

Social Work and Private Practice: Information for Members of the Public

Many people avail of counselling/therapy from social workers in private practice. The following information is intended as a resource to help members of the public find a private practitioner who can meet their needs.

Is the individual offering counselling/therapy a registered social worker?

Social work in Newfoundland and Labrador is regulated under provincial legislation titled, [An Act Respecting the Practice of Social Work \(Social Workers Act\)](#). Registration with the Newfoundland and Labrador College of Social Workers (NLCSW) grants the Registered Social Worker (RSW) professional designation required to use the title social worker, or to practice within the scope of the social work profession in this province. All RSW's who engage in private practice are required to hold appropriate professional liability insurance.

NLCSW maintains an online registry of all registered social workers in NL which can be found at <https://nlcsw.ca/membersearch>. Registered social workers are listed with an 'active' status which is updated annually. The registration year runs from March 1 – February 28.

Are their rules or guidelines that social workers in private practice must follow?

Yes, social workers in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) must be aware of and adhere to the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) (2005) Code of Ethics, CASW (2005) Guidelines for Ethical Practice and the NLCSW (2020) Standards of Practice for Social Workers in Newfoundland and Labrador. These documents can be found on the NLCSW website at <https://nlcsw.ca/practice-resources/code-of-ethics>.

In finding the right social worker for me, what are some questions I can ask?

- What is your area of expertise?
- What is your experience working in this area?
- What is your level of education and what is your training in this area?
- What can I expect in my work with you?
- What specific approaches do you use to help people? How do you know these approaches are proven ways to help people?
- How will I know it will be helpful?

- What might be hard about the counselling/therapy process?
- What can I do if the approaches you use do not help me?
- Do you provide in person and/or electronic social work services?

I am interested in receiving services electronically. From a client perspective, what should I be aware of prior to engaging in electronic social work services?

The increased utilization of electronic social work services has provided social workers and clients with the ability to engage in services remotely. The NLCSW has clear practice standards for social workers registered in NL who are engaging in electronic social work services which can be found at [https://nlcsw.ca/electronic social work practice](https://nlcsw.ca/electronic_social_work_practice).

NLCSW also has an electronic practice policy for social workers registered in other Canadian provinces who are providing social work services electronically to residents of NL. Information for clients receiving electronic social work services from a social worker in another province can be found at [https://nlcsw.ca/information for clients](https://nlcsw.ca/information_for_clients).

NLCSW maintains a list of social workers from other Canadian jurisdictions who have been approved for electronic social work practice in NL. This listing can be found at [https://nlcsw.ca/social workers other canadian jurisdictions approved for electronic practice NL](https://nlcsw.ca/social_workers_other_canadian_jurisdictions_approved_for_electronic_practice_NL).

I have concerns about the practice of a social worker in private practice. How can I address these concerns?

The NLCSW has a complaints and discipline process designed to fairly and objectively, review allegations against professional social work practice. Information on the NLCSW professional conduct review process can be found at <https://nlcsw.ca/regulation/complaints-review-process>. If you would like to speak to someone regarding the conduct or behaviour of a social worker or about the NLCSW professional conduct review process, please contact the NLCSW Associate Registrar by email at poneil@nlcsw.ca or by phone at (709) 753-0200 (ext. 202).