**SRH SERBIA**

**CODE OF CONDUCT**

**VERSION 3.5 ADOPTED ON DECEMBER 2014 AND REVISED ON AUGUST 2015 AND FEBRUARY 2016**

**Preamble**

The primary mission of the non governmental organization employees, volunteers and Executive Board members is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of humanitarian work is the profession’s focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to humanitarian work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.

SRH Serbia promotes social justice and social change with and on behalf of clients. “Clients” is used inclusively to refer to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. We are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice. These activities may be in the form of direct practice, community organizing, supervision, consultation administration, advocacy, social and political action, policy development and implementation, education, and research and evaluation. We seek to enhance the capacity of people to address their own needs. We also seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities, and other social institutions to individuals’ needs and social problems.

The mission of our profession is rooted in a set of core values. These core values, embraced by SRH Serbia throughout the profession’s history, are the foundation of our work’s unique purpose and perspective:

* service
* social justice
* dignity and worth of the person
* importance of human relationships
* integrity
* competence.

This constellation of core values reflects what is unique to our profession. Core values, and the principles that flow from them, must be balanced within the context and complexity of the human experience.

**Purpose of SRH Serbia’s Code of Conduct**

Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession has an obligation to articulate its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. The *SRH Serbia’s Code of Conduct*sets forth these values, principles, and standards to guide our workers’ and volunteers’ conduct. The *Code*is relevant to all involved in provision of services, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve.

The *SRH Serbia’s Code of Conduct*serves six purposes:

1. The Code identifies core values on which our mission is based.
2. The *Code*summarizes broad ethical principles that reflect the profession’s core values and establishes a set of specific ethical standards that should be used to guide our practice.
3. The *Code*is designed to help core staff and volunteers identify relevant considerations when professional obligations conflict or ethical uncertainties arise.
4. The *Code*provides ethical standards to which the general public can hold the social work profession accountable.
5. The *Code*socializes practitioners new to the field to social work’s mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards.
6. The *Code*articulates standards that the social work profession itself can use to assess whether core staff and volunteers have engaged in unethical conduct. SRH SERBIA has formal procedures to adjudicate ethics complaints filed against its members.\*

In subscribing to this *Code*, core staff and volunteers are required to cooperate in its implementation, participate in SRH SERBIA adjudication proceedings, and abide by any SRH SERBIA disciplinary rulings or sanctions based on it.

The *Code*offers a set of values, principles, and standards to guide decision making and conduct when ethical issues arise. It does not provide a set of rules that prescribe how core staff and volunteers should act in all situations. Specific applications of the *Code*must take into account the context in which it is being considered and the possibility of conflicts among the *Code‘s*values, principles, and standards. Ethical responsibilities flow from all human relationships, from the personal and familial to the social and professional.

Further, the *SRH SERBIA Code of Conduct*does not specify which values, principles, and standards are most important and ought to outweigh others in instances when they conflict. Reasonable differences of opinion can and do exist among core staff and volunteers with respect to the ways in which values, ethical principles, and ethical standards should be rank ordered when they conflict. Ethical decision making in a given situation must apply the informed judgment of the individual social worker and should also consider how the issues would be judged in a peer review process where the ethical standards of the profession would be applied.

Ethical decision making is a process. There are many instances in social work where simple answers are not available to resolve complex ethical issues. Core staff and volunteers should take into consideration all the values, principles, and standards in this *Code*that are relevant to any situation in which ethical judgment is warranted. Core staff and volunteers’ decisions and actions should be consistent with the spirit as well as the letter of this *Code*.

In addition to this *Code*, there are many other sources of information about ethical thinking that may be useful. Core staff and volunteers should consider ethical theory and principles generally, social work theory and research, laws, regulations, agency policies, and other relevant codes of ethics, recognizing that among codes of ethics core staff and volunteers should consider the *SRH SERBIA Code of Conduct*as their primary source. Core staff and volunteers also should be aware of the impact on ethical decision making of their clients’ and their own personal values and cultural and religious beliefs and practices. They should be aware of any conflicts between personal and professional values and deal with them responsibly. For additional guidance core staff and volunteers should consult the relevant literature on professional ethics and ethical decision making and seek appropriate consultation when faced with ethical dilemmas. This may involve consultation with an agency-based or social work organization’s ethics committee, a regulatory body, knowledgeable colleagues, supervisors, or legal counsel.

Instances may arise when core staff and volunteers’ ethical obligations conflict with agency policies or relevant laws or regulations. When such conflicts occur, core staff and volunteers must make a responsible effort to resolve the conflict in a manner that is consistent with the values, principles, and standards expressed in this Code. If a reasonable resolution of the conflict does not appear possible, core staff and volunteers should seek proper consultation before making a decision.

