

دائرة تنمية المجتمع
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT



DCD Social Care Professionals Code of Conduct & Ethics in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi

Licensing of Social Care Professionals

First Edition - 2020

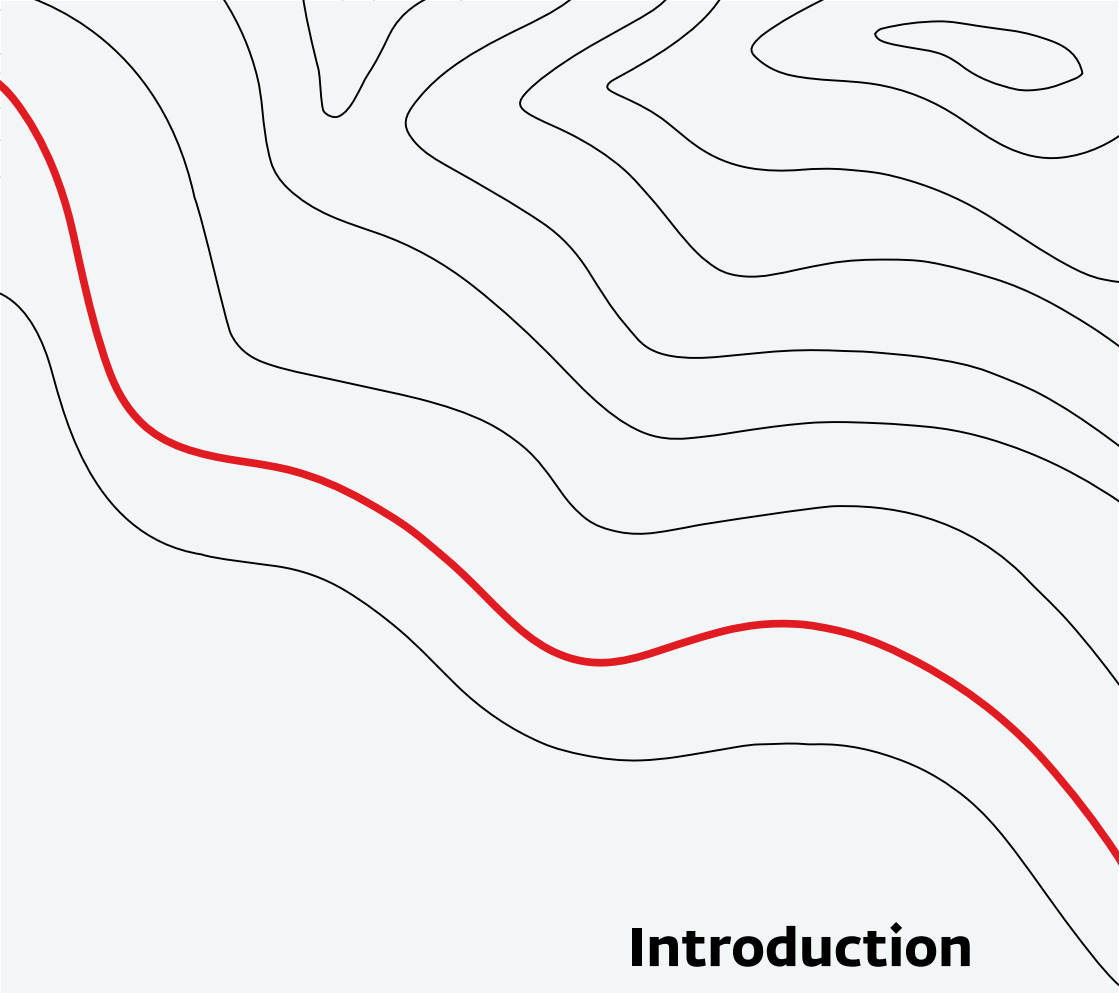


معاً لمستقبل أفضل

Together for better future

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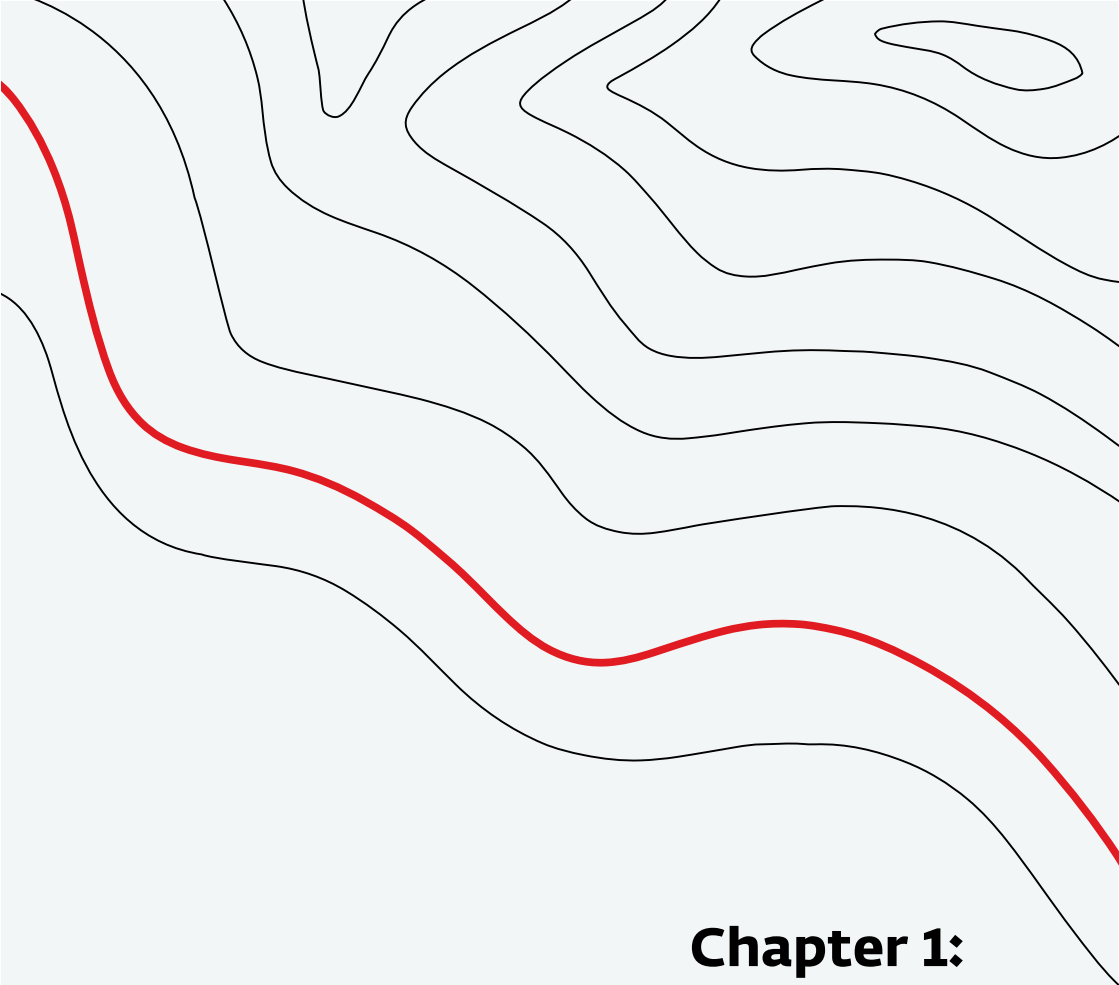
Introduction

The Department of Community Development (DCD) was established to ensure a dignified life for all members of society. DCD has closely collaborated with partners to enhance the inclusion and social welfare of the Emirate characterized by respect, credibility, empathy, responsibility, and passion for giving and kindness. As such, the DCD's efforts are aligned with the vision of the late Founding Father, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, who designated the development of human resources as a key pillar of the nation's development.

The role of the DCD is to regulate, empower and monitor the social and community development sector in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and enable its partners and stakeholders in the provision of high quality and effective services and social care for all members of the Abu Dhabi community. The Department of Community Development also strives to build an engaged, responsible and inclusive community that works together to achieve social development through adopting positive and meaningful change, and by overcoming the obstacles that attempt to limit the journey of progress.

Regulating the social care services and practicing social care professions is considered one of the most important initiatives due to its role in ensuring high quality services. Licensing of social care professionals and relevant implemented standards will provide protection to all the community and its members by ensuring that the social care services offered are provided by competent professionals who have the right qualification and experiences. This will also establish the basis of safe and professional practice as well as formalize ethical conduct and improve the quality of the services provided.

