

## NASW CE Content Development Guidelines for Social Work Continuing Education Programs

Program topics must build on the foundations of social work education and must clearly fall within the scope of practice for social workers and be directly applicable to social work theory and practice, relating to one or more of the following social work educational areas:

- Theories and concepts of human behavior in the social environment
  - Social work practice, knowledge, and skills
    - Social work research, programs, or practice evaluations
    - Development, evaluation, and implementation of social policy
    - Social work generalist practice
    - Social work clinical practice
  - Diversity and social justice
  - Social work ethics
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- Program content should be based on peer-reviewed research as demonstrated in the social work professional literature, cover widely recognized evidence-based theory and practice, and apply specifically to the needs and the scope of practice of licensed social workers.
  - CE providers must ensure that their continuing education programs promote cultural awareness and understanding of diversity and inclusion as defined in the NASW Standards and Indicators for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice.

CE providers must assign a social work consultant to participate in and monitor the planning and implementation of the program. This person's role is to:

- Comply with NASW's Guidelines
- Assess the educational needs of social workers to inform course development.
- Review or develop learning objectives.
- Work closely with the provider and staff to stay current on the CE requirements set forth by NASW and in all jurisdictions for which CE credit is offered.
- Ensure that the provider infuses cultural awareness and diversity into courses and their educational program.
- Resolve grievances and or serve as an advisor to providers when grievances occur.
- Evaluate program effectiveness and ensure that post program requirements (Summary Evaluations) are met.

In addition, the social work consultant:

- Should not also serve as speaker/presenter of the program because they need to be able to provide an objective content review.
- Must hold a degree in social work (BSW, MSW, DSW/PhD).

- Must currently practice privately or within an institutional setting.
- If the program content is clinical, the social work consultant must be in good standing with the appropriate regulatory body during the duration of the program.

### **Learning Objectives:**

Learning objectives (and the program content associated with the learning objectives) should clearly demonstrate how the program builds on a foundation of academic preparation for **social work practice, knowledge, and skills**.

Continuing education programs must include written educational goals and specific, measurable learning objectives as the basis for evaluation of program effectiveness. Each learning objective must be precise and replicable, giving participants the same understanding of the desired outcome.

Learning objectives provide direction in the planning of a learning activity for professional social work. They help to (1) focus on learners' behavior that is to be changed; (2) serve as guidelines for program content, instruction, and evaluation; (3) identify specifically what should be learned; and (4) convey to learners exactly what is to be accomplished.

Learning Objectives must have the following characteristics: (1) the specified action by the learners must be observable; (2) the specified action by the learners must be measurable; and (3) the specified action must be done by the learners. The ultimate test when writing a learning objective is whether or not the action taken by the participant can be assessed. If not, the outcome does not meet all three of these characteristics.

### **Multidisciplinary Programs:**

CE providers must not offer a program for social work CE that is created for another profession/discipline and includes learning objectives and content that is not geared toward the profession of social work, or is designed for paraprofessionals, the general public, or laypeople. For example, programs that are within the scope of licensure and practice for medical professionals, programs to train paraprofessionals/volunteers, staff orientation or development, programs that are for the general public.

### **Avoiding Commercial Bias**

- Program providers and/or instructors must not promote, offer, or sell specific products or services in the context of a learning activity.
- Program materials, including promotional materials, must not promote a specific product or service.

## **Instructional Materials**

Instructional materials (e.g., training manuals, handouts, outlines, background materials, audiovisual aids, bibliography, etc.) must enhance participants' understanding, be appropriate to their learning level, and be designed for social work professionals.

- Materials initially developed for audiences other than social workers must be carefully reviewed and modified as necessary in consultation with the CE provider's social work consultant or, if applicable, the social work planner.
- CE providers and/or instructors and material must not promote commercial bias or interest.
- CE providers must ensure and attest that program materials do not infringe upon or otherwise violate intellectual property or privacy rights, including copyright, trademark, and license rights. Providers must either own the materials used or be permitted by law to use them, consulting with legal counsel if needed. NASW may require a provider to show proof of usage rights in the form of written permission. It is ultimately the responsibility of the CE provider, however, and not NASW, to ensure compliance with all applicable laws for all continuing education programs offered for NASW credit.

## **Unacceptable CE Content Areas\***

- Billing/Coding
- Chakra
- Coaching
- Commercial content
- Company specific policy procedures
- Consultation and Peer Support-Staff/Peer/Intern/Case/Client consultation/technical support
- CPR/First Aid
- Compassion Fatigue
- Computer software training/EHR Trainings/User Groups/Technology enhancement
- Conversion therapy
- Divorce mediation
- Exam Preparation
- Expressive Therapies Art/Dance/Drama/Movement
- Financial Planning
- Funeral Planning
- General Leadership or Management
- Generating income
- Holistic Therapies/Acupuncture/Acupressure
- Infection control
- Interpreter training
- Marketing or growing a practice/business
- Meditation
- Mindfulness

- Office Management
- Personal growth/Enrichment/Self care
- Self help
- Sex therapy
- Staff orientation/staff meetings/staff development/trainings for volunteers
- Supervisory Sessions, Practicums, Grand Rounds (including but not limited to supervision towards licensure)
- Topics outside the scope of social work practice (prescribing, medication administration, nutrition, massage, aroma therapy, funeral planning, financial advice, legal advice - for example: powers of attorney, guardianship, estate planning, etc.)
- Touch therapy
- Tai Chi/Quigong
- Yoga
- Promotion of sexual orientation change efforts as a therapeutic method (sometimes called "conversion therapy).
- Political and religious content restriction: The program cannot state or imply in any manner that individuals who act inconsistently with or who do not accept a particular political or religious belief or principle are dysfunctional or otherwise inappropriate or that the belief is unacceptable or incorrect.

Program content related to other functions sometimes filled by social workers, such as general leadership or business practices, are not acceptable for social work CE credit. Training that applies to leaders in any field, even when helpful to social workers is not acceptable for social work CE credit. Program topics that are procedural or oriented toward business practices, self-help or staff development are not acceptable for social work CE credit.

\*The above list is not comprehensive, additional program content areas may be determined to be unacceptable to offer CE credit.