The *SRH SERBIA Code of Conduct*is to be used by SRH SERBIA and by individuals, agencies, organizations bthat choose to adopt it or use it as a frame of reference. Violation of standards in this *Code*does not automatically imply legal liability or violation of the law. Such determination can only be made in the context of legal and judicial proceedings. Alleged violations of the *Code*would be subject to a peer review process. Such processes are generally separate from legal or administrative procedures and insulated from legal review or proceedings to allow the profession to counsel and discipline its own members.

A Code of Conduct cannot guarantee ethical behavior. Moreover, a Code of Conduct cannot resolve all ethical issues or disputes or capture the richness and complexity involved in striving to make responsible choices within a moral community. Rather, a Code of Conduct sets forth values, ethical principles, and ethical standards to which professionals aspire and by which their actions can be judged. Core staff and volunteers’ ethical behavior should result from their personal commitment to engage in ethical practice. The *SRH SERBIA Code of Conduct*reflects the commitment of all core staff and volunteers to uphold the profession’s values and to act ethically. Principles and standards must be applied by individuals of good character who discern moral questions and, in good faith, seek to make reliable ethical judgments.

**Ethical Principles**

The following broad ethical principles are based on social work’s core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. These principles set forth ideals to which all core staff and volunteers should aspire.

**Value:***Service*

**Ethical Principle:***Core staff and volunteers’ primary goal is to help people in need and to address problems.*  
Core staff and volunteers elevate service to others above self-interest. Core staff and volunteers draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address their problems. Core staff and volunteers are encouraged to volunteer some portion of their professional skills with no expectation of significant financial return (pro bono service).

**Value:***Social Justice*

**Ethical Principle:***Core staff and volunteers challenge social injustice.*  
Core staff and volunteers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Core staff and volunteers’ social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Core staff and volunteers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

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

**Ethical Principle:***Core staff and volunteers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.*  
Core staff and volunteers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Core staff and volunteers promote clients’ socially responsible self-determination. Core staff and volunteers seek to enhance clients’ capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Core staff and volunteers are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between clients’ interests and the broader society’s interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession.

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

**Ethical Principle:***Core staff and volunteers recognize the central importance of human relationships.*  
Core staff and volunteers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Core staff and volunteers engage people as partners in the helping process. Core staff and volunteers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

**Value:***Integrity*

**Ethical Principle:***Core staff and volunteers behave in a trustworthy manner.*  
Core staff and volunteers are continually aware of the profession’s mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Core staff and volunteers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

**Value:***Competence*

**Ethical Principle:***Core staff and volunteers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.*

Core staff and volunteers continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice. Core staff and volunteers should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.

**Ethical Standards**

The following ethical standards are relevant to the professional activities of all core staff and volunteers. These standards concern (1) core staff and volunteers’ ethical responsibilities to clients, (2) core staff and volunteers’ ethical responsibilities to colleagues, (3) core staff and volunteers’ ethical responsibilities in practice settings, (4) core staff and volunteers’ ethical responsibilities as professionals, (5) core staff and volunteers’ ethical responsibilities to the profession, and (6) core staff and volunteers’ ethical responsibilities to the broader society.

Some of the standards that follow are enforceable guidelines for professional conduct, and some are aspirational. The extent to which each standard is enforceable is a matter of professional judgment to be exercised by those responsible for reviewing alleged violations of ethical standards.

**1. CORE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS’ ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO CLIENTS**

**1.01 Commitment to Clients**

Core staff and volunteers’ primary responsibility is to promote the well-being of clients. In general, clients’ interests are primary. However, core staff and volunteers’ responsibility to the larger society or specific legal obligations may on limited occasions supersede the loyalty owed clients, and clients should be so advised. (Examples include when a social worker is required by law to report that a client has abused a child or has threatened to harm self or others.)

**1.02 Self-Determination**

Core staff and volunteers respect and promote the right of clients to self-determination and assist clients in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals. Core staff and volunteers may limit clients’ right to self-determination when, in the core staff and volunteers’ professional judgment, clients’ actions or potential actions pose a serious, foreseeable, and imminent risk to themselves or others.

**1.03 Informed Consent**

(a) Core staff and volunteers should provide services to clients only in the context of a professional relationship based, when appropriate, on valid informed consent. Core staff and volunteers should use clear and understandable language to inform clients of the purpose of the services, risks related to the services, limits to services because of the requirements of a third-party payer, relevant costs, reasonable alternatives, clients’ right to refuse or withdraw consent, and the time frame covered by the consent. Core staff and volunteers should provide clients with an opportunity to ask questions.

(b) In instances when clients are not literate or have difficulty understanding the primary language used in the practice setting, core staff and volunteers should take steps to ensure clients’ comprehension. This may include providing clients with a detailed verbal explanation or arranging for a qualified interpreter or translator whenever possible.

