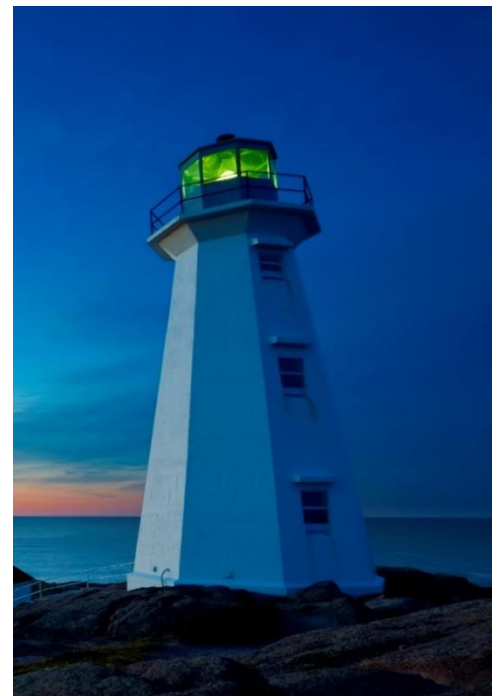


Documentation Matters: Tip #10

What are helpful questions to consider when reflecting on social work documentation?

“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 questions may be helpful when reflecting on documentation practices.

- How do I view documentation in my practice? Does this impact how I document? Taking time to consider these questions is an important reflexive exercise.
- How familiar am I with documentation standards? A review of the CASW (2005) Guidelines for Ethical Practice - Section 1.7 (client records) and NLCSW (2020) Standards of Practice - Standard 5 (documentation) is advised.
- How would I describe the link between assessment and documentation? The NLCSW (2020) Standards of Practice, states: “social work documentation includes a clear assessment, intervention strategy and termination plan” (p. 6).
- How has the use of technology impacted my documentation practices? A review of the NLCSW (2020) Standards of Practice – Standard 8 (technology) is recommended.
- How do I make decisions on what to include in my documentation? The NLCSW (2020) Standards of Practice notes: “social work records should contain all information that is clinically relevant and significant to service delivery” (p. 6).
- What are my documentation strengths? What areas do I need to improve? Social workers engage in continuing professional education (CPE) to ensure clients receive high quality services. Regular CPE focused on social work documentation is helpful.
- What sometimes gets in the way of my social work documentation? What strategies might be helpful in addressing identified barriers? Setting aside time for social work documentation is always a helpful strategy. Where appropriate, engaging in dialogue with a manager or supervision to identify issues and solutions to ensure timely documentation can be effective.



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