



# Social Worker & Social Work Technician Scopes of Practice

NBASW Ethics, Standards & Guidelines Training  
2025-2026 Registration Season



## NBASW Ethics, Standards & Guidelines Training

- One NBASW Ethics, Standards & Guidelines Training is required for practicing and non-practicing members each registration year.
- Watching the webinar counts as a Group A activity.
- Track activities on annual CPE Log.
- This presentation applies to all Registrants (social workers & social work technicians).

# Presentation Outline

- NBASW Mission & Vision
- What is a Scope of Practice and why does it matter?
- Scope of Practice Components
- Social Work Scope of Practice Statement
- Social Work Technician Scope of Practice Statement
- Grid for Scopes of Practice
- Case Studies
- Intervention Decision-Making Tool
- Ethical Responsibilities





# Learning Objectives

- Understanding the Scopes of Practice.
- Understand the tasks that social workers and social work technicians can do in practice.
- Identify tasks that are appropriate for the different professionals.
- Identify similarities and differences.
- Apply the scope of real situations.
- Know when supervision or case oversight is required.

# NBASW Vision and Mission

## Vision

The NBASW envisions a professional organization that reflects the values of social work, provides ethical leadership and instills public confidence.

## Mission

The NBASW is an association that protects the public and promotes excellence in social work practice.

# What Does Regulation Mean?



- Establishing standards of practice
- Defining scope of practice (roles and limits of practice)
- Workforce mobility and standardization
- Enforcing ethical and professional conduct with a complaint and disciplinary processes
- Protecting the public and ensuring accountability

Regulation is valuable for the public and for professionals!

# Who does the NBASW Regulate?

- The NBASW Act received Royal Assent on June 7, 2024.
- Since this time, the NBASW regulates two distinct categories:
  - Social workers (professionals)
  - Social work technicians (paraprofessionals)
- Ongoing work to educate the public and to integrate social work technicians across systems.



# What is a Scope of Practice?

- Critical regulatory activity
- Describes the range of activities that a qualified professional may perform
- Establishes the boundaries of the profession
- Assists regulated individuals in understanding the tasks that they can perform in practice



SOCIAL WORKER &  
SOCIAL WORK TECHNICIAN

The document cover is orange with white text. At the top, it says "SOCIAL WORKER &amp; SOCIAL WORK TECHNICIAN" and "SCOPES OF PRACTICE". Below the title are three small photographs: a woman outdoors, a man in a suit, and a group of people. To the right, there is a larger photograph of a woman smiling. At the bottom right, it says "Adopted by the Board of Directors December 9, 2023" and "Policy in effect June 7, 2024". The text "New Brunswick Association of Social Workers" is at the very bottom.

A photograph of a man and a woman smiling and looking at each other. They are positioned behind a large stack of books on a desk. The man is wearing a plaid shirt and the woman has short, light-colored hair.

# Why do Scopes of Practice Matter?

1. Public protection and safety
2. Role clarity
  - Understand who is responsible for which tasks
  - Support for interprofessional collaboration
3. Ethical and competent practice
  - Hold practitioners accountable to professional and regulatory standards
  - Address complaints, misconduct, or practice concerns fairly and consistently



## Why do Scopes of Practice Matter? (Cont.)

4. Legal and regulatory clarity
  - Fairness and consistency
5. Workforce planning
  - Determine which professions are appropriate for which jobs;
  - Develop policies and job descriptions;
  - Determine supervision and delegation requirements; and
  - Inform education, licensure, and continuing professional development expectations.

# Components of Scopes of Practice



- **Professional scope** is set by the NBASW and applies to everyone in that category (today's presentation focus).
- **Individual scope** depends on a Registrants education, experience, and competence.
- **Tasks of employment** are defined by the employer.

Ethical practice must fall within all three levels.

# Social Work Profession

# Social Work Profession

**Practice of social work** means : the assessment, diagnosis and prevention of social problems, and the enhancement and rehabilitation of social functioning of individuals, families, groups and communities by means of:

- (a) provision of direct counselling services within an established relationship between a social worker and a client or in collaboration with health and other professionals;
- (b) the development, promotion and delivery of human service programs, including that done in collaboration with health and other professionals;
- (c) the development and promotion of social policies aimed at improving social conditions and promoting social equality; and
- (d) any other activities consistent with the objects of the Association.