(c) In instances when clients lack the capacity to provide informed consent, core staff and volunteers should protect clients’ interests by seeking permission from an appropriate third party, informing clients consistent with the clients’ level of understanding. In such instances core staff and volunteers should seek to ensure that the third party acts in a manner consistent with clients’ wishes and interests. Core staff and volunteers should take reasonable steps to enhance such clients’ ability to give informed consent.

(d) In instances when clients are receiving services involuntarily, core staff and volunteers should provide information about the nature and extent of services and about the extent of clients’ right to refuse service.

(e) Core staff and volunteers who provide services via electronic media (such as computer, telephone, radio, and television) should inform recipients of the limitations and risks associated with such services.

(f) Core staff and volunteers should obtain clients’ informed consent before audiotaping or videotaping clients or permitting observation of services to clients by a third party.

**1.04 Competence**

(a) Core staff and volunteers should provide services and represent themselves as competent only within the boundaries of their education, training, license, certification, consultation received, supervised experience, or other relevant professional experience.

(b) Core staff and volunteers should provide services in substantive areas or use intervention techniques or approaches that are new to them only after engaging in appropriate study, training, consultation, and supervision from people who are competent in those interventions or techniques.

(c) When generally recognized standards do not exist with respect to an emerging area of practice, core staff and volunteers should exercise careful judgment and take responsible steps (including appropriate education, research, training, consultation, and supervision) to ensure the competence of their work and to protect clients from harm.

**1.05 Cultural Competence and Social Diversity**

(a) Core staff and volunteers should understand culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures.

(b) Core staff and volunteers should have a knowledge base of their clients’ cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients’ cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups.

(c) Core staff and volunteers 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 disability.

**1.06 Conflicts of Interest**

(a) Core staff and volunteers should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment. Core staff and volunteers should inform clients when a real or potential conflict of interest arises and take reasonable steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes the clients’ interests primary and protects clients’ interests to the greatest extent possible. In some cases, protecting clients’ interests may require termination of the professional relationship with proper referral of the client.

(b) Core staff and volunteers should not take unfair advantage of any professional relationship or exploit others to further their personal, religious, political, or business interests.

(c) Core staff and volunteers 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 when dual or multiple relationships are unavoidable, core staff and volunteers should take steps to protect clients and are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. (Dual or multiple relationships occur when core staff and volunteers relate to clients in more than one relationship, whether professional, social, or business. Dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively.)

(d) When core staff and volunteers provide services to two or more people who have a relationship with each other (for example, couples, family members), core staff and volunteers should clarify with all parties which individuals will be considered clients and the nature of core staff and volunteers’ professional obligations to the various individuals who are receiving services. Core staff and volunteers who anticipate a conflict of interest among the individuals receiving services or who anticipate having to perform in potentially conflicting roles (for example, when a social worker is asked to testify in a child custody dispute or divorce proceedings involving clients) should clarify their role with the parties involved and take appropriate action to minimize any conflict of interest.

**1.07 Privacy and Confidentiality**

(a) Core staff and volunteers should respect clients’ right to privacy. Core staff and volunteers should not solicit private information from clients unless it is essential to providing services or conducting social work evaluation or research. Once private information is shared, standards of confidentiality apply.

(b) Core staff and volunteers may disclose confidential information when appropriate with valid consent from a client or a person legally authorized to consent on behalf of a client.

(c) Core staff and volunteers should protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional service, except for compelling professional reasons. The general expectation that core staff and volunteers will keep information confidential does not apply when disclosure is necessary to prevent serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to a client or other identifiable person. In all instances, core staff and volunteers 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.

(d) Core staff and volunteers should inform clients, to the extent possible, about the disclosure of confidential information and the potential consequences, when feasible before the disclosure is made. This applies whether core staff and volunteers disclose confidential information on the basis of a legal requirement or client consent.

(e) Core staff and volunteers should discuss with clients and other interested parties the nature of confidentiality and limitations of clients’ right to confidentiality. Core staff and volunteers should review with clients circumstances where confidential information may be requested and where disclosure of confidential information may be legally required. This discussion should occur as soon as possible in the social worker-client relationship and as needed throughout the course of the relationship.

(f) When core staff and volunteers provide counseling services to families, couples, or groups, core staff and volunteers should seek agreement among the parties involved concerning each individual’s right to confidentiality and obligation to preserve the confidentiality of information shared by others. Core staff and volunteers should inform participants in family, couples, or group counseling that core staff and volunteers cannot guarantee that all participants will honor such agreements.

(g) Core staff and volunteers should inform clients involved in family, couples, marital, or group counseling of the social worker’s, employer’s, and agency’s policy concerning the social worker’s disclosure of confidential information among the parties involved in the counseling.

(h) Core staff and volunteers should not disclose confidential information to third-party payers unless clients have authorized such disclosure.

