

NASW Code of Ethics Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

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- 1. What should social workers advocate for, in relation to the communities they serve?**
 - A. To restrict resource access for awareness**
 - B. To support only the needs of specific groups**
 - C. To promote conditions conducive to fulfilling basic human needs**
 - D. To prioritize bureaucracy over community engagement**

- 2. How should social workers obtain consent when participants cannot do so?**
 - A. Proceed without consent from anyone**
 - B. Provide an explanation and obtain assent from the participants**
 - C. Ignore the inability of the participant**
 - D. Only consult friends or family**

- 3. When are social workers allowed to disclose confidential information to third-party payers?**
 - A. When it is requested by the payer**
 - B. When clients have authorized such disclosure**
 - C. When it enhances treatment plans**
 - D. When there is a family agreement**

- 4. Which of the following is true regarding the discussion of clients with consultants?**
 - A. Identifying information can always be shared**
 - B. Consultants must be informed of confidentiality**
 - C. Information must remain undisclosed unless consent is given or if there is a compelling need**
 - D. Disclosures are acceptable if the consultant requests it**

- 5. What is the primary responsibility of social workers in relation to their clients?**
 - A. To promote the well-being of clients**
 - B. To ensure strict adherence to laws**
 - C. To maintain organizational loyalty**
 - D. To achieve professional accolades**

6. What is permissible for social workers regarding labor unions?

- A. Participation in organized actions for improvement**
- B. Joining any available union regardless of conditions**
- C. Promoting union disputes among employees**
- D. Ignoring labor-management issues**

7. Which of the following is NOT a way social workers are ethically responsible to their colleagues?

- A. Sexual relationships with colleagues**
- B. Confidentiality in communications**
- C. Referral for services when necessary**
- D. Interdisciplinary collaboration**

8. When should social workers document client requests to access records?

- A. After access is granted**
- B. When there is a significant event**
- C. At all times for requests and rationale**
- D. Only for partial denials**

9. What should social workers ensure regarding the confidentiality of information?

- A. That it is shared with everyone**
- B. That colleagues understand their confidentiality obligations**
- C. That they ignore the exceptions**
- D. That it is not documented**

10. What community aspect should social workers focus on improving according to ethical guidelines?

- A. Uniform policies across all demographics**
- B. Access to resources for marginalized groups**
- C. Training exclusively for seasoned professionals**
- D. Limiting support to economically advantaged areas**

Answers

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1. C
2. B
3. B
4. C
5. A
6. A
7. A
8. C
9. B
10. B

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Explanations

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1. What should social workers advocate for, in relation to the communities they serve?

- A. To restrict resource access for awareness
- B. To support only the needs of specific groups
- C. To promote conditions conducive to fulfilling basic human needs**
- D. To prioritize bureaucracy over community engagement

Social workers are fundamentally committed to social justice and the well-being of the communities they serve. Advocating for conditions that are conducive to fulfilling basic human needs aligns perfectly with the core values and ethical principles set forth in the NASW Code of Ethics. This option reflects the social work profession's mission to enhance the quality of life for all individuals by ensuring access to necessary resources such as food, water, shelter, healthcare, and education. Promoting these conditions supports empowerment, social support systems, and equitable access to resources. Focusing on basic human needs is essential for fostering resilience, community empowerment, and healthier lifestyles, which ultimately contributes to the overall welfare and development of communities. In contrast, restricting resource access or supporting only the needs of specific groups would be counterproductive to the universal aim of social work, which is to improve the lives of all community members. Additionally, prioritizing bureaucracy over community engagement may hinder genuine efforts to understand and address the unique needs of different populations, ultimately undermining the mission of promoting social justice and advocacy in diverse communities.

2. How should social workers obtain consent when participants cannot do so?

- A. Proceed without consent from anyone
- B. Provide an explanation and obtain assent from the participants**
- C. Ignore the inability of the participant
- D. Only consult friends or family

The appropriate approach for social workers in situations where participants cannot provide consent is to provide an explanation and obtain assent from them. This process involves clearly communicating the purpose and nature of the involvement in the study or service, while also respecting the participant's dignity and autonomy, even if they cannot formally consent. Assent recognizes that individuals who cannot give formal consent still have the right to understand what is happening to them and to express their willingness to participate in a way that is appropriate to their level of understanding. This approach fosters respect and ethical consideration for participants who may be vulnerable or unable to fully comprehend the implications of their participation. By obtaining assent, social workers honor the participants' involvement and agency, which is central to ethical practice. This is particularly important in fields like social work, where the aim is to empower individuals and maintain their rights and dignity throughout the process.