The Professional Code of Conduct and Ethics for Social care professionals licensed by the Department is one of the central elements in regulating the social sector and the provision of social care services in the Emirate. This Code defines and links the provision of social care services to a number of ethical and professional values and principles that define professional behavior to improve the quality of services provided to the Beneficiaries. The importance of this Code also comes from the specificity of social care professions and related activities in serving the whole community and more specifically the vulnerable groups with special needs.



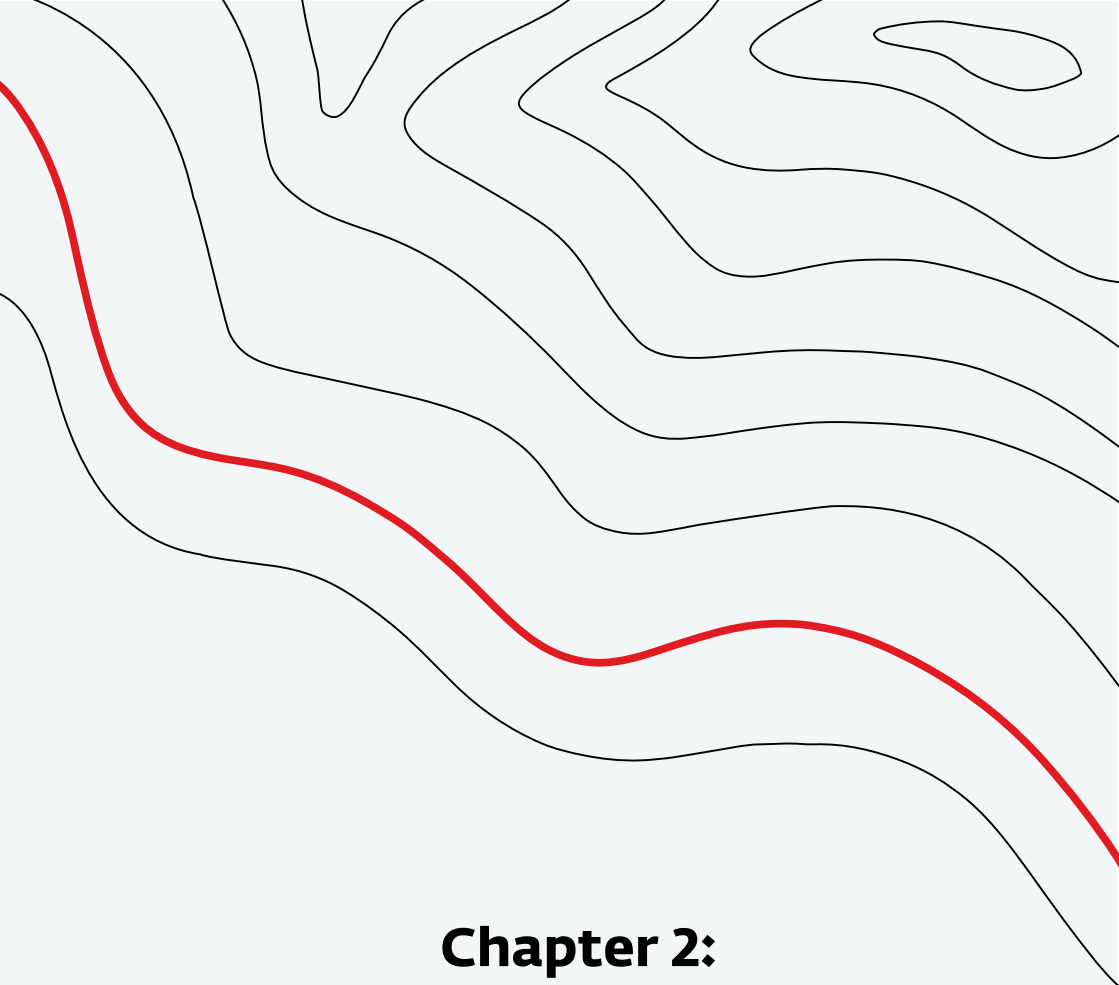
Chapter 1:
Definitions

1. Definitions

The following words and expressions shall bear the meanings assigned thereto herein respectively, unless the context otherwise requires:

