



Using Social Media Ethically in a Digital Age of Practice

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Objectives:

- ▶ **Identify why values and ethics are crucial to the practice of SW**
- ▶ **Review SW Code of Ethics and Alabama Code**
- ▶ **Explore examples of misuse of social media in practice**
- ▶ **Identify and apply ethical decision-making tips for social media use**



Instagram

- ▶ 1 billion people are using Instagram on a monthly basis.
- ▶ 59% of Instagram users in the U.S. are under 30, with 72% of teens on Instagram every day.

Snapchat

- ▶ Snapchat has 300 million active monthly users.
- ▶ 60% of American Snapchat users are under 25.
- ▶ 71% of these users visit the platform multiple times per day.

Twitter

- ▶ Twitter has more than 326 million monthly active users.
- ▶ Twitter's highest demographic of users are those between 18 and 29, with 40% of this population on the platform.

Facebook

- ▶ 2 billion monthly
- ▶ 74% of American adults login to Facebook daily
- ▶ Only half of American teens use Facebook. While this is a big number, if you're targeting this audience, Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat are all better bets.

SW Code of Ethics

- ▶ Serves as a guide to the everyday professional conduct of SW
- ▶ Provides ethical standards to which we are held accountable
- ▶ Provides a guide for ethical decision making and conduct
- ▶ does not specify which are most important or outweighs another

Primary mission of SW profession is “to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic needs of all people with particular attention to needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed and living in poverty.” (NASW)

6 Core Values and Ethical Principles

▶ **Value:** *Service*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems.*

▶ **Value:** *Social Justice*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers challenge social injustice.*

▶ **Value:** *Dignity and Worth of the Person*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.*

▶ **Value:** *Importance of Human Relationships*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.*

▶ **Value:** *Integrity*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.*

▶ **Value:** *Competence*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.*

6 Ethical Standards/Responsibilities

- ▶ Ethical Responsibility to Clients
- ▶ Ethical Responsibility to Colleagues
- ▶ Ethical Responsibility in Practice Settings
- ▶ Ethical Responsibility as Professionals
- ▶ Ethical Responsibility to SW Profession
- ▶ Ethical Responsibility to the Broader Society

Ethical Responsibility to Clients

- Commitment to Clients
- Self-Determination
- Informed Consent
- Competence
- Cultural Awareness and Social Diversity
- Conflicts of Interest
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Access to Records
- Sexual Relationships
- Physical Contact
- Sexual Harassment
- Derogatory Language
- Payment for Services
- Clients Lacking Decision-Making Capacity
- Interruption of Services
- Referral for Services
- Termination of Services

Ethical Responsibility to Colleagues

- Respect
- Confidentiality
- Interdisciplinary Collaboration
- Disputes Involving Colleagues
- Consultation
- Sexual Relationships
- Sexual Harassment
- Impairment of Colleagues
- Incompetence of Colleagues
- Unethical Conduct of Colleagues



Ethical Responsibility in Practice Settings

- Supervision and Consultation
- Education and Training
- Performance Evaluation
- Client Records
- Billing
- Client Transfer
- Administration
- Continuing Education and Staff Development
- Commitments to Employers
- Labor-Management Disputes

Ethical Responsibility as Professionals

- Competence
- Discrimination
- Private Conduct
- Dishonesty, Fraud, and Deception
- Impairment
- Misrepresentation
- Solicitations
- Acknowledging Credit

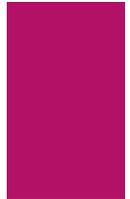


Ethical Responsibility to SW Profession

- Integrity of the Profession
- Evaluation and Research

Ethical Responsibility to the Broader Society

- Social Welfare
- Public Participation
- Public Emergencies
- Social and Political Action



Revisions in Code

- ▶ Commitment to clients and clients' interest – balance of client interest and ethical responsibilities
- ▶ Informed consent – clearly, capacity, voluntary
- ▶ Technology Policies – Firewall, encryption, etc.
- ▶ Competence – “cultural competence and social diversity” to “cultural awareness and social diversity”
- ▶ Conflict of interests - preventing boundary confusion, in appropriate dual relationships and doing no harm to clients
- ▶ Privacy and Confidentiality - HIPPA

