Ethical Considerations for Helping Professionals: A Social Worker's Perspective

Presented by

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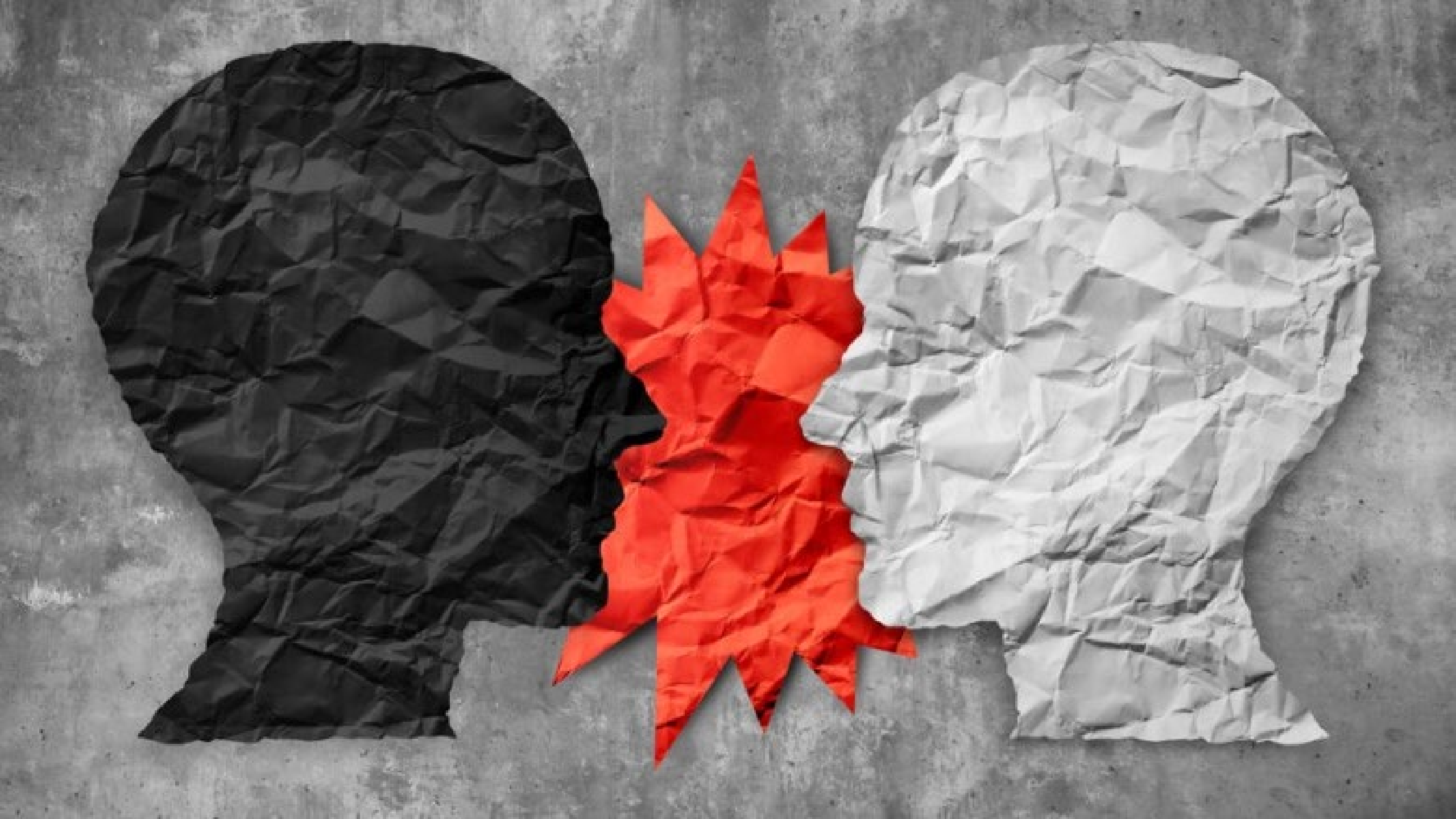
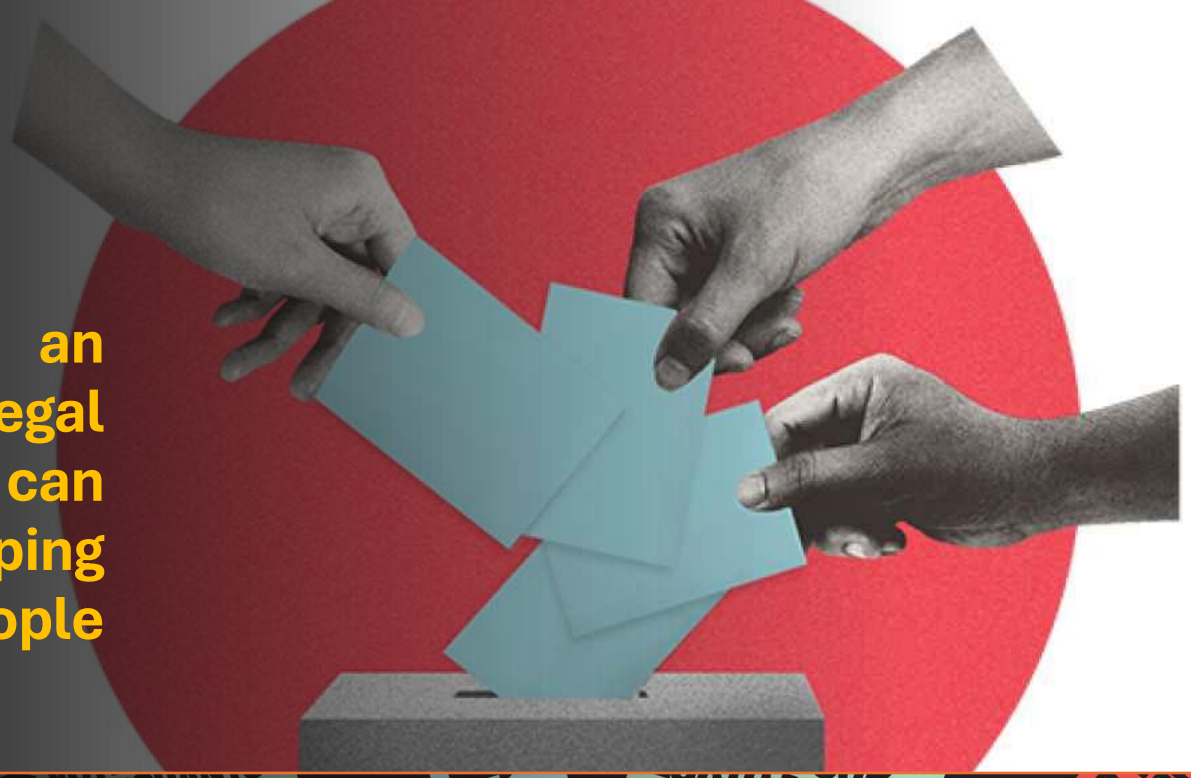
Pronouns: he/ him/ his