*New Brunswick Association of Social Workers Act (2019)*

# Social Work Profession (Cont.)

- Practice-based profession and academic discipline founded on:
  - ✓ theories of social work;
  - ✓ social science;
  - ✓ and humanities.
- Focuses on the person within their environment.
- Recognized the importance and influence of different social components on over all well-being



*Canadian Association of Social Workers (2020)*

# Social Work Scope of Practice Statement (1/3)

The scope of practice for the social work profession includes the following:



1. The provision of clinical services, including psychosocial assessment, treatment and evaluation services, within a relationship between a social worker and a client;
2. The provision of supervision and/or consultation services to a social worker, social work student or other supervisee;
3. The provision of social support to individuals and/or groups including relationship building, life skills instruction, employment support, tangible support including food and financial assistance, and information and referral services;
4. The provision of educational, training, and professional development services related to the social work profession and the social work technician paraprofession;

## Social Work Scope of Practice Statement (2/3)

The scope of practice for the social work profession includes the following:



5. The development, promotion, management, administration, delivery and evaluation of social service programs, including that done in collaboration with other professionals;
6. The development, promotion, management, administration, delivery, and evaluation of organizations, programs, and services, including those done in collaboration with other professionals.
7. The delivery of services and interventions that support community development and enrich individual, family, and collective well-being;
8. The provision of services in organizing and/or mobilizing community members and/or other professionals in the promotion of social change;

## Social Work Scope of Practice Statement (3/3)

The scope of practice for the social work profession includes the following:



9. The provision of advocacy activities to address barriers and inequities that exist in organizations and society;
10. The provision of contractual consultation services to other social workers or professionals or organizations;
11. The development, promotion, implementation and evaluation of social policies aimed at improving social conditions and equality;
12. Professional conduct and services founded in the ethics, standards, and guidelines of the profession;
13. The conduct of research regarding the practice of social work, as defined in paragraphs (1) to (12) above; and
14. Any other activities approved by the Association.

# Social Work Technician Paraprofession

# Social Work Technician Paraprofession

Practice as a social work technician means the paraprofessional support to the assessment, prevention of social problems, enhancement of social functioning, and the rehabilitation of individuals, families, groups, and communities.



*New Brunswick Association of Social Workers Act (2019)*

# Social Work Technician Profession (Cont.)

- Academic discipline and practice
  - Technician-level understanding of the interrelated nature of people and their environments.
- Hands-on interventions.
- Helping clients to achieve optimal social functioning and well-being.
- Collaborate with social workers and other professionals.



# Social Work Technician Scope of Practice Statement (1/2)

The scope of practice for the social work technician paraprofession includes the following:



