

Documentation Matters: Tip #3

What things should I consider pertaining to the documentation of electronic social work services?

The purpose of social work recording is “to provide a clear statement of social work assessment, intervention, and professional decision-making” (NLASW Standards of Practice, 2018, p. 5). This purpose does not change from in-person to electronic service delivery; only the medium is changing. Social workers must use professional judgment in assessing what information is relevant and necessary for the delivery of services and meets professional standards and the needs of clients.

Social workers also consider the following:

- Has the informed consent of clients to engage in electronic services been documented?
- Does the record contain up to date contact information for the client and/or service plan for a possible interruption or failure in the technology that is being used?
- What is the policy pertaining to emails and texts from clients? How are these documented?
- What risk management strategies are being used to protect client information shared through technology?
- Social workers in private practice are the custodians of personal health information under the Personal Health Information Act (PHIA). Therefore, another question for those in private practice is whether the technology being used to deliver services and store client information is PHIA compliant?



For more information review the NLASW Standards of Practice and the Self-Assessment Tools for Informed Consent and Documentation on the NLASW website at www.nlasw.ca.