There are times when life's ends are so raveled that reason and sense cry out that we stop and gather them together again before we can proceed.

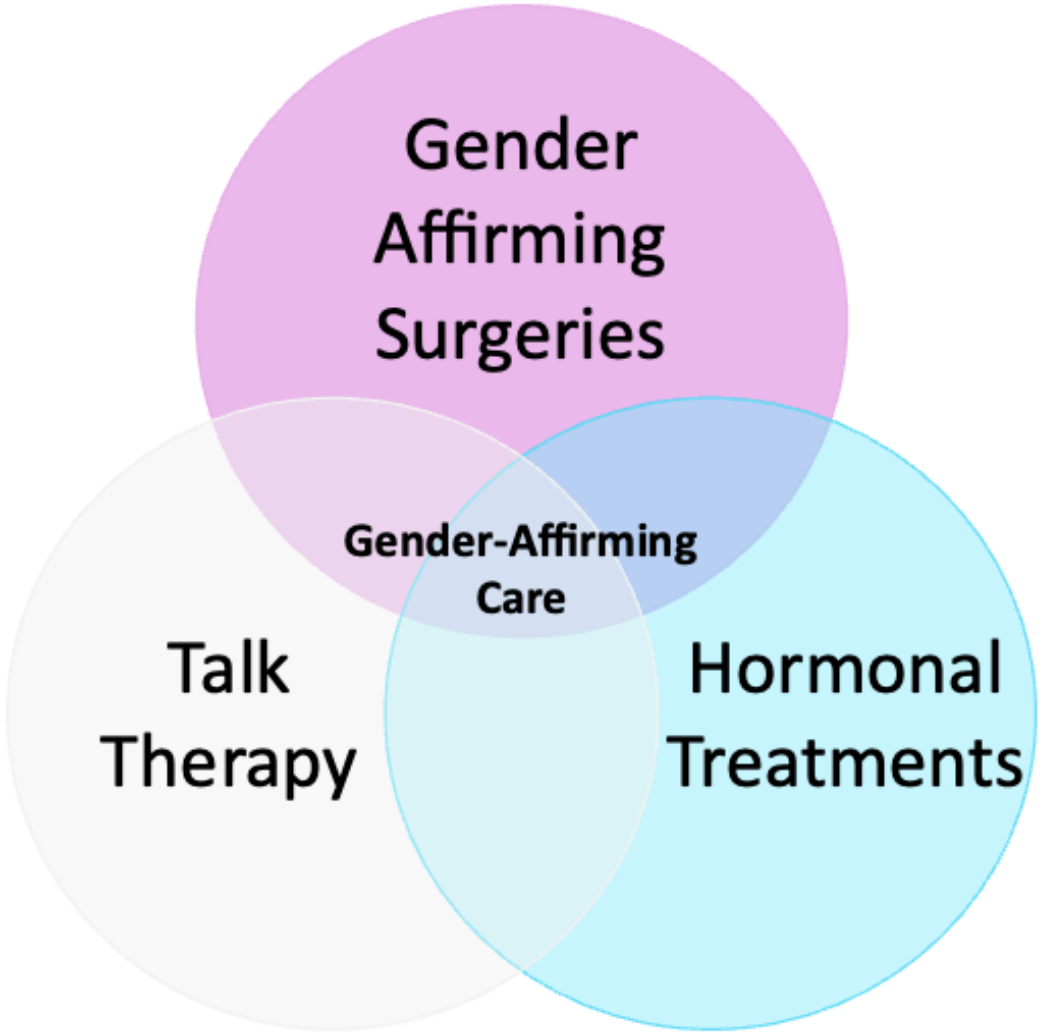
RICHARD WRIGHT



The outcome of something like an election can redefine a person's legal standing in the world, just as it can attempt to redefine what a helping professional can do to assist the people that depend on them for care.



Gender-affirming care **is life-saving healthcare**



A Social Worker's Perspective

What is gender-affirming care?

Gender-affirming care, as defined by the World Health Organization, **encompasses a range of social, psychological, behavioral, and medical interventions "designed to support and affirm an individual's gender identity"** when it conflicts with the gender they were assigned at birth. The interventions help transgender people align various aspects of their lives — emotional, interpersonal, and biological — with their gender identity.

Navigating Social & Clinical Ambiguity

Professional Competency

Social Determinants of Health

Duty to Report

Safety Concerns

Consent

Legal and Ethical Right to Care

Parental Consent

Discrimination

Name & Gender Marker Change

HRT Initiation

What is the impact of the socio-political climate on the role of a helper, provider?

“Law is the aftermath of culture.”

YOUR HUMBLE INSTRUCTOR

A Social Worker's Perspective

Approximate Social Work Workforce & State-based Gender Identity (GI) Policy:

- Negative GI Policy 22%; 148100
- Low GI Policy 19%; 130360
- Fair GI Policy 6%; 42680
- Medium GI Policy 8%; 49780
- High GI Policy 45%; 306180

