

Documentation Matters: Tip #8

Documentation and Interdisciplinary Teams: what are some key considerations for social workers?

“The primary purpose of social work recording is to provide a clear statement of social work assessment, intervention, and professional decision-making” (NLCSW 2020, Standards of Practice, p. 5). The following are important considerations as it relates to documentation and interdisciplinary teams:

- What social work standards apply? Importantly, a review of the CASW Guidelines for Ethical Practice - Section 1.7 (documentation) and 1.3 (informed consent) and NLCSW Standards of Practice - Standard 5 (documentation), Standard 4 (informed consent) and Standard 7 (collegial relationships and interdisciplinary practice) is advised.
- Do clients understand the role of social work on the team and how social work services will be delivered? The documented informed consent of clients is essential.
- Do clients have a clear understanding of what information will be documented as part of social work service delivery? Social work records should contain information that is clinically relevant, reflective of the service provided, address client needs, and meet employer/professional standards.
- Are clients informed on how their information will be accessed by, or shared with, members of the team? It is important that clients are given information on how records will be maintained, who has access to the records, and for what purpose access is provided (i.e., circle of care).
- Is the social work assessment, intervention, and decision-making clearly identified and distinguishable from that of other team members? Signing each clinical note with one’s name and professional designation is important.
- Is social work documentation legible and easily understood amongst team members? Social workers maintain legible records that are free from jargon or language (including ambiguous acronyms) that can lead to misunderstandings.



For more information related to social work documentation, visit the NLCSW website www.nlcsw.ca.