(i) Core staff and volunteers should not discuss confidential information in any setting unless privacy can be ensured. Core staff and volunteers should not discuss confidential information in public or semipublic areas such as hallways, waiting rooms, elevators, and restaurants.

(j) Core staff and volunteers should protect the confidentiality of clients during legal proceedings to the extent permitted by law. When a court of law or other legally authorized body orders core staff and volunteers to disclose confidential or privileged information without a client’s consent and such disclosure could cause harm to the client, core staff and volunteers should request that the court withdraw the order or limit the order as narrowly as possible or maintain the records under seal, unavailable for public inspection.

(k) Core staff and volunteers should protect the confidentiality of clients when responding to requests from members of the media.

(l) Core staff and volunteers should protect the confidentiality of clients’ written and electronic records and other sensitive information. Core staff and volunteers should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients’ records are stored in a secure location and that clients’ records are not available to others who are not authorized to have access.

(m) Core staff and volunteers should take precautions to ensure and maintain the confidentiality of information transmitted to other parties through the use of computers, electronic mail, facsimile machines, telephones and telephone answering machines, and other electronic or computer technology. Disclosure of identifying information should be avoided whenever possible.

(n) Core staff and volunteers should transfer or dispose of clients’ records in a manner that protects clients’ confidentiality and is consistent with state statutes governing records and social work licensure.

(o) Core staff and volunteers should take reasonable precautions to protect client confidentiality in the event of the social worker’s termination of practice, incapacitation, or death.

(p) Core staff and volunteers should not disclose identifying information when discussing clients for teaching or training purposes unless the client has consented to disclosure of confidential information.

(q) Core staff and volunteers should not disclose identifying information when discussing clients with consultants unless the client has consented to disclosure of confidential information or there is a compelling need for such disclosure.

(r) Core staff and volunteers should protect the confidentiality of deceased clients consistent with the preceding standards.

**1.08 Access to Records**

(a) Core staff and volunteers should provide clients with reasonable access to records concerning the clients. Core staff and volunteers who are concerned that clients’ access to their records could cause serious misunderstanding or harm to the client should provide assistance in interpreting the records and consultation with the client regarding the records. Core staff and volunteers should limit clients’ access to their records, or portions of their records, only in exceptional circumstances when there is compelling evidence that such access would cause serious harm to the client. Both clients’ requests and the rationale for withholding some or all of the record should be documented in clients’ files.

(b) When providing clients with access to their records, core staff and volunteers should take steps to protect the confidentiality of other individuals identified or discussed in such records.

**1.09 Sexual Relationships**

(a) Core staff and volunteers should under no circumstances engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with current clients, whether such contact is consensual or forced.

(b) Core staff and volunteers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with clients’ relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a close personal relationship when there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. Sexual activity or sexual contact with clients’ relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a personal relationship has the potential to be harmful to the client and may make it difficult for the social worker and client to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Core staff and volunteers—not their clients, their clients’ relatives, or other individuals with whom the client maintains a personal relationship—assume the full burden for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

(c) Core staff and volunteers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with former clients because of the potential for harm to the client. If core staff and volunteers engage in conduct contrary to this prohibition or claim that an exception to this prohibition is warranted because of extraordinary circumstances, it is core staff and volunteers—not their clients—who assume the full burden of demonstrating that the former client has not been exploited, coerced, or manipulated, intentionally or unintentionally.

(d) Core staff and volunteers should not provide clinical services to individuals with whom they have had a prior sexual relationship. Providing clinical services to a former sexual partner has the potential to be harmful to the individual and is likely to make it difficult for the social worker and individual to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

**1.10 Physical Contact**

Core staff and volunteers should not engage in physical contact with clients when there is a possibility of psychological harm to the client as a result of the contact (such as cradling or caressing clients). Core staff and volunteers who engage in appropriate physical contact with clients are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern such physical contact.

**1.11 Sexual Harassment**

Core staff and volunteers should not sexually harass clients. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, sexual solicitation, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

**1.12 Derogatory Language**

Core staff and volunteers should not use derogatory language in their written or verbal communications to or about clients. Core staff and volunteers should use accurate and respectful language in all communications to and about clients.

**1.13 Payment for Services**

(a) When setting fees, core staff and volunteers should ensure that the fees are fair, reasonable, and commensurate with the services performed. Consideration should be given to clients’ ability to pay.

(b) Core staff and volunteers should avoid accepting goods or services from clients as payment for professional services. Bartering arrangements, particularly involving services, create the potential for conflicts of interest, exploitation, and inappropriate boundaries in core staff and volunteers’ relationships with clients. Core staff and volunteers should explore and may participate in bartering only in very limited circumstances when it can be demonstrated that such arrangements are an accepted practice among professionals in the local community, considered to be essential for the provision of services, negotiated without coercion, and entered into at the client’s initiative and with the client’s informed consent. Core staff and volunteers who accept goods or services from clients as payment for professional services assume the full burden of demonstrating that this arrangement will not be detrimental to the client or the professional relationship.