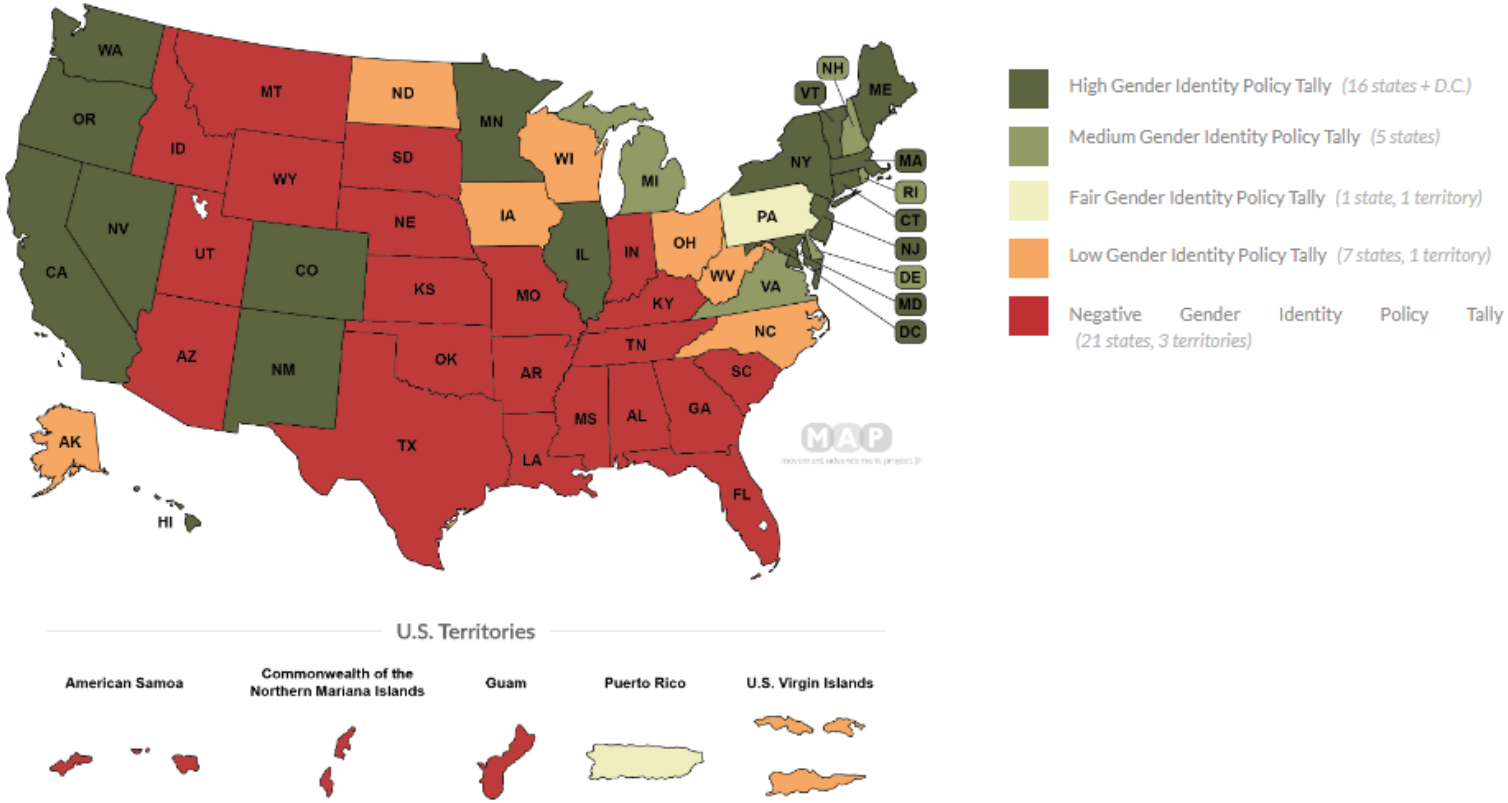
Source: Social Workers: Occupational Outlook Handbook: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

SNAPSHOT: LGBTQ EQUALITY BY STATE

OVERALL POLICY TALLY | SEXUAL ORIENTATION | GENDER IDENTITY | STATE DATA TABLE

The Movement Advancement Project (MAP) tracks over 50 different LGBTQ-related laws and policies. This map shows the gender identity policy tallies for each state, the District of Columbia, and the five populated U.S. territories. A state's policy tally scores the laws and policies within each state that shape LGBTQ people's lives, experiences, and equality. The major categories of laws covered by the policy tally include: Relationship & Parental Recognition, Nondiscrimination, Religious Exemptions, LGBTQ Youth, Health Care, Criminal Justice, and Identity Documents.

Click on any state to view its detailed policy tally and state profile, or click "Choose an Issue" above to view maps on over 50 different LGBTQ-related laws and policies.



POLITICS ▶

Tennessee Senate passes bill making 'recruiting' for trans youth care a felony

The bill could have far ranging impacts in Tennessee and outside of the state, and could be broadly used to target health care professionals across state lines.

