

Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues

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Regarding the social worker's ethical responsibilities to colleagues, section 2.01 of the NASW Code of Ethics states the following:

a. "Social workers should treat colleagues with respect and should represent accurately and fairly the qualifications, views, and obligations of colleagues."

b. "Social workers should avoid unwarranted negative criticism of colleagues in communications with clients or 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, age, marital status, political belief, religion, and mental or physical disability."

c. "Social workers should cooperate with social work colleagues and with colleagues of other professions when such cooperation serves the well-being of clients."

As health care professionals duly credentialed to practice social work in the State of New York, social work professional conduct is guided by certain ethical standards. These ethical standards are clearly delineated in the NASW Code of Ethics which can be found at this website:

<http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>.

Regarding enforcement of these standards, the NASW Code of Ethics states the following: "The extent to which each standard is enforceable is a manner of professional judgment to be exercised by those responsible for reviewing alleged violations of ethical standards."