TERM	DEFINITION
THE COUNTRY	The United Arab Emirates
THE EMIRATE	The Emirate of Abu Dhabi
DCD	Department of Community Development
BENEFICIARY	The recipient or user of any service provided in a Social Care facility or by a social care professional whether at the individual, group or community level.
BENEFICIARY'S RELATED PARTY	Refers to a person or family that has an established relationship with the beneficiary which stems from blood relationship or the duty/responsibility to provide and/or supervise the duty of care in the event the beneficiary is a minor or is incapacitated. This includes but is not limited to parents, siblings, cousins, and guardians.
COMPETENCY-BASED ASSESSMENT	The process of evaluating the professional's ability to achieve a standard of competency pertaining to the practice of a specific Social Care Profession.
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	Every action leads to financial interest, personal interest or other interest that a facility, facility manager or owner or professional get and that may be in conflict with the best interests of the beneficiary.
CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)	The formal, self-led or profession-related learning activities that Social Care Professionals undergo in order to advance their skills, enhance the quality of practice and qualify to renew a License.
CPD ACTIVITY LOG	A document used to document all the Continuing Professional Development activities a Social Care Professional undergoes throughout the License Period. The dated record highlights the activity, the category, the duration of the activity and the date it was completed.
CPD EVIDENCE PORTFOLIO	The collection of evidence used to prove the fact a Social Care Professional has completed each of the Continuing Professional Development activities listed on the CPD Dated Record through the license period.
LICENSE PERIOD	Is a time-bound duration starts on the date of license issuance and ends by the license expiry date. During this period, a Social Care Professional and/or Facility are authorized to provide Social Care Services to a Beneficiary.
PROFESSIONAL LICENSE	The permission given by DCD to a social care professional who meets the qualification and experience and allows the professionals to practice the profession in the Emirate and does not include the Provisional License.

TERM	DEFINITION
PROVISIONAL LICENSE	A license granted by DCD to applicants upon fulfilling part of the licensing requirements such as the educational qualification requirements only. This license grants them the ability to practice a social care profession whilst being supervised by a Social Care Professional with a Professional License. This license is granted to applicants who seek to complete an advanced educational degree and/or are pursuing to fulfil the practical experience requirements in order to qualify for a Professional License.
SOCIAL CARE PROFESSION	Social Worker, Counselor, Applied Behaviour Analyst (ABA), Psychologist (Non-Clinical), or Psychotherapist in the specializations mentioned in DCD standards for Education and Practical Experience, or all these professions together.
SOCIAL CARE FACILITY	The private, governmental or third sector entity or institution licensed by DCD to provide social care services in the Emirate including Supported Accommodation Facilities, Day Care and Therapy, Community Service Facilities and Digital and Teleservices.
SOCIAL CARE PROFESSIONAL	Is the licensed individual by DCD to practice a Social Care Profession in the Emirate.
SOCIAL CARE SERVICES	A spectrum of integrated and multi-disciplinary services which provide care, social support, protection and empowerment of individuals and/or families in order to promote social wellbeing and inclusion through an independent, active and well-led life.
SOCIAL SECTOR	An integrated system of social work aiming to care for and develop individuals, families and community of all aspects , and includes private and public entities, whether profitable or not, providing services to the Social Sector which care for family affairs in general and women and children in particular as well as the Affairs of Minors, Orphans, Necessitous, People of Determination, Youth, Elderly and those of Unknown Parentage.
DCD PROFESSIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS	A set of professional and ethical standards by which the social care professionals working in social care facilities or in other sectors are expected to abide.