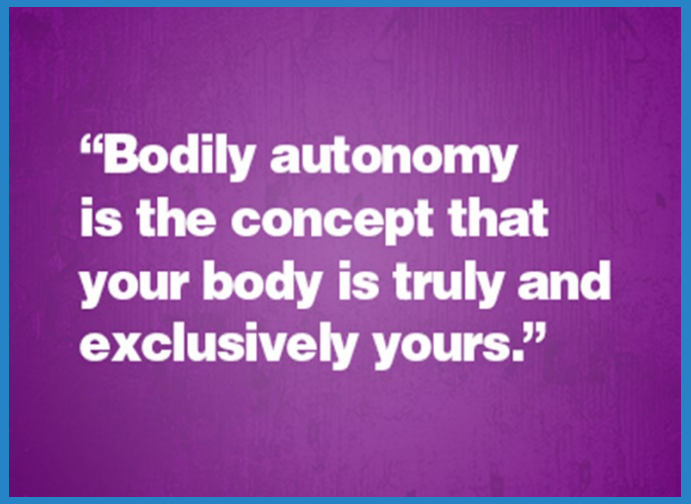
BY ERIN REED

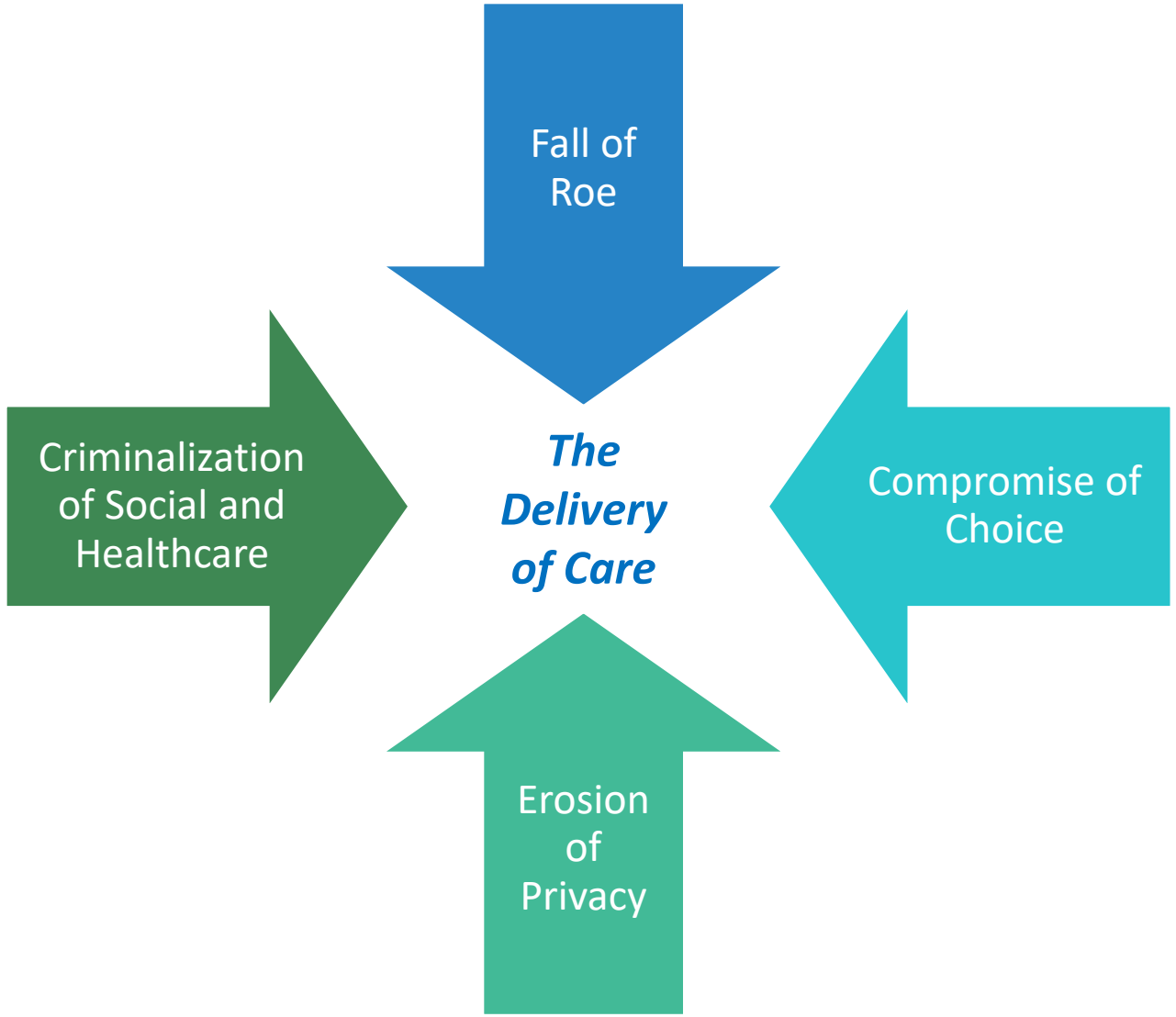
APRIL 14 2024 11:17 AM EST

A Social Worker's Perspective

Self-determination - the process by which a person controls their own life

Autonomy – independence in one's thoughts or actions; the quality or state of being self-governing





SOCIAL WORK LICENSURE COMPACT

This project is funded by the Department of Defense

What is the **Social Work Licensure Compact?**

The Social Work Licensure Compact is an interstate occupational licensure compact. Interstate compacts are constitutionally authorized, legislatively enacted, legally binding agreements among states. This compact will enable regulated social workers with bachelor's, master's and clinical licenses to serve clients in every state that joins the compact, rather than going through the licensure process in every state where they want to practice. Like the compact for a driver's license, each Social Work Licensure Compact member state agrees to mutually recognize the licenses issued by every other member state.

