

Documentation Matters: Tip #16

Social work documentation and groups:

A client is defined as “the recipient of social work services and can include an individual, family, couple, group, community, or organization” (NLCSW, 2024, Standards of Practice, p. 2). Social work documentation is an essential component of practice. In keeping with the standards of practice, social workers consider the following when documenting the delivery of social work services to groups:

- Social workers ensure that records reflect the service provided. A group record should outline the nature and purpose of the group, meeting logistics, participants who are involved, and interventions provided.
- Social workers seek the informed consent of clients prior to the delivery of social work services. With groups, it is important that social workers provide participants with information on how group recordings are maintained, who has access to the records, and the limits to confidentiality of information shared within the group context. Noting the provision of this information is important for the initial group session recording.
- Social workers document following the intervention or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. A summary of each group session should be completed to capture who was present, interventions provided, issues or challenges that arose, and group progress and planning. A termination summary, reflecting goals and progress, should also be included at the conclusion of the group.
- Social workers document in an individual client record as needed to track the client’s progress particularly as issues arise within a group that are clinically relevant and require individual follow-up.



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