3. When are social workers allowed to disclose confidential information to third-party payers?

- A. When it is requested by the payer**
- B. When clients have authorized such disclosure**
- C. When it enhances treatment plans**
- D. When there is a family agreement**

Social workers are permitted to disclose confidential information to third-party payers when clients have authorized such disclosure. This respect for client autonomy aligns with the principles of confidentiality and informed consent outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics. Clients have the right to control their personal information, which includes deciding what can be shared with third parties, such as insurance companies or other payers involved in their care. This authorization typically involves obtaining written consent from the client, detailing what information can be shared and for what purpose. This ensures that the client's privacy is respected while allowing necessary communication for billing or treatment purposes. The focus here is on the client's rights and the importance of their consent in any disclosure of information. Other options, such as an arbitrary request from a payer or a family agreement without the client's consent, do not align with ethical guidelines, as they do not prioritize the client's rights or confidentiality. Additionally, disclosing information solely to enhance treatment plans may not be permissible unless the client has explicitly consented to such sharing.

4. Which of the following is true regarding the discussion of clients with consultants?

- A. Identifying information can always be shared**
- B. Consultants must be informed of confidentiality**
- C. Information must remain undisclosed unless consent is given or if there is a compelling need**
- D. Disclosures are acceptable if the consultant requests it**

The assertion that information must remain undisclosed unless consent is provided or there is a compelling need is aligned with the principles of confidentiality outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics. This guideline emphasizes the importance of obtaining informed consent from clients before sharing their personal information. It acknowledges that clients have the right to control their own personal data and protects their privacy. Additionally, the mention of a "compelling need" refers to situations where there may be a legitimate risk of harm to the client or others, such as instances involving abuse or imminent danger. In such cases, the ethical obligation towards protecting life may take precedence. Thus, this answer addresses both the ethical requirement for confidentiality and the situations in which exceptions may apply. The other choices reflect misunderstandings of the ethical standards. For instance, the idea that identifying information can always be shared does not prioritize client consent and undermines the essential privacy rights of clients. Stating that consultants must be informed of confidentiality is incomplete without detailing the context in which information can be shared, and asserting that disclosures are acceptable simply upon a consultant's request ignores the necessity for client consent and the ethical obligations involved.

5. What is the primary responsibility of social workers in relation to their clients?

- A. To promote the well-being of clients**
- B. To ensure strict adherence to laws**
- C. To maintain organizational loyalty**
- D. To achieve professional accolades**

The primary responsibility of social workers is to promote the well-being of clients. This commitment is foundational to social work practice, as it reflects the overarching goal of enhancing the quality of life and dignity of individuals. Social workers advocate for the needs and rights of their clients, striving to empower them to achieve personal goals and improve their circumstances. This involves not only addressing immediate issues but also considering the broader social context that affects clients' well-being, such as systemic barriers and inequalities. The importance of client well-being is emphasized in the NASW Code of Ethics, which articulates the ethical responsibility to prioritize the interests of clients in all professional interactions. Social workers engage in practices that foster a supportive and trusting relationship, ensuring that clients feel safe and valued. Ultimately, by focusing on client well-being, social workers play a crucial role in promoting social justice and supporting individuals in overcoming challenges. Other options do not capture the central mission of social work. While adherence to laws is important, it is secondary to the core obligation to serve and support clients. Similarly, maintaining organizational loyalty and pursuing professional accolades are not fundamental responsibilities of social workers when weighed against the necessity of prioritizing client welfare. The essence of social work lies in its client-centered focus, making the promotion of

6. What is permissible for social workers regarding labor unions?

- A. Participation in organized actions for improvement**
- B. Joining any available union regardless of conditions**
- C. Promoting union disputes among employees**
- D. Ignoring labor-management issues**

The correct response under the NASW Code of Ethics emphasizes that social workers are encouraged to participate in organized actions aimed at improving working conditions. This participation aligns with the profession's commitment to social justice and advocating for the rights and well-being of employees. Social workers play a vital role in supporting fair labor practices and can contribute meaningfully to discussions and collective actions that seek to enhance workplace conditions and promote the welfare of all workers. Moreover, participating in organized actions does not only benefit the workers but also can enhance the quality of services provided to clients by fostering a healthier and more supportive work environment. This involvement is consistent with the overall guiding principle of enhancing the dignity and worth of individuals, as social workers are tasked with advocating for those facing challenges, including workplace inequities. In contrast, the other choices do not align with ethical practices. Joining any available union without regard to conditions can lead to conflicts of interest or ethical dilemmas. Promoting disputes among employees could undermine workplace harmony and does not align with the goal of improving working conditions. Ignoring labor-management issues would contradict the social worker's role as an advocate for social and economic justice. Therefore, only participation in organized actions for improvement is a permissible and ethical choice for social workers.