How does the **Social Work Licensure Compact** work?

SOCIAL WORKER
A social worker in their home state wants to practice in other compact member states.

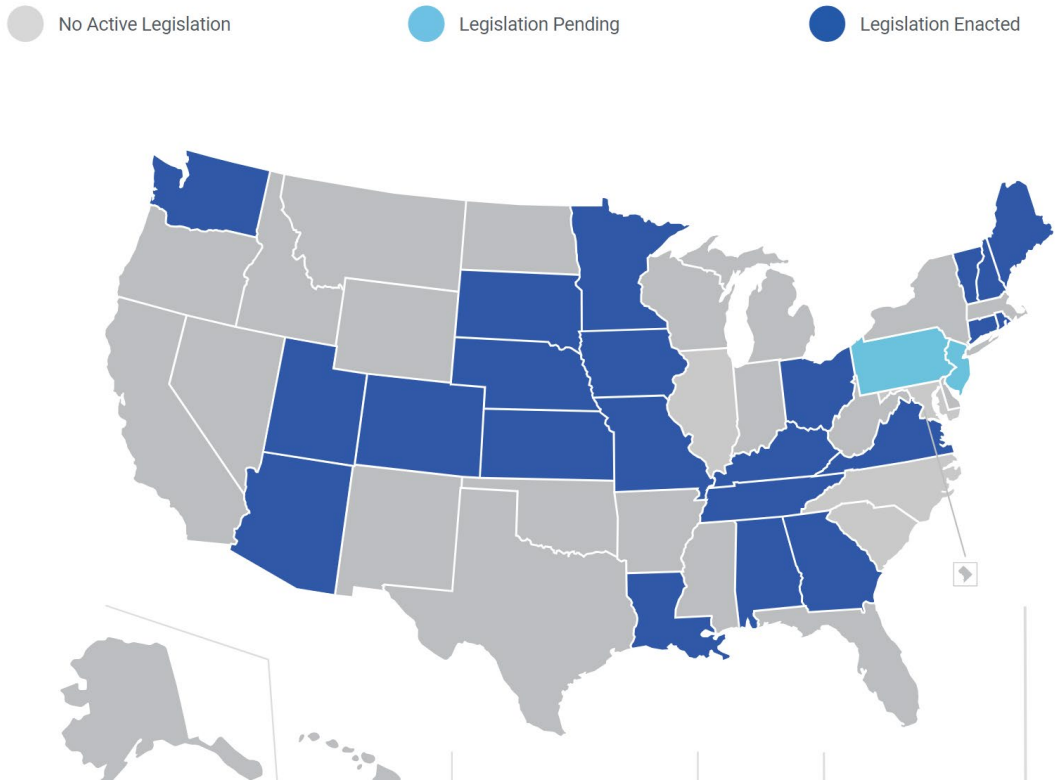
APPLY FOR MULTISTATE LICENSE
The social worker must hold or be eligible for an active, unencumbered license in the home state.
Social worker applies for a multistate license.

ELIGIBILITY VERIFIED
Home state verifies that the social worker meets the compact's requirements based on license category.
License categories include Bachelor's, Master's and Clinical.

MULTISTATE LICENSE ISSUED
A multistate license is issued authorizing social work practice corresponding to each category of licensure regulated in the member state.
The social worker can now practice in any other member state.

What other professions have an interstate compact?

- Interstate Medical Licensure Compact (IMLC)
- Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) and Advanced Practice Nurse Compact (APRN Compact)
- Emergency Medical Service Officials Licensure Compact (EMS Compact)
- Physical Therapists Licensure Compact (PT Compact)
- Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact (PSYPACT)
- Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact (ASLP-IC)
- Occupational Therapy Interstate Licensure Compact (OT Compact)
- Counseling Interstate Licensure Compact



A Social Worker's Perspective

Accessible, equitable, and high-quality care is predicated on the delivery of ***whole-person care***. This essential approach to care does not allow for providers to disregard or abandon:

- Adherence to professional ethics
- Implementation of evidence-based standards of care
- Practicing shared decision making
- Preservation of trust & confidentiality

How can a provider adhere to these ethical mandates within the context of hostile state laws – especially within the context of interstate practice?