(c) Core staff and volunteers should not solicit a private fee or other remuneration for providing services to clients who are entitled to such available services through the core staff and volunteers’ employer or agency.

**1.14 Clients Who Lack Decision-Making Capacity**

When core staff and volunteers act on behalf of clients who lack the capacity to make informed decisions, core staff and volunteers should take reasonable steps to safeguard the interests and rights of those clients.

**1.15 Interruption of Services**

Core staff and volunteers should make reasonable efforts to ensure continuity of services in the event that services are interrupted by factors such as unavailability, relocation, illness, disability, or death.

**1.16 Termination of Services**

(a) Core staff and volunteers should terminate services to clients and professional relationships with them when such services and relationships are no longer required or no longer serve the clients’ needs or interests.

(b) Core staff and volunteers should take reasonable steps to avoid abandoning clients who are still in need of services. Core staff and volunteers should withdraw services precipitously only under unusual circumstances, giving careful consideration to all factors in the situation and taking care to minimize possible adverse effects. Core staff and volunteers should assist in making appropriate arrangements for continuation of services when necessary.

(c) Core staff and volunteers in fee-for-service settings may terminate services to clients who are not paying an overdue balance if the financial contractual arrangements have been made clear to the client, if the client does not pose an imminent danger to self or others, and if the clinical and other consequences of the current nonpayment have been addressed and discussed with the client.

(d) Core staff and volunteers should not terminate services to pursue a social, financial, or sexual relationship with a client.

(e) Core staff and volunteers who anticipate the termination or interruption of services to clients should notify clients promptly and seek the transfer, referral, or continuation of services in relation to the clients’ needs and preferences.

(f) Core staff and volunteers who are leaving an employment setting should inform clients of appropriate options for the continuation of services and of the benefits and risks of the options.

**2. CORE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS’ ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO COLLEAGUES**

**2.01 Respect**

(a) Core staff and volunteers should treat colleagues with respect and should represent accurately and fairly the qualifications, views, and obligations of colleagues.

(b) Core staff and volunteers should avoid unwarranted negative criticism of colleagues in 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, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical disability.

(c) Core staff and volunteers should cooperate with social work colleagues and with colleagues of other professions when such cooperation serves the well-being of clients.

**2.02 Confidentiality**

Core staff and volunteers should respect confidential information shared by colleagues in the course of their professional relationships and transactions. Core staff and volunteers should ensure that such colleagues understand core staff and volunteers’ obligation to respect confidentiality and any exceptions related to it.

**2.03 Interdisciplinary Collaboration**

(a) Core staff and volunteers who are members of an interdisciplinary team should participate in and contribute to decisions that affect the well-being of clients by drawing on the perspectives, values, and experiences of the social work profession. Professional and ethical obligations of the interdisciplinary team as a whole and of its individual members should be clearly established.

(b) Core staff and volunteers for whom a team decision raises ethical concerns should attempt to resolve the disagreement through appropriate channels. If the disagreement cannot be resolved, core staff and volunteers should pursue other avenues to address their concerns consistent with client well-being.

**2.04 Disputes Involving Colleagues**

(a) Core staff and volunteers should not take advantage of a dispute between a colleague and an employer to obtain a position or otherwise advance the core staff and volunteers’ own interests.

(b) Core staff and volunteers should not exploit clients in disputes with colleagues or engage clients in any inappropriate discussion of conflicts between core staff and volunteers and their colleagues.

**2.05 Consultation**

(a) Core staff and volunteers should seek the advice and counsel of colleagues whenever such consultation is in the best interests of clients.

(b) Core staff and volunteers should keep themselves informed about colleagues’ areas of expertise and competencies. Core staff and volunteers should seek consultation only from colleagues who have demonstrated knowledge, expertise, and competence related to the subject of the consultation.

(c) When consulting with colleagues about clients, core staff and volunteers should disclose the least amount of information necessary to achieve the purposes of the consultation.

**2.06 Referral for Services**

(a) Core staff and volunteers should refer clients to other professionals when the other professionals’ specialized knowledge or expertise is needed to serve clients fully or when core staff and volunteers believe that they are not being effective or making reasonable progress with clients and that additional service is required.

(b) Core staff and volunteers who refer clients to other professionals should take appropriate steps to facilitate an orderly transfer of responsibility. Core staff and volunteers who refer clients to other professionals should disclose, with clients’ consent, all pertinent information to the new service providers.

(c) Core staff and volunteers are prohibited from giving or receiving payment for a referral when no professional service is provided by the referring social worker.

**2.07 Sexual Relationships**

(a) Core staff and volunteers who function as supervisors or educators should not engage in sexual activities or contact with supervisees, students, trainees, or other colleagues over whom they exercise professional authority.