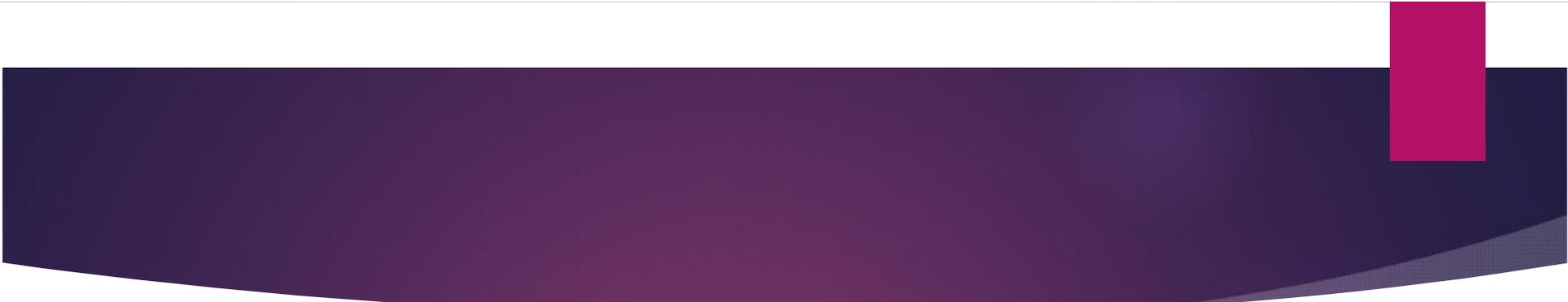
Revisions in Code

- ▶ Confidentiality Notice - This e-Mail message, including any attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s) and may contain confidential or privileged information. If this message concerns a lawsuit, it may be considered a privileged communication. Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure, or distribution is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender by reply e-mail and destroy all copies of the original message.
- ▶ "If you are not the intended recipient, employee or agent responsible for delivering this message"

Common I.T. Mistakes in Social Services Agencies

- ▶ Budgetary issues
- ▶ Being too open with client data
- ▶ Lack of accountability with machines
- ▶ Using personal e-mail/machines for organizational business, especially if client info involved

(Mynerdybuddy.com)

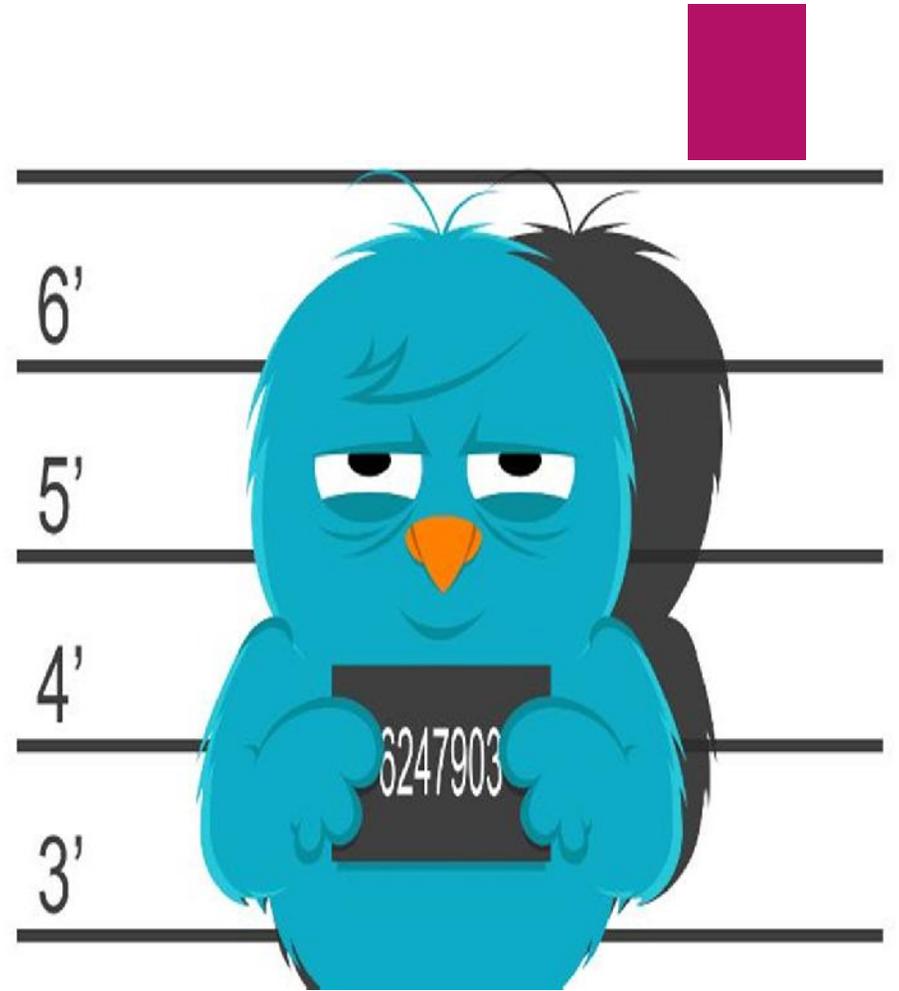


▶ To view the Alabama law pertaining to Social Workers and the Board of Social Work Examiners, click on the link "Alabama Law" (below). Then click on the side tab marked "Code of Alabama" select "view" next to the tab and go to Title 34, Chapter 30.