7. Which of the following is NOT a way social workers are ethically responsible to their colleagues?

- A. Sexual relationships with colleagues**
- B. Confidentiality in communications**
- C. Referral for services when necessary**
- D. Interdisciplinary collaboration**

The choice regarding sexual relationships with colleagues is the correct answer because social workers are expected to maintain professional boundaries and avoid situations that could create conflicts of interest or jeopardize the integrity of their work environment. Engaging in sexual relationships with colleagues can lead to ethical dilemmas, such as compromised objectivity and favoritism, which violate the ethical standards laid out in the NASW Code of Ethics. In contrast, maintaining confidentiality in communications is crucial for fostering trust and security among colleagues. Upholding confidentiality ensures that sensitive information remains protected and that professional relationships are built on respect and integrity. Referring clients for services when necessary is also a key ethical responsibility, as it demonstrates a commitment to ensuring that clients receive comprehensive support. Social workers must recognize their professional limits and facilitate access to the appropriate resources. Interdisciplinary collaboration is equally championed within the profession, as it promotes a holistic approach to client care. By working together with other professionals, social workers can enhance service delivery and improve client outcomes. Overall, while confidentiality, referrals, and collaboration are all integral to ethical relationships amongst colleagues, engaging in sexual relationships undermines the professionalism expected within the social work field.

8. When should social workers document client requests to access records?

- A. After access is granted**
- B. When there is a significant event**
- C. At all times for requests and rationale**
- D. Only for partial denials**

Documenting client requests to access records at all times for requests and rationale is essential for maintaining transparency, providing accountability, and ensuring compliance with ethical standards and legal guidelines. This practice aligns with the NASW Code of Ethics, which emphasizes the importance of client autonomy and the right of clients to understand and access their own information. By documenting every request, social workers create a clear record of what the client has requested, why they have made that request, and how the social worker responded. This comprehensive documentation not only protects the client's rights but also serves as a valuable resource in case of disputes or misunderstandings regarding access to records. In addition, consistently documenting requests helps to establish a pattern of communication and decision-making that is respectful of the client's wishes and needs. This approach can foster a more trusting relationship between the client and the social worker, as it demonstrates respect for the client's agency and promotes an environment of collaborative practice. The other answer choices do not encompass the full scope of client requests. For instance, documenting only after access is granted might overlook important interactions that occur before the decision is made. Similarly, only documenting during significant events might create gaps in the record-keeping process, leaving out critical context that could inform future interactions. Documenting requests only

9. What should social workers ensure regarding the confidentiality of information?

- A. That it is shared with everyone
- B. That colleagues understand their confidentiality obligations**
- C. That they ignore the exceptions
- D. That it is not documented

Social workers have an ethical obligation to uphold the confidentiality of the information they gather about clients. Ensuring that colleagues understand their confidentiality obligations is crucial for maintaining trust and protecting clients' private information. This responsibility includes training and reinforcing the importance of confidentiality in all professional interactions, as colleagues play a vital role in safeguarding sensitive data. Confidentiality is a principle outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics, which emphasizes the need for social workers to protect clients' privacy and ensure that they share information only when necessary and in accordance with ethical guidelines and legal requirements. By educating colleagues on these obligations, social workers can foster a culture of respect for client privacy, which helps to prevent potential breaches of confidentiality. Other options do not align with the ethical standards set forth in the NASW Code of Ethics. Sharing information indiscriminately undermines the trust relationship with clients. Ignoring exceptions to confidentiality can lead to serious ethical violations, and not documenting important information can create significant risks in practice, ultimately failing to provide the required protections for clients' rights and welfare. Hence, emphasizing that colleagues understand their confidentiality obligations is integral to ethical social work practice.

10. What community aspect should social workers focus on improving according to ethical guidelines?

- A. Uniform policies across all demographics
- B. Access to resources for marginalized groups**
- C. Training exclusively for seasoned professionals
- D. Limiting support to economically advantaged areas

Focusing on access to resources for marginalized groups aligns with the ethical guidelines set forth in the NASW Code of Ethics. Social work is deeply rooted in principles of social justice and empowerment, emphasizing the importance of addressing the needs of vulnerable populations. This commitment involves working actively to remove barriers that prevent marginalized individuals from accessing essential services and resources, which is a core responsibility for social workers. Prioritizing access to resources ensures that social workers are advocating for equitable treatment and opportunities for all community members, particularly those who have historically been underserved or disadvantaged. This approach not only helps to alleviate immediate challenges faced by these groups but also contributes to long-term societal change aimed at reducing inequality and promoting inclusivity. In contrast, the other options do not align with the ethical focus on equity and justice. Uniform policies, while important, may overlook the specific needs of diverse communities, and training exclusively for seasoned professionals neglects the ongoing development of all practitioners, particularly those who serve marginalized populations. Additionally, limiting support to economically advantaged areas directly contradicts the mission of social work to promote well-being across all segments of society.

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

<https://naswcodeofethics.examzify.com>

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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