(b) Core staff and volunteers should avoid engaging in sexual relationships with colleagues when there is potential for a conflict of interest. Core staff and volunteers who become involved in, or anticipate becoming involved in, a sexual relationship with a colleague have a duty to transfer professional responsibilities, when necessary, to avoid a conflict of interest.

**2.08 Sexual Harassment**

Core staff and volunteers should not sexually harass supervisees, students, trainees, or colleagues. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, sexual solicitation, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

**2.09 Impairment of Colleagues**

(a) Core staff and volunteers who have direct knowledge of a social work colleague’s impairment that is due to personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties and that interferes   
with practice effectiveness should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.

(b) Core staff and volunteers who believe that a social work colleague’s impairment interferes with practice effectiveness and that the colleague has not taken adequate steps to address the impairment should take action through appropriate channels established by employers, agencies, SRH SERBIA, licensing and regulatory bodies, and other professional organizations.

**2.10 Incompetence of Colleagues**

(a) Core staff and volunteers who have direct knowledge of a social work colleague’s incompetence should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.

(b) Core staff and volunteers who believe that a social work colleague is incompetent and has not taken adequate steps to address the incompetence should take action through appropriate channels established by employers, agencies, SRH SERBIA, licensing and regulatory bodies, and other professional organizations.

**2.11 Unethical Conduct of Colleagues**

(a) Core staff and volunteers should take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, expose, and correct the unethical conduct of colleagues.

(b) Core staff and volunteers should be knowledgeable about established policies and procedures for handling concerns about colleagues’ unethical behavior. Core staff and volunteers should be familiar with national, state, and local procedures for handling ethics complaints. These include policies and procedures created by SRH SERBIA, licensing and regulatory bodies, employers, agencies, and other professional organizations.

(c) Core staff and volunteers who believe that a colleague has acted unethically should seek resolution by discussing their concerns with the colleague when feasible and when such discussion is likely to be productive.

(d) When necessary, core staff and volunteers who believe that a colleague has acted unethically should take action through appropriate formal channels (such as contacting a state licensing board or regulatory body, an SRH SERBIA committee on inquiry, or other professional ethics committees).

(e) Core staff and volunteers should defend and assist colleagues who are unjustly charged with unethical conduct.

**3. CORE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS’ ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN PRACTICE SETTINGS**

**3.01 Supervision and Consultation**

(a) Core staff and volunteers who provide supervision or consultation should have the necessary knowledge and skill to supervise or consult appropriately and should do so only within their areas of knowledge and competence.

(b) Core staff and volunteers who provide supervision or consultation are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

(c) Core staff and volunteers should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with supervisees in which there is a risk of exploitation of or potential harm to the supervisee.

(d) Core staff and volunteers who provide supervision should evaluate supervisees’ performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.

**3.02 Education and Training**

(a) Core staff and volunteers who function as educators, field instructors for students, or trainers should provide instruction only within their areas of knowledge and competence and should provide instruction based on the most current information and knowledge available in the profession.

(b) Core staff and volunteers who function as educators or field instructors for students should evaluate students’ performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.

(c) Core staff and volunteers who function as educators or field instructors for students should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients are routinely informed when services are being provided by students.

(d) Core staff and volunteers who function as educators or field instructors for students should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with students in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the student. Social work educators and field instructors are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

**3.03 Performance Evaluation**

Core staff and volunteers who have responsibility for evaluating the performance of others should fulfill such responsibility in a fair and considerate manner and on the basis of clearly stated criteria.

**3.04 Client Records**

(a) Core staff and volunteers should take reasonable steps to ensure that documentation in records is accurate and reflects the services provided.

(b) Core staff and volunteers should include sufficient and timely documentation in records to facilitate the delivery of services and to ensure continuity of services provided to clients in the future.

(c) Core staff and volunteers’ documentation should protect clients’ privacy to the extent that is possible and appropriate and should include only information that is directly relevant to the delivery of services.

(d) Core staff and volunteers should store records following the termination of services to ensure reasonable future access. Records should be maintained for the number of years required by state statutes or relevant contracts.

**3.06 Client Transfer**

(a) When an individual who is receiving services from another agency or colleague contacts a social worker for services, the social worker should carefully consider the client’s needs before agreeing to provide services. To minimize possible confusion and conflict, core staff and volunteers should discuss with potential clients the nature of the clients’ current relationship with other service providers and the implications, including possible benefits or risks, of entering into a relationship with a new service provider.

(b) If a new client has been served by another agency or colleague, core staff and volunteers should discuss with the client whether consultation with the previous service provider is in the client’s best interest.

**3.07 Administration**

(a) Social work administrators should advocate within and outside their agencies for adequate resources to meet clients’ needs.

(b) Core staff and volunteers should advocate for resource allocation procedures that are open and fair. When not all clients’ needs can be met, an allocation procedure should be developed that is nondiscriminatory and based on appropriate and consistently applied principles.