- [Http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/alison/codeofalabama/1975/coatoc.htm](http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/alison/codeofalabama/1975/coatoc.htm)

▶ Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners Administrative Code

- <http://www.socialwork.alabama.gov/rules.aspx>
- [850-X-1 General Provisions](#)
- [850-X-2 Definitions](#)
- [850-X-3 Supervision](#)
- [850-X-4 Applications for Licensure and Certification](#)
- [850-X-5 Fees](#)
- [850-X-6 Examinations](#)
- [850-X-7 Display and Renewal of License](#)
- [850-X-8 Continuing Education](#)
- [850-X-9 Standards of Professional Conduct and Ethics](#)
- [850-X-10 Disciplinary Proceedings](#)



What could land us in Social Media Jail?

- ▶ Biases and/or Racist Remarks
- ▶ Threatening someone (work, client or otherwise)
- ▶ Going back and forth with someone (prove my point)
- ▶ Confidentiality
- ▶ Friending/Following Clients
- ▶ Check-In (Confidentiality)
- ▶ Cavalier-ness
- ▶ Misrepresentation
- ▶ Just plain ole special

CONFIDENTIALITY



CONFIDENTIALITY...CAVALIER-NESS

“I work in a hospital and there was a police shooting in my area a couple of years ago. Multiple officers were brought into our ER. One officer was DOA and a number of idiot hospital employees posted condolences on their Facebook pages with the name of the officer before the family was officially informed. Seven or eight employees were rightfully fired for that one.”

“I had to fire an employee for a tweet he wrote about a customer. He tweeted ‘(customer’s full name) would be a great name for a porn star.’”

NASW Code of Ethics

▶ 1.07 Privacy and Confidentiality

“(c) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional service, except for compelling professional reasons...social workers should disclose the least amount of confidential information necessary to achieve the desired purpose; only information that is directly relevant to the purpose for which the disclosure is made should be revealed.

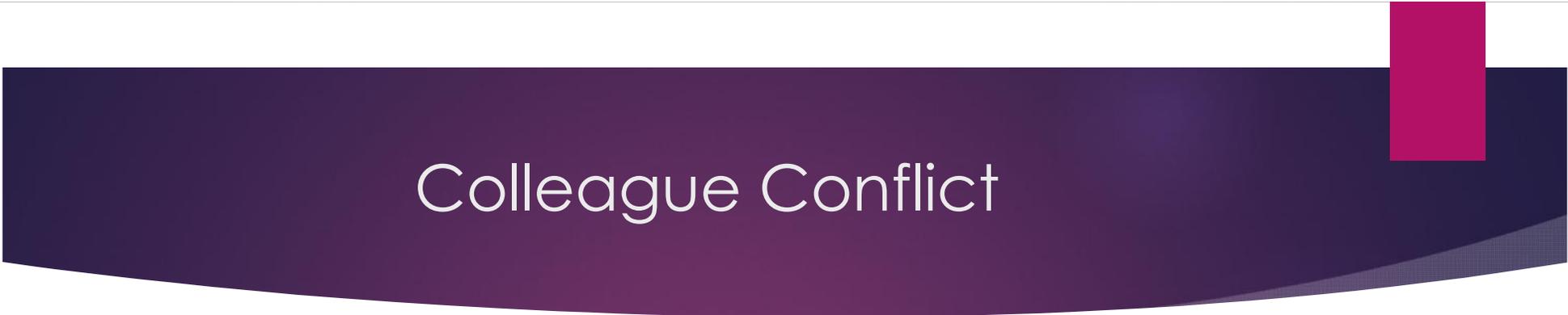
“(i) Social workers should not discuss confidential information, electronically or in person, in any setting unless privacy can be ensured. Social workers should not discuss confidential information in public or semi-public areas such as hallways, waiting rooms, elevators, and restaurants.

“(m) Social workers should take reasonable steps to protect the confidentiality of electronic communications, including information provided to clients or third parties. Social workers should use applicable safeguards (such as encryption, firewalls, and passwords) when using electronic communications such as e-mail, online posts, online chat sessions, mobile communication, and text messages.

