

NLCSW Continuing Professional Education (CPE) Self-Assessment Tool

Continuing professional education (CPE) is an ethical and professional responsibility for all social workers. The CASW Code of Ethics (2024) states that “social workers continuously develop their professional knowledge and skill at the level required to provide competent professional services. Social workers engage in lifelong learning, professional development, and self-reflection to provide evidence-informed inclusive services to diverse service users and to enhance their professional knowledge, skill, and expertise” (p. 24). Social workers are committed to lifelong learning.

The NLCSW CPE policy requires that social workers submit forty continuing professional education credits annually. Since social work is a diverse profession with a broad scope of practice, the content and selection of the continuing education is left to the professional social worker to determine.

This document is intended to assist registered social workers to reflect on choices for continuing education that advance social work competencies and considers the unique needs of the social work professional. It poses a series of questions for self-reflection.

1. Current competencies

Begin the process by reflecting on current areas of competence

- a) Education achieved
- b) Years of experience
- c) Area(s) of practice
- d) Continuing education completed to date
- e) Opportunities for supervision, consultation
- f) Strengths as a social worker

2. Career Plans and Goals of Continuing Education

Depending upon the results of the competency self-assessment, the level of experience and the identification of future plans, social workers will have different goals.

- a) What are my career goals?
- b) Are there areas where my current practice needs to be enhanced?
- c) Is there a specific technique, therapy or skill upon which I would like to focus my continuing education?
- d) Am I considering transferring to another field of social work practice?
- e) Am I considering expanding my type of practice? (ex. supervision, policy analysis, direct practice, private practice)
- f) Are there areas where my knowledge is out of date?
- g) Are there areas where my skills need to be refreshed?

- h) Is there a population of interest that I would like to study? (ex. children, seniors)

3. Type of Activities

Thinking about the types of environments in which individuals learn, the opportunities available and the identified goals is helpful. Many individuals will integrate a combination of types of activities.

- a) Would I benefit from intensive training? (ex. course, conference, series of workshops on the topic, certificate programs)
- b) Will shorter sessions meet my needs? (webinars, lectures)
- c) Do I prefer in-person sessions, or can I benefit from content delivered by technology? (full day workshops, interactive web casts, web-based learning modules)
- d) Do I need to focus on content, skills or both?
- e) Am I engaged in the practice of field instruction? If not, should I consider becoming a field instructor? How will this relate to my learning as a professional social worker?
- f) Do I engage in independent study? What types of self-directed learning best meets my needs? What types of books, academic journals or peer reviewed research have I selected to review?

4. Professional Knowledge

Regardless of degree level (BSW, MSW, PhD), years of experience or field of practice, there are certain areas of knowledge which are important for the practice of the profession. Therefore, consider current level of knowledge in each of the following areas and address any identified gaps.

- a) Knowledge of the social work code of ethics, ethical guidelines and ethical decision-making models
- b) Relevant legislation guiding social work practice
- c) Principles of documentation
- d) Informed consent
- e) Current standards of practice
- f) Confidentiality, privacy and the disclosure of client information
- g) Professional boundaries and dual relationships
- h) Social work theory and interventions

My Continuing Professional Education Goals:

The Update My CPE tracking tool available through the MyNLCSW portal on the NLCSW website www.nlcsw.ca can be used to record activities completed throughout the year which can be easily submitted at the time of registration renewal. Following completion of CPE activities for the registration year, social workers can reflect upon whether activities completed met CPE goals.

It is recognized that the location of the social worker, the employment setting and personal considerations may impact accessibility of continuing professional education. It is therefore important that social workers explore all available opportunities to access CE in meeting their identified learning needs including those offered through one's employer and those offered by outside service providers.

Current practice resources, the NLCSW Continuing Professional Education Policy and a link to continuing education webinars which meet the definition of **required credits** under the category **workshop** are available at www.nlcsw.ca.