Chapter 2:

**Purposes, Scope,
Principles and Values**

2. Purpose

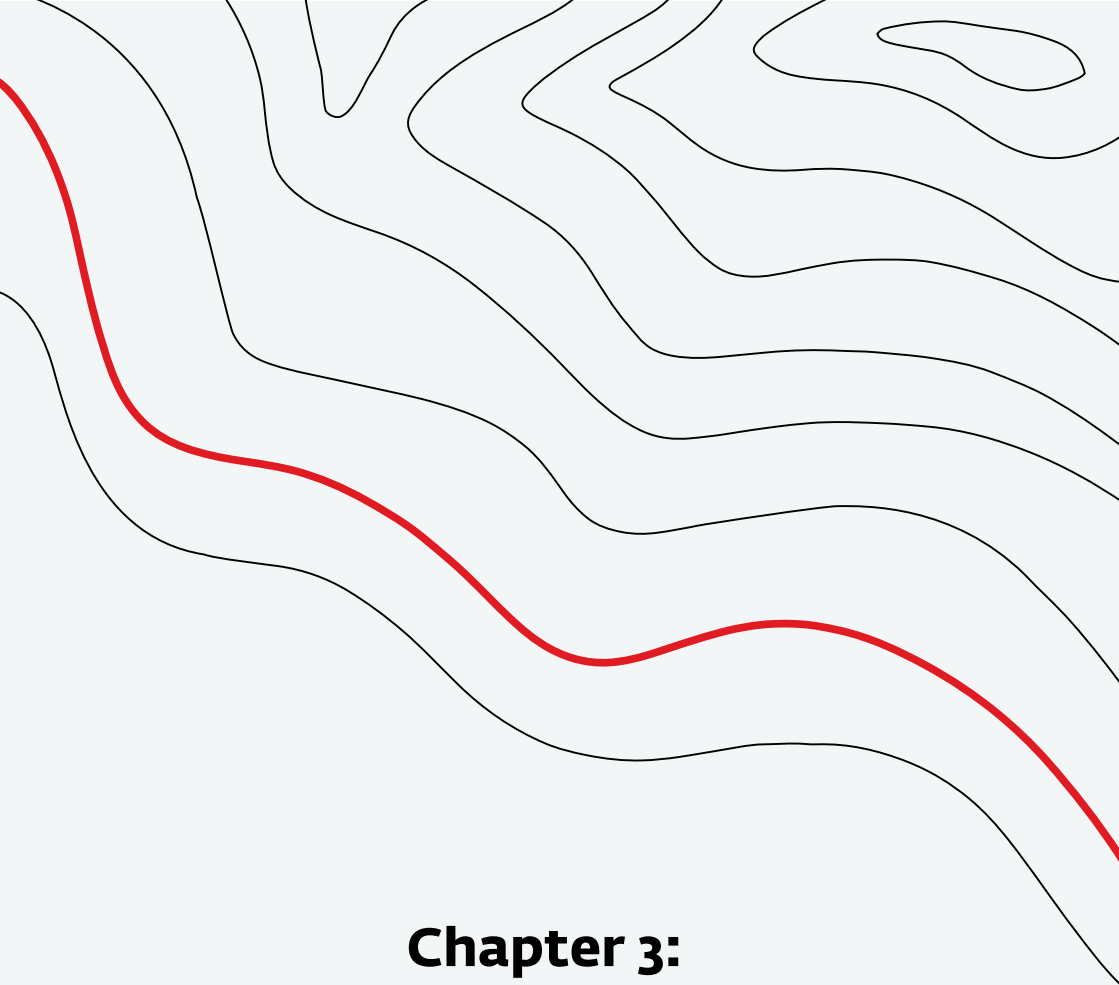
- The Social Care Professionals Code of Conduct and Ethics has been developed to:
 - Protect the rights of the Beneficiaries by establishing a solid foundation for ethical and professional conduct to guide the practices of the Social Care Professionals in the Emirate.
 - Define the duties and regulate the professional practices of Social Care Professionals in the Emirate.
 - Consolidate the basic values and principles of social care services in the Emirate.

3. Scope

- The Professional Code of Conduct and Ethics are to be adopted and complied with by:
 - DCD Licensed Social Care Professionals.
 - Social Care Facilities, Facility Managers, Support Staff, Trainees and Volunteers due to their involvement in the provisioning of Social Care Services.

4. Principles and Values

- The Professional Code of Conduct and Ethics is based on a set of core values to guide the practices of Social Care Professionals including:
 - **Integrity and honesty:** Commitment to the right behaviours under any circumstances.
 - **Transparency:** Dealing with Beneficiaries, Colleagues, Related Parties and members of society in an open, sincere and honest manner.
 - **Respect:** Respecting the rights of Beneficiaries, their Related Parties, colleagues and the community.
 - **Accountability:** Social Care Professional bears the responsibility of his words and deeds.
 - **Care and Compassion:** Caring for others and feeling responsible for them, especially vulnerable groups.