▶ 1.12 Derogatory Language

Social workers should not use derogatory language in their written, verbal, or electronic communications to or about clients. Social workers should use accurate and respectful language in all communications to and about clients.

▶ Alabama Administrative Code regarding Privacy and Confidentiality



Colleague Conflict

“It was my first week on the job a week at a law firm, and had to ride with one of the female employees to the UPS store. She was a terrible driver, and almost wrecked multiple times. I posted on Facebook, ‘One week on the job and my coworker is trying to kill me; worst driver ever.’ The next day I was called into my boss’s office with the girl sitting there with an expressionless look on her face, and there was a printout of my post. It was awkward and they fired me on the spot. All of my account information was also set to private, so they figured a way to check my activity.”

“One of my Facebook friends worked for the postal service in my town. She posted about how she wanted to kill her boss and went into some gory details. Then, about 5 hours later, she posted another status about how the Feds showed up at her house and that one of her coworkers had showed her boss the status and she was now fired. She’s obviously really dumb.”

NASW Code of Ethics

- ▶ 2.01 Respect

“(a) Social workers should treat colleagues with respect and should represent accurately and fairly the qualifications, views, and obligations of colleagues”

“(b) Social workers should avoid unwarranted negative criticism of colleagues in verbal, written, and electronic communications with clients or with other professionals. Unwarranted negative criticism may include demeaning comments that refer to colleagues' level of competence or to individuals' attributes such as race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression”

- ▶ Alabama Code on Respect, Fairness, and Courtesy for Colleagues

BIAS/RACIST....JUST PLAIN SPECIAL



Justine Sacco

@JustineSacco



Follow

Going to Africa. Hope I don't get AIDS. Just kidding. I'm white!

[Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#) [More](#)

2,678
RETWEETS

1,206
FAVORITES



10:19 AM - 20 Dec 13 from Hillingdon, London

The police need to just start mowing them down with machine guns... Purge them.

6 hours ago · Like · 13 · Reply

BIAS/RACIST....JUST PLAIN SPECIAL

“Guy at my company got sacked for putting a Facebook status along the lines of ‘f-ng immigrants, I hate them’ not realizing both his bosses (also owners of the company) were second generation immigrants from India. They started the company from scratch and now employ 30 people. They pay for full gym membership, healthcare, and generous pension for all the staff, which he had to say goodbye to when he was fired.”

NASW Code of Ethics

▶ 1.05 Cultural Competence and Social Diversity

“(c) Social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical ability.”

▶ 4.03 Private Conduct

“Social workers should not permit their private conduct to interfere with their ability to fulfill their professional responsibilities.”

▶ 6.01 Social Welfare

“Social workers should promote the general welfare of society, from local to global levels, and the development of people, their communities, and their environments. Social workers should advocate for living conditions conducive to the fulfillment of basic human needs and should promote social, economic, political, and cultural values and institutions that are compatible with the realization of social justice.”

▶ Alabama Code regarding Primacy of Client’s Interest, Ethical Responsibilities

Cavalier-ness...Just special

██████████ ██████████ OMG I HATE MY JOB!! My boss is a total pervy wanker always making me do shit stuff just to piss me off!! WANKER!

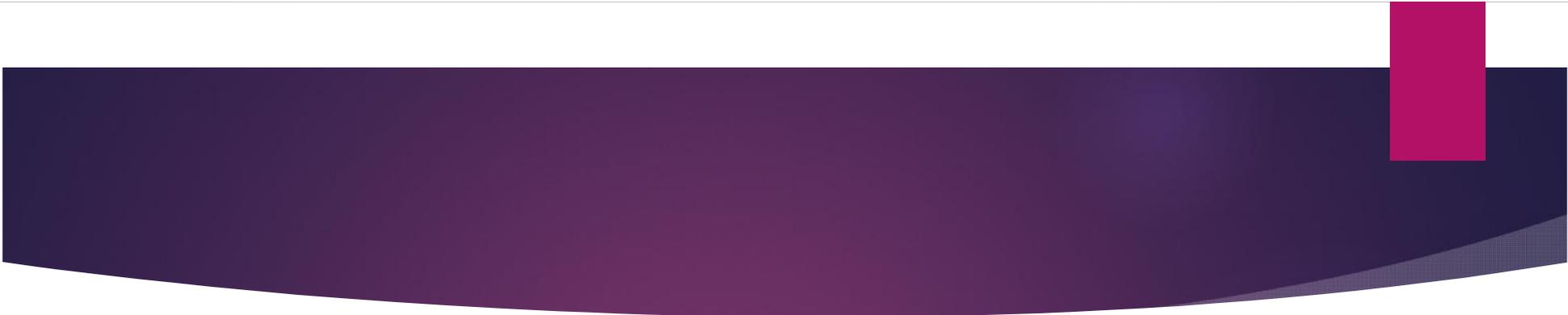
██████████ Yesterday at 18:03 · Comment · Like

██████████ ██████████ Hi ██████████, i guess you forgot about adding me on here?