A Social Worker's Perspective

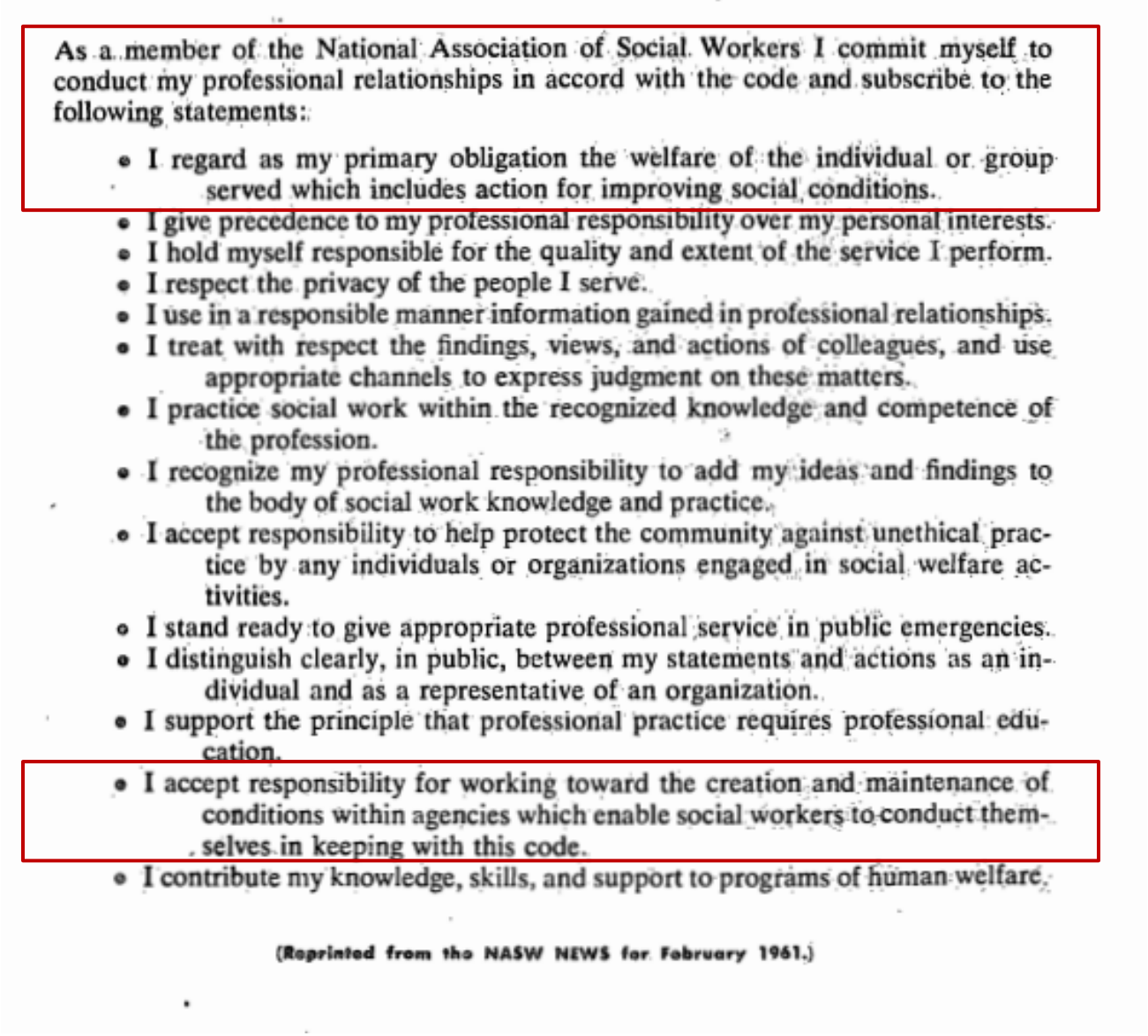
The first NASW Code of Ethics was approved in the latter half of 1960 during the beginning chapters of the Civil Rights Movement – a movement that exemplified:

- Conscientious objection
- Social activism
- Moral courage

A Social Worker's Perspective

NASW's Delegate Assembly approved the first edition of the NASW Code of Ethics on October 13, 1960.

The initial Code of Ethics and subsequent updates were based upon the ethical principle of ***social justice***.