Chapter 3:

Standards of Professional
Practice, Conduct & Ethics

The following sections outline the standards with which all Social Care Professionals shall comply when performing their professional duties:

5. Protecting and acting in the best interest of Beneficiaries

- Treating Beneficiaries, their Related Parties with respect and protecting their best interests by:
 - Respecting Beneficiaries' privacy and dignity at all times.
 - Involving Beneficiaries and their Related Parties in the decision-making process, especially in matters related to their support or the Social Care Services they are seeking to receive.
- Abiding by the 'Principles for Respecting Mental Capacity & Protecting Best Interest' demonstrated through:
 - Acknowledging that Beneficiaries should have choice and control over the social care services they receive, and aspects related to their well-being.
 - Ensuring that the protection of Beneficiaries' interests is at the forefront of professional practice
 - Ensuring that best interests guide all decision making when dealing with incapacitated Beneficiaries.
- Supporting Beneficiaries in order to promote and maintain their health and well-being.
- Obtaining consent from the Beneficiaries before providing Social Care Services.
- Challenging discrimination and promoting inclusion and equality by:
 - Not to engage with or tolerate any form of discrimination against Beneficiaries, their Related Parties or colleagues.
 - Rejecting and reporting any unethical and/or discriminatory acts to the facility management and/or DCD.

6. Effective and appropriate communication with Beneficiaries and their Related Parties

- Consider the emotional, psychological, social and physical needs of Beneficiaries when communicating with them, and their Related Parties.
- Ensure that the information requested by Beneficiaries and their Related Parties is communicated to them in a timely and clear manner and in a format which they can understand.
- Work proactively to meet and ensure the Beneficiaries' communication needs are appropriately met; which includes, but is not limited to, language barriers and any sensory limitations.

- Provide Beneficiaries and their Related Parties with accurate and comprehensive information in relation to any expected commitments from their side including payment terms to support them in decision making.
- Ensure transparency and clarity with Beneficiaries and their Related Parties regarding any changes to the Beneficiaries' commitments such as payment terms that may be incurred by them for the provision of services.

7. Effective and appropriate communication with colleagues

- Initiating and maintaining effective professional relationships with colleagues in a way that actively promotes and facilitates learning, and the sharing of good practice to continuously improve quality and outcomes for Beneficiaries.
- Collaborating with colleagues involved in the provision of care services to Beneficiaries, which includes, but is not limited to, sharing information deemed necessary or relevant in achieving optimum wellbeing and compliance with Standards of information sharing and confidentiality in doing so.

8. Delegating duties and tasks in responsible and appropriate manners

- Delegating duties and responsibilities when necessary, and only to an individual who is skilled and qualified to undertake the delegated duties.
- Supporting the individual who accept the delegation duties and supervise the activities related to social care services where necessary.
- Taking all practical steps to mitigate the risk of harm.

9. Working within the boundaries of professional practice, knowledge and expertise

- Fulfilling the licensing eligibility criteria to practice a Social Care Profession. This can be achieved by:
 - Obtaining a valid Provisional License issued by DCD and be subject to the supervision of a licensed Professional who have a valid Professional License.
 - Obtaining a valid Professional License issued by DCD in order to provide Social Care Services to Beneficiaries without supervision.
- Practice within the scope of Professional boundaries and experience.
- Refer Beneficiaries who are looking for services outside of the professional scope of competencies to other qualified professionals with considering safe and proper referring procedures.
- Setting and maintaining professional boundaries by:

- Upholding professional boundaries and the reputation of Social Care Profession in order to protect the professional himself, Beneficiaries and the facility that he/she works for.
 - Taking measures to ensure relationships remain professional, this includes ending relationships in a safe and responsible manner.
 - Ensuring that all professional relationships with the Beneficiaries and their Related Parties abide by and respect the local culture, traditions and religious norms.
 - Abiding by the Mental Capacity & Best Interest Principles during professional practices and interactions with the Beneficiaries or their Related Parties.
- Sustaining and refining skills and/or knowledge by:
 - Undertaking Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities as per DCD regulations and standards.
 - Abiding by the Licensing **Professional Standards for Continuing Professional Development.**
 - Keeping up to date with any legal or professional adjustments affecting the professional's daily practice.