██████████ Firstly, don't flatter yourself. Secondly, you've worked here 5 months and didn't work out that i'm gay? I know i don't prance around the office like a queen, but it's not exactly a secret. Thirdly, that 'shit stuff' is called your 'job', you know, what i pay you to do. But the fact that you seem able to fuck-up the simplest of tasks might contribute to how you feel about it. And lastly, you also seem to have forgotten that you have 2 weeks left on your 6 month trial period. Don't bother coming in tomorrow. I'll pop your P45 in the post, and you can come in whenever you like to pick up any stuff you've left here. And yes, i'm serious.

██████████ Yesterday at 22:53

Write a comment...



The license of a Gig Harbor psychologist has been suspended months after a prostitute stole a laptop containing the private information of hundreds of patients, state health officials say. According to the state Department of Health's charges, _____, compromised the personal health information of 652 clients _____ obtained through two contracts with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) when he left his personal laptop with a prostitute.

<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/prostitute-takes-laptop-psychologist-loses-license/>

Code of Ethics

- ▶ 3.09 Commitment to Employer

(g) Social workers should be diligent stewards of the resources of their employing organizations, wisely conserving funds where appropriate and never misappropriating funds or using them for unintended purposes.

- ▶ 850-X-9-.01 Standards of Professional Conduct & Ethics.

The Social Worker's Conduct and Comportment as a Social Worker. (a) Propriety - The social worker shall maintain high standards of personal conduct in the capacity or identity as social worker.

2. The social worker shall not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, deceit, misrepresentation, or criminal activity.

- ▶ 850-x-9-.01 (4) The Social Worker's Ethical Responsibility to the Employer

“(d) The social worker should use with scrupulous regard, and only for the purpose for which they are intended, the resources of the employing organization.”

Friending Clients

▶ 1.06 Conflicts of Interest

“(c) Social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships with clients or former clients in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. In instances where dual or multiple relationships are unavoidable, social workers should take steps to protect clients and are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.”

(h) Social workers should avoid accepting requests from or engaging in personal relationships with clients on social networking sites or other electronic media to prevent boundary confusion, inappropriate dual relationships, or harm to clients.

▶ 850-x-9-.01(2)(a) Primacy of Client's Interests

“4. The social worker shall not condone or engage in any dual or multiple relationships with clients or former clients in which there is a risk of exploitation of or potential harm to the client. The social worker is responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.”

▶ American Counseling Association - Code of Ethics

A.5.e. Personal Virtual Relationships with Current Clients

“Counselors are prohibited from engaging in a personal virtual relationship with individuals with whom they have a current counseling relationship (e.g., through social and other media).”

Others to Note

- ▶ 1.06 Conflicts of Interest

(e) Social workers should avoid communication with clients using technology (such as social networking sites, online chat, e-mail, text messages, telephone, and video) for personal or non-work-related purposes.

- ▶ 1.07 Privacy and Confidentiality

(q) Social workers should avoid searching or gathering client information electronically unless there are compelling professional reasons, and when appropriate, with the client's informed consent.

Sound, Ethical Social Work Practice

- ▶ sometimes there are no simple answers...but a lot of times, with social media there is 
- ▶ should be aware of any conflicts between personal and professional values and deal with them responsibly
- ▶ SW should seek consultation and consult relevant literature when thinking about posting

TIPS

- ▶ Alabama Administrative Code

850-x-9-.01(1)(d) Integrity

“1. The social worker should be alert to and resist the influences and pressures (including those that arise from personal beliefs) that interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment required for the performance of professional functions.”

- ▶ Check and Manage Your Privacy and Location Settings

- ▶ Think Before Posting.....Just Say No

Sources

- ▶ www.socialworkers.org
- ▶ <http://www.socialwork.alabama.gov/rules.aspx>
- ▶ <Http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/alison/codeofalabama/1975/coatoc.htm>
- ▶ <https://www.business2community.com/social-media/2019-social-media-trends-statistics-02156179>
- ▶ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/578364/countries-with-most-instagram-users/>
- ▶ <https://people.com/celebrity/employees-who-were-fired-because-of-social-media-posts/>