(c) Core staff and volunteers who are administrators should take reasonable steps to ensure that adequate agency or organizational resources are available to provide appropriate staff supervision.

(d) Social work administrators should take reasonable steps to ensure that the working environment for which they are responsible is consistent with and encourages compliance with the *SRH SERBIA Code of Conduct*. Social work administrators should take reasonable steps to eliminate any conditions in their organizations that violate, interfere with, or discourage compliance with the *Code*.

**3.08 Continuing Education and Staff Development**

Social work administrators and supervisors should take reasonable steps to provide or arrange for continuing education and staff development for all staff for whom they are responsible. Continuing education and staff development should address current knowledge and emerging developments related to social work practice and ethics.

**3.09 Commitments to Employers**

(a) Core staff and volunteers generally should adhere to commitments made to employers and employing organizations.

(b) Core staff and volunteers should work to improve employing agencies’ policies and procedures and the efficiency and effectiveness of their services.

(c) Core staff and volunteers should take reasonable steps to ensure that employers are aware of core staff and volunteers’ ethical obligations as set forth in the *SRH SERBIA Code of Conduct*and of the implications of those obligations for social work practice.

(d) Core staff and volunteers should not allow an employing organization’s policies, procedures, regulations, or administrative orders to interfere with their ethical practice of social work. Core staff and volunteers should take reasonable steps to ensure that their employing organizations’ practices are consistent with the *SRH SERBIA Code of Conduct*.

(e) Core staff and volunteers should act to prevent and eliminate discrimination in the employing organization’s work assignments and in its employment policies and practices.

(f) Core staff and volunteers should accept employment or arrange student field placements only in organizations that exercise fair personnel practices.

(g) Core staff and volunteers 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.

**3.10 Labor-Management Disputes**

(a) Core staff and volunteers may engage in organized action, including the formation of and participation in labor unions, to improve services to clients and working conditions.

(b) The actions of core staff and volunteers who are involved in labor-management disputes, job actions, or labor strikes should be guided by the profession’s values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. Reasonable differences of opinion exist among core staff and volunteers concerning their primary obligation as professionals during an actual or threatened labor strike or job action. Core staff and volunteers should carefully examine relevant issues and their possible impact on clients before deciding on a course of action.

**4. CORE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS’ ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES AS PROFESSIONALS**

**4.01 Competence**

(a) Core staff and volunteers should accept responsibility or employment only on the basis of existing competence or the intention to acquire the necessary competence.

(b) Core staff and volunteers should strive to become and remain proficient in professional practice and the performance of professional functions. Core staff and volunteers should critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work. Core staff and volunteers should routinely review the professional literature and participate in continuing education relevant to social work practice and social work ethics.

(c) Core staff and volunteers should base practice on recognized knowledge, including empirically based knowledge, relevant to social work and social work ethics.

**4.02 Discrimination**

Core staff and volunteers should not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical disability.

**4.03 Private Conduct**

Core staff and volunteers should not permit their private conduct to interfere with their ability to fulfill their professional responsibilities.

**4.04 Dishonesty, Fraud, and Deception**

Core staff and volunteers should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, or deception.

**4.05 Impairment**

(a) Core staff and volunteers should not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere with their professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility.

(b) Core staff and volunteers whose personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties interfere with their professional judgment and performance should immediately seek consultation and take appropriate remedial action by seeking professional help, making adjustments in workload, terminating practice, or taking any other steps necessary to protect clients and others.

**4.06 Misrepresentation**

(a) Core staff and volunteers should make clear distinctions between statements made and actions engaged in as a private individual and as a representative of the social work profession, a professional social work organization, or the social worker’s employing agency.

(b) Core staff and volunteers who speak on behalf of professional social work organizations should accurately represent the official and authorized positions of the organizations.

(c) Core staff and volunteers should ensure that their representations to clients, agencies, and the public of professional qualifications, credentials, education, competence, affiliations, services provided, or results to be achieved are accurate. Core staff and volunteers should claim only those relevant professional credentials they actually possess and take steps to correct any inaccuracies or misrepresentations of their credentials by others.

**4.07 Solicitations**

(a) Core staff and volunteers should not engage in uninvited solicitation of potential clients who, because of their circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence, manipulation, or coercion.

(b) Core staff and volunteers should not engage in solicitation of testimonial endorsements (including solicitation of consent to use a client’s prior statement as a testimonial endorsement) from current clients or from other people who, because of their particular circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence.

**4.08 Acknowledging Credit**

(a) Core staff and volunteers should take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work they have actually performed and to which they have contributed.

(b) Core staff and volunteers should honestly acknowledge the work of and the contributions made by others.

**5. CORE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS’ ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE WORK PROFESSION**

**5.01 Integrity of the Profession**

(a) Core staff and volunteers should work toward the maintenance and promotion of high standards of practice.