As a member of the National Association of Social Workers I commit myself to conduct my professional relationships in accord with the code and subscribe to the following statements:

- I regard as my primary obligation the welfare of the individual or group served which includes action for improving social conditions.
- I give precedence to my professional responsibility over my personal interests.
- I hold myself responsible for the quality and extent of the service I perform.
- I respect the privacy of the people I serve.
- I use in a responsible manner information gained in professional relationships.
- I treat with respect the findings, views, and actions of colleagues, and use appropriate channels to express judgment on these matters.
- I practice social work within the recognized knowledge and competence of the profession.
- I recognize my professional responsibility to add my ideas and findings to the body of social work knowledge and practice.
- I accept responsibility to help protect the community against unethical practice by any individuals or organizations engaged in social welfare activities.
- I stand ready to give appropriate professional service in public emergencies.
- I distinguish clearly, in public, between my statements and actions as an individual and as a representative of an organization.
- I support the principle that professional practice requires professional education.
- I accept responsibility for working toward the creation and maintenance of conditions within agencies which enable social workers to conduct themselves in keeping with this code.
- I contribute my knowledge, skills, and support to programs of human welfare.

(Reprinted from the NASW NEWS for February 1961.)

A Social Worker's Perspective

6.04 Social and Political Action

Social workers 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.

Social workers 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.

Social workers 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 ability.

A Social Worker's Perspective

"We can disagree and still love each other unless your disagreement is rooted in my oppression and denial of my humanity and right to exist."— James Baldwin

Human Rights as a concept and as a framework emphasizes:

- Basic protections and entitlements needed to safeguard a person's dignity
- Promotion of the realization of each person's full potential
- A universal moral language to build solidarity

The core values of many helping professions are predicated on a Human Rights Framework.

A Social Worker's Perspective

Number 1 Ethical Rule

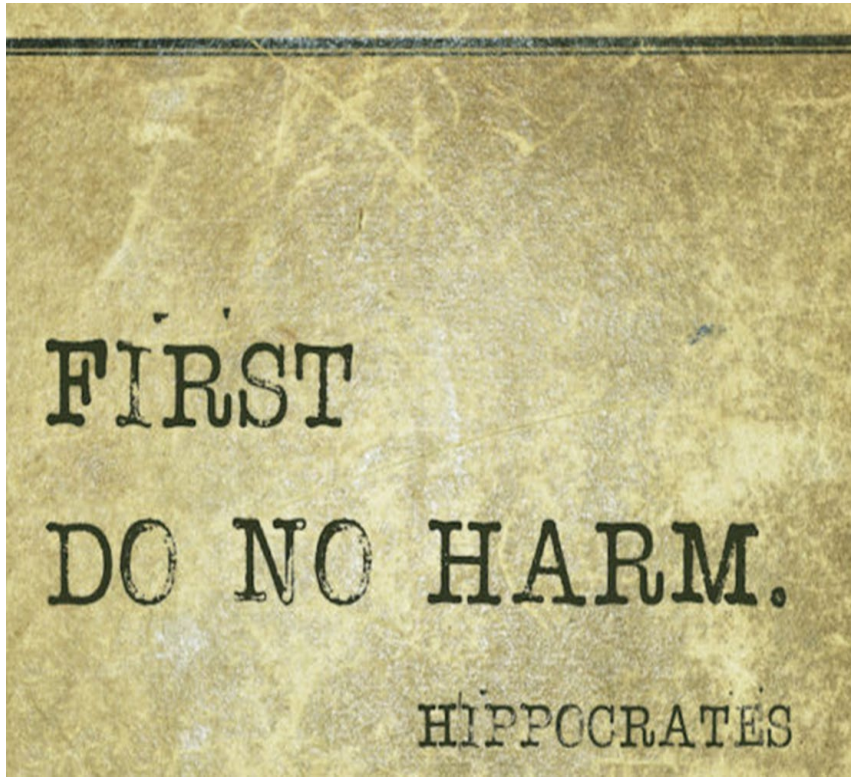
Social workers' primary ethical responsibility is to promote the well-being of clients (Code of Ethics, Standard 1.01). ***Social workers must also "respect and promote the right of clients to self-determination and assist clients in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals"***

LIVED EXPERIENCE

Ethical care is also predicated on recognizing, valuing, and honoring the lived experiences of the people that we serve.

A Social Worker's Perspective

Helping professionals in all capacities stand to play pivotal roles in advocating in ways that do not replicate abuse, mistreatment, and discrimination. To provide ethical and affirming care advocacy, we are all called upon to:

- ***Believe*** and ***value*** the lived experiences and challenges of those that entrust us with their care
- Commit to learning how to deliver and protect whole-person care
- Fight and resist against the laws that seek to harm, disempower, and erase and discredit those kept at the margins
- Recognize that those subjected to harm are our clients, colleagues, neighbors, and families by blood and by choice

Being complicit or actively engaging in harm are not compatible with our respective ethical codes of practice.