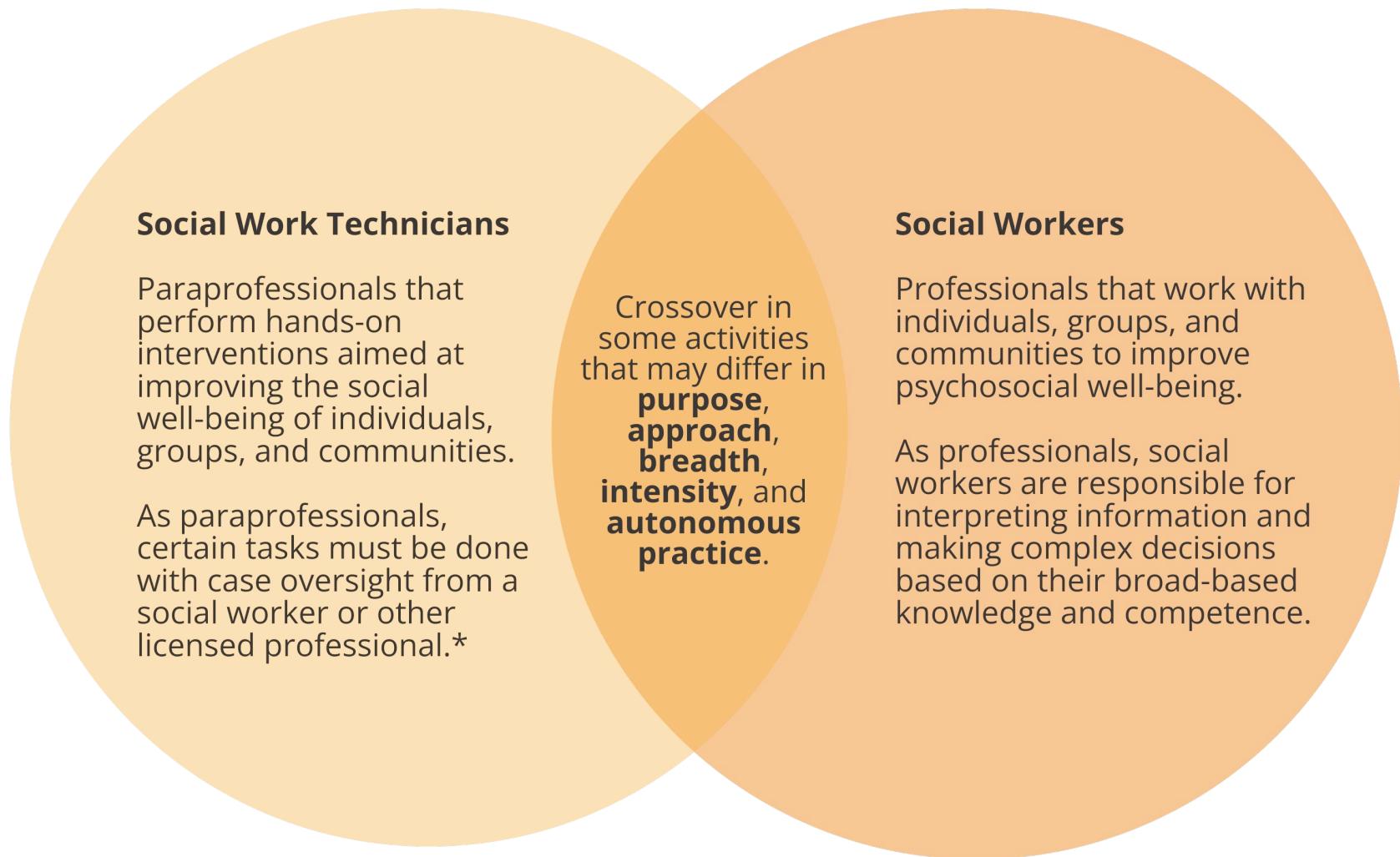
1. The provision of supportive services within a relationship between a social work technician and a client;
2. The provision of supervision and/or consultation to a social work technician or social work technician student;
3. The provision of foundational social support to individuals and/or groups to enhance social functioning including relationship building, life skills instruction, employment support, tangible support including food and financial assistance and information and assistance in navigating community resources;
4. The provision of educational, training, and professional development services related to the social work technician paraprofession;
5. The foundational delivery of services and interventions that support community development and enrich individual, family, and collective well-being;

## Social Work Technician Scope of Practice Statement (2/2)

The scope of practice for the social work technician paraprofession includes the following:



6. The provision of foundational services in organizing and/or mobilizing community members and/or other professionals in the promotion of social change;
7. The foundational development, promotion, implementation and evaluation of social policies aimed at improving social conditions and equality;
8. Professional conduct and services founded in the ethics, standards, and guidelines of the profession;
9. The conduct of research regarding the practice of social work technicians, as defined in paragraphs (1) to (8) above; and
10. Any other activities approved by the Association.



*\*Social workers may also perform activities within the social work technician scope of practice while social work technicians perform activities within their specific scope.*



## Tasks of Employment

- **Social work technicians** are suited for positions that:
  - Require hands-on interventions that are less likely to vary; and
  - Are aimed at improving social functioning.
- **Social workers** are suited for positions that:
  - Have a higher level of complexity; and
  - Require a person-in-environment assessment, interpretation, and complex decision-making and intervention.

# Case Oversight

- Requirement of case oversight for certain tasks within SWT scope.
- Case oversight refers to a structure that allows SWTs to consult with a social worker or other licensed professional as needed.
- Case oversight does not mean that social work technician work needs direct supervision.
- Social work technicians are independent members of multidisciplinary teams.
- They are licensed professionals with their own scope of practice who are accountable for their work.

# Autonomous Practice

- Social workers perform tasks autonomously in practice.
- Social work technicians may perform certain tasks autonomously in practice, seeking case oversight as needed.
- Both social workers and social work technicians have a responsibility to seek clinical supervision and consultation as required.

# Key Differences

Area	Social Worker	Social Work Technician
Assessments	Conducts & interprets	Collects & contributes information
Decision-Making	Complex, autonomous	Supports under direction
Autonomy	Independent practice	Some activities require case oversight
Focus	Psychosocial functioning	Social functioning

# Tasks from Appendix A: Grid for Scopes of Practice

A photograph of a man and a woman smiling at each other. They are positioned in front of a stack of books on a table. The man is wearing a plaid shirt and the woman has short, light-colored hair.

