

# Documentation Matters: Tip #7

## What do I need to document when terminating a social work service?

“Social workers document decisions and actions related to termination of services” (NLCSW 2020, Standards of Practice, p. 13). The following questions are also important to consider as it relates to documentation:

- What ethical/practice standards apply? A review of the CASW Code of Ethics/Guidelines for Ethical Practice and the NLCSW Standards of Practice is advised (Section 1.8 of the CASW Ethical Guidelines and Standard 15 of the NLCSW Standards specifically addresses termination).
- Was the client provided with information on how terminations would be addressed at the onset of the professional relationship? Having this documented as part of the informed consent process is a helpful strategy.
- Is the record up to date and complete in keeping with documentation standards? Having a summary/closing note is recommended.
- Why is the professional relationship being terminated (i.e., treatment goals have been achieved, client is being referred to another health professional, client is no longer engaged, social worker is changing employment, etc.)? Documenting the reason for termination and the process taken, including appropriate referrals, is important.
- Was termination planned or abrupt? It is important that clients are given an abundance of notice and communication regarding terminations, when reasonable.
- Has the client been informed about how they can access their records? Giving clients information about how records are being maintained and stored following the social work intervention is in keeping with ethical standards and legislative responsibilities.



For more information related to social work documentation, visit the NLCSW website [www.nlcsw.ca](http://www.nlcsw.ca).