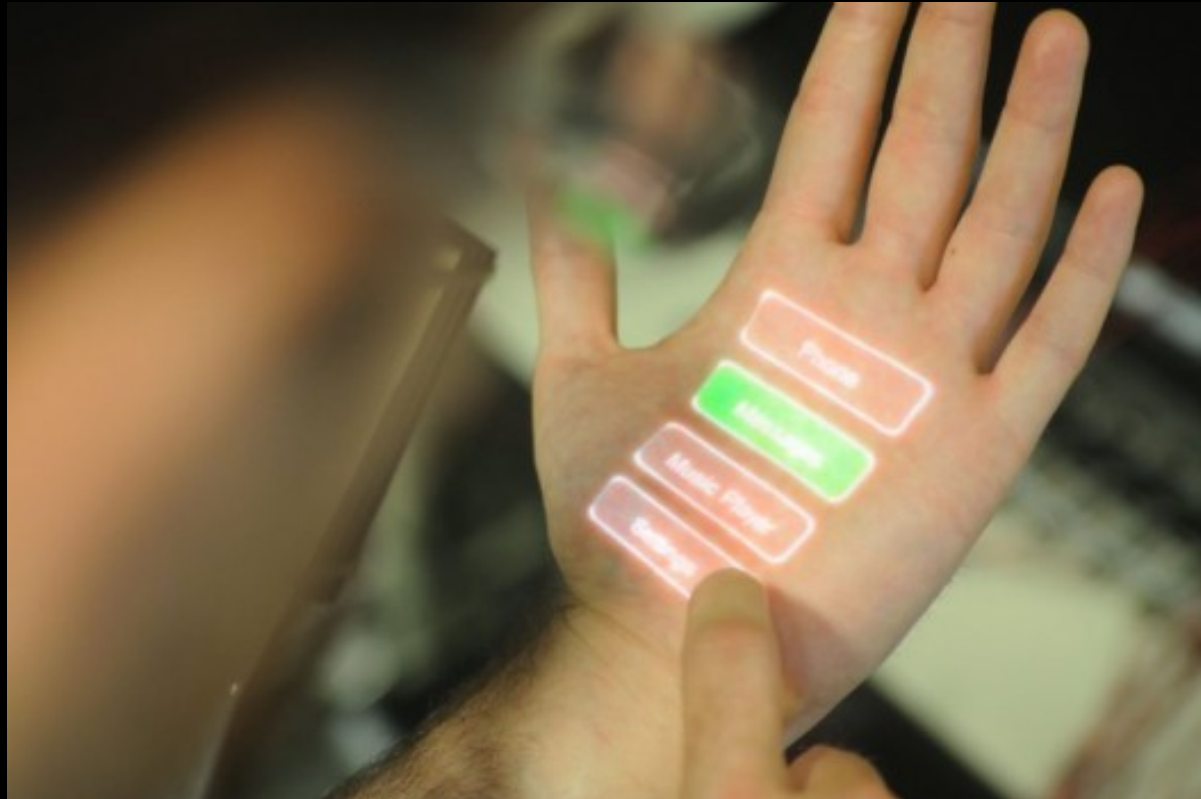**PROFESSIONAL CODE OF ETHICS**

SOCIAL WORK STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

CONTINUING EDUCATION

AN ARTICLE ON NASW-FL WEBSITE BY KAT CAMPBELL, PHD, LCSW

- http://nebula.wsimg.com/83fff2687b2bc27c4975f0fa7202b4f0?AccessKeyId=90F75F7B3595EF0B8BD2&disposition=0&alloworigin=1

NING…

4/13/20

RESOURCES

- NASW/ASWB/CSWA/CSWE Standards for Technology Practice. The Standards are available online at: http://bit.ly/2sFmTwI

- NASW Code of Ethics NASW Code of Ethics - National Association of Social Workers available online at https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English

- Social Media Policies: Kolmes, Keely, *My Private Practice Social Media Policy*: http://www.drkkolmes.com/docs/socmed.pdf

RESOURCES AVAILABLE ONLINE

- International Society for Mental Health Online: http://ismho.org/
- American Distance Counseling Association: http://www.adca-online.org/
- Online Therapy Institute: http://onlinetherapyinstitute.com/ethical-training/
- American Telemedicine Association

American Telemedicine Association: http://www.americantelemed.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageID=3604

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