(b) Core staff and volunteers should uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, and mission of the profession. Core staff and volunteers should protect, enhance, and improve the integrity of the profession through appropriate study and research, active discussion, and responsible criticism of the profession.

(c) Core staff and volunteers should contribute time and professional expertise to activities that promote respect for the value, integrity, and competence of the social work profession. These activities may include teaching, research, consultation, service, legislative testimony, presentations in the community, and participation in their professional organizations.

(d) Core staff and volunteers should contribute to the knowledge base of social work and share with colleagues their knowledge related to practice, research, and ethics. Core staff and volunteers should seek to contribute to the profession’s literature and to share their knowledge at professional meetings and conferences.

(e) Core staff and volunteers should act to prevent the unauthorized and unqualified practice of social work.

**5.02 Evaluation and Research**

(a) Core staff and volunteers should monitor and evaluate policies, the implementation of programs, and practice interventions.

(b) Core staff and volunteers should promote and facilitate evaluation and research to contribute to the development of knowledge.

(c) Core staff and volunteers should critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work and fully use evaluation and research evidence in their professional practice.

(d) Core staff and volunteers engaged in evaluation or research should carefully consider possible consequences and should follow guidelines developed for the protection of evaluation and research participants. Appropriate institutional review boards should be consulted.

(e) Core staff and volunteers engaged in evaluation or research should obtain voluntary and written informed consent from participants, when appropriate, without any implied or actual deprivation or penalty for refusal to participate; without undue inducement to participate; and with due regard for participants’ well-being, privacy, and dignity. Informed consent should include information about the nature, extent, and duration of the participation requested and disclosure of the risks and benefits of participation in the research.

(f) When evaluation or research participants are incapable of giving informed consent, core staff and volunteers should provide an appropriate explanation to the participants, obtain the participants’ assent to the extent they are able, and obtain written consent from an appropriate proxy.

(g) Core staff and volunteers should never design or conduct evaluation or research that does not use consent procedures, such as certain forms of naturalistic observation and archival research, unless rigorous and responsible review of the research has found it to be justified because of its prospective scientific, educational, or applied value and unless equally effective alternative procedures that do not involve waiver of consent are not feasible.

(h) Core staff and volunteers should inform participants of their right to withdraw from evaluation and research at any time without penalty.

(i) Core staff and volunteers should take appropriate steps to ensure that participants in evaluation and research have access to appropriate supportive services.

(j) Core staff and volunteers engaged in evaluation or research should protect participants from unwarranted physical or mental distress, harm, danger, or deprivation.

(k) Core staff and volunteers engaged in the evaluation of services should discuss collected information only for professional purposes and only with people professionally concerned with this information.

(l) Core staff and volunteers engaged in evaluation or research should ensure the anonymity or confidentiality of participants and of the data obtained from them. Core staff and volunteers should inform participants of any limits of confidentiality, the measures that will be taken to ensure confidentiality, and when any records containing research data will be destroyed.

(m) Core staff and volunteers who report evaluation and research results should protect participants’ confidentiality by omitting identifying information unless proper consent has been obtained authorizing disclosure.

(n) Core staff and volunteers should report evaluation and research findings accurately. They should not fabricate or falsify results and should take steps to correct any errors later found in published data using standard publication methods.

(o) Core staff and volunteers engaged in evaluation or research should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest and dual relationships with participants, should inform participants when a real or potential conflict of interest arises, and should take steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes participants’ interests primary.

(p) Core staff and volunteers should educate themselves, their students, and their colleagues about responsible research practices.

**6. CORE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS’ ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE BROADER SOCIETY**

**6.01 Social Welfare**

Core staff and volunteers should promote the general welfare of society, from local to global levels, and the development of people, their communities, and their environments. Core staff and volunteers 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.

**6.02 Public Participation**

Core staff and volunteers should facilitate informed participation by the public in shaping social policies and institutions.

**6.03 Public Emergencies**

Core staff and volunteers should provide appropriate professional services in public emergencies to the greatest extent possible.

**6.04 Social and Political Action**

(a) Core staff and volunteers should engage in social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment, services, and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully. Core staff and volunteers should be aware of the impact of the political arena on practice and should advocate for changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions in order to meet basic human needs and promote social justice.

(b) Core staff and volunteers should act to expand choice and opportunity for all people, with special regard for vulnerable, disadvantaged, oppressed, and exploited people and groups.

(c) Core staff and volunteers should promote conditions that encourage respect for cultural and social diversity within the United States and globally. Core staff and volunteers should promote policies and practices that demonstrate respect for difference, support the expansion of cultural knowledge and resources, advocate for programs and institutions that demonstrate cultural competence, and promote policies that safeguard the rights of and confirm equity and social justice for all people.

(d) Core staff and volunteers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group, or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical disability.