10. Maintaining confidentiality and respecting data and information privacy

- Any information relating to the care of a Beneficiary is to be treated as confidential and private.
- Social Care Professional shall not disclose any of the beneficiary's information obtained during or due to practicing a social care profession, and this prohibition does not apply to any of the following circumstances:
 - If the disclosure of information is requested by the Beneficiary unless he/she is deficient or lacking eligibility
 - If professional has the appropriate consent and permission to do so in accordance with the standards for seeking consent
 - If the disclosure of information is to prevent or report a crime, the disclosure in this case will only be to the related authority
 - If the professional is assigned by a judicial or official investigation authority in the country as an expert, or if he/she was summoned by them as a witness in an investigation.

11. Ethical use of technology and social media

- Ensuring the ethical standards related to the provisioning of social care services are applied on the use of digital technology and social media in providing these services including but not limited to privacy and confidentiality, conflicts of interest, competence, and documentation and must obtain the necessary knowledge and skills to guard against unethical practice when using technology.

12. Managing and dealing with risk

- Recognizing and appropriately mitigating risks by:
 - Not to take any action that could threaten or put the safety or health of the Beneficiaries, their Related Parties or colleague at risk.
 - Not to use unauthorized or unlawful means of interference.
 - Clearly document the steps and actions have been taken to minimize risks.
 - Only act within the boundaries of profession, the employing facility's policies and procedures especially those concerning safeguarding and where necessary refer to qualified professionals in the case of emergencies.
- Prevent exposure to avoidable risks by:
 - Monitoring physical and mental health and recognise when own personal circumstances may affect professional performance.
 - Ensuring that necessary arrangements are made in order to prevent Beneficiaries, their Related Parties and colleagues from being exposed to avoidable risks such as health and safety procedures.

13. Reporting concerns and incidences

1. Reporting of concerns and incidents by:
 - Referring Beneficiaries to a legitimate and qualified service provider licensed by DCD, if they need service out of his/ her scope of practice.
 - Abiding by the referral processes set by the employing facility.
 - Promoting a supportive environment where Beneficiaries are confident and empowered to recognize and act on incidents, concerns, or risks and understand the process for doing so.

- With all care and insight, responding to any issues concerning the safety and well-being of vulnerable groups, children and/or other Beneficiary groups by taking the appropriate actions and in accordance with Federal and Emirate Laws and regulations.
 - Acting in a manner that consistently prioritizes the interest of Beneficiaries and their safety.
 - Taking the necessary measures to ensure that flagged concerns are adequately addressed.
 - Ensuring that any issues, concerns and incidents are clearly documented, including outlining actions that professionals have undertaken.
2. Following up issues, concerns and incidents by:
- Following up on any concerns or incidents that are raised or observed during or after providing the service, reporting these concerns and incidents and handling them appropriately.
 - Informing his/ her employer and DCD if any of the following circumstances occur to the professional or to any of his/ her colleagues:
 - The professional has been charged with or found guilty of a criminal offense.
 - The professional has received a formal caution/notice from the police or any other judicial authority.
 - The professional has been subject to any form of disciplinary action by a higher educational institution, a professional body or a regulatory authority.
 - Reporting on Social Care Professionals regarding material concerns to their disciplinary status through:
 - Informing DCD if the professional has been suspended or dismissed from employment with any Licensed Social Care Facility for any reason.
 - Reporting concerns in the event that the professional performs activities that breach the applicable laws.
 - Reporting on Social Care Professionals regarding concerns to their fitness to practice through:
 - Reporting any issue regarding a Social Care Professional's ability to practice their profession, which includes but is not limited to:

- Deteriorating their mental or physical health.
- Practicing without the required approvals and licenses required by DCD.
- If another Social Care Professional is not fit to practice, by reporting your rationale to the licensed Social Care Facility that employs the professional and DCD.