# Scope of Practice Goals

Goal 1: To enhance problem-solving, coping, and development capacities of people

Goal 2: To link people with systems that provide resources, services, and opportunities

Goal 3: To promote effective and humane operations of systems

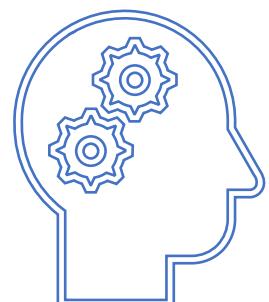
Goal 4: To develop and improve social policy

Goal 5: To enhance and expand the profession's knowledge base

# GOAL 1: TO ENHANCE PROBLEM-SOLVING, COPING, AND DEVELOPMENT CAPACITIES OF PEOPLE

## Social workers are responsible for:

- Psychosocial assessment and interpretation
- Counselling, therapy, and psychotherapy
- Complex and advanced risk and safety assessments
- Diagnosis (where appropriately licensed)
- Treatment planning and evaluation
- Court-ordered, custody, and capacity assessments
- Independent or private clinical practice



## Social work technicians are responsible for:

- Providing supportive and hands-on interventions
- Implementing aspects of case plans
- Basic risk and safety screening (with case oversight)
- Crisis support within non-crisis intervention specific roles
- Life-skills training and social support
- Home visits, supervised visits, transportation (with oversight)
- Monitoring and reporting client progress

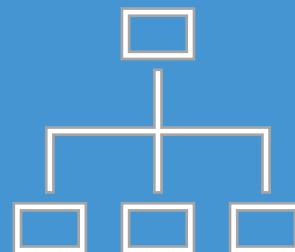
## GOAL 2: TO LINK PEOPLE WITH SYSTEMS THAT PROVIDE RESOURCES, SERVICES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

### Social workers are responsible for:

- Assessing client needs and matching services
- Complex referral decision-making
- Advanced community needs assessments
- In-depth community organizing and mobilization
- System navigation involving high-risk or complex situations

### Social work technicians are responsible for:

- Helping clients navigate services and resources
- Providing information and referrals
- Supporting community engagement activities
- Basic community outreach and mobilization
- Connecting clients to services identified in care plans



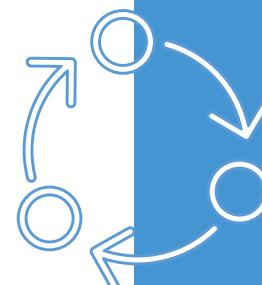
## GOAL 3: TO PROMOTE EFFECTIVE AND HUMANE OPERATIONS OF SYSTEMS

### Social workers are responsible for:

- Program and organizational leadership
- Management and administration of services
- Strategic planning
- Clinical program direction
- Program evaluation and quality improvement leadership
- Advanced organizational assessments
- Ethical practice

### Social work technicians are responsible for:

- Coordinating services under direction
- Participating in program delivery
- Supporting program evaluation activities
- Contributing to quality improvement efforts
- Facilitating staff learning opportunities
- Ethical practice



## GOAL 4: TO DEVELOP AND IMPROVE SOCIAL POLICY

### Social workers are responsible for:

- Policy analysis and evaluation
- Developing, implementing, and evaluating social policies
- Advanced policy advocacy
- Interpreting policy impacts on populations



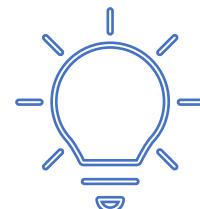
### Social work technicians are responsible for:

- Foundational policy engagement
- Supporting advocacy efforts
- Contributing frontline perspectives
- Participating in policy development activities under direction

## GOAL 5: TO ENHANCE AND EXPAND THE PROFESSION'S KNOWLEDGE BASE

### Social workers are responsible for:

- Teaching social work students
- Advanced professional education
- Designing and leading research
- Conducting research on social work practice
- Engaging in reflective practice



### Social work technicians are responsible for:

- Training social work technician students
- Participating in research activities
- Collecting data
- Conducting research related to technician practice
- Engaging in reflective practice



## Case Studies: Questions to Ask Yourself

- What are the roles of social workers in this situation?
- What are the roles of social work technicians?
- How can both roles work together and complement each other, to best support the client?



## Scenario #1: Individual Practice Case

A 32-year-old parent involved with child protection is struggling with housing instability, missed appointments, and emotional distress.



## Scenario #2 : Crisis Situation Case

A client at a shelter becomes emotionally distressed and expresses feelings of hopelessness during an evening shift.



## Scenario #3 : Community Program Case

An organization is developing a new community outreach program to address food insecurity.