14.Cooperating, maintaining transparency and complaints management

1. Maintaining transparency, honesty, and openness with Beneficiaries and their Related Parties:
 - In case of any mistakes or problem caused by the Social Care Professionals while providing social care service, professional should be open, transparent and honest by:
 - Ensuring that the Beneficiaries and their Related Parties are aware.
 - Taking formal action to remedy the situation.
 - Ensuring that Beneficiaries and their Related Parties receive a prompt explanation that highlights in detail, the impact of the actions that have gone wrong and the actions that can be taken to ensure the Beneficiaries are supported appropriately.
 - Extending support to Beneficiaries to give them the opportunity to voice their complaints regarding the care, service or treatment provided, which includes but is not limited to:
 - Guiding Beneficiaries through the prescribed process to raise/flag a concern.
 - Giving concerns diligent consideration.
 - Assessing whether the complaint is justified.
 - Following DCD standards, and the employer's procedures to address concerns and complaints.
 - Recognizing and dealing appropriately with complaints and concerns through:
 - Responding to Beneficiaries who have made a complaint in relation to a Social Care Service they received with honesty and integrity. Professional response must be provided in a clear format which the Beneficiary understands.

- Cooperating on Investigations through:
 - Cooperating fully with any investigation carried out by the employer or DCD, or other relevant authorities, into the treatment and/or harm of a Beneficiary and must disclose any information that is relevant to the investigation.
 - Extending the appropriate assistance, upon request, to the relevant authorities when other Social Care Professionals or Social Care Facilities are being investigated.

15. Maintaining trustworthiness and honesty in all professional relationships

- Professional shall be honest and truthful in all provided information about the professional, his/ her profession and the provided services, including, but not limited to, certificates, skills and qualifications.
- Ensure not to publish any promotional activities and materials related to the professional, his/ her profession, his/ her practice, and the provided services without obtaining DCD's approval.
- Ensure that all information disclosed in or as part of any promotional activities and/or materials are not misleading, are factually accurate, and verifiable through evidence that can be provided upon request.
- Proactively identify and disclose information which could influence the professional judgement, which includes but is not limited to issues that create/ constitute conflicts of interest.
- Professional shall not use the beneficiary's need for care to obtain a payment or other benefit, unless the payment is paid for a provided social care service by the social care professional. Professional shall provide the same level of service for all beneficiaries and not discriminate between them.

16. Creating and maintaining records of work-related information

1. Ensure precision and accuracy of records by:
 - Ensuring a record is created for each of the following:
 - Beneficiaries that the professional has served.
 - The social care services that the professional provided to Beneficiaries.
 - Possessors of Provisional Licensees who are under the professional direct supervision (if any).

- Recording and verifying that information included in a Social Care Facility's documentation, paperwork and information systems, concerning Beneficiaries, provisional licensees, or the Social Care Services provided is accurate clear, and up to date.
 - Ensuring that records are created, archived and reviewed on the dates set out in Social Care Facility's policies and practices.
2. Archiving and storing records securely by ensuring that records are:
- Archived and stored securely (in line with the Social Care Facility's information management and confidentiality policies and procedures) to ensure their confidentiality
 - Stored in a manner that complies with existing emirate's laws and regulations.

17. Duties and responsibilities toward their community


- Adhere to professional practices when performing duties and strive to apply modern practices based on scientific facts that are not incompatible with local regulations, culture and values.
- Support vulnerable and needy groups of the community by adopting issues related to them and seeking justice and community equality to ensure their inclusion and empowerment.
- Take the initiative to serve the community through the provision of social care services in emergencies and crises.
- Ethical responsibility when conducting scientific studies and research.

18. Ethical responsibility in the conducting scientific studies and research

- Follow a clear scientific approach in his/ her research and results analysis procedures.
- Comply with intellectual property and copyright regulations.
- Obtain approvals from relevant parties and entities before undertaking any study.
- Emphasize on scientific honesty and investigate honesty in disseminating research findings.
- Obtain a written consent is required from research participants. In this case, the approval from the beneficiary's custodians on the participation of a minor, incapacitated person or people with determination is not accepted without prior DCD approval.
- Provide information to the participants on the nature, objectives of the research and outcomes.
- Respect the privacy and dignity of research participants and treat all information as confidential.
- Professionals shall not use the participants' information in the research for other purposes than the scientific research, while maintaining the confidentiality of the names of the participants, and not disclosing any information of their participants that leads to the disclosure of their identity, unless this is based on the prior written consent given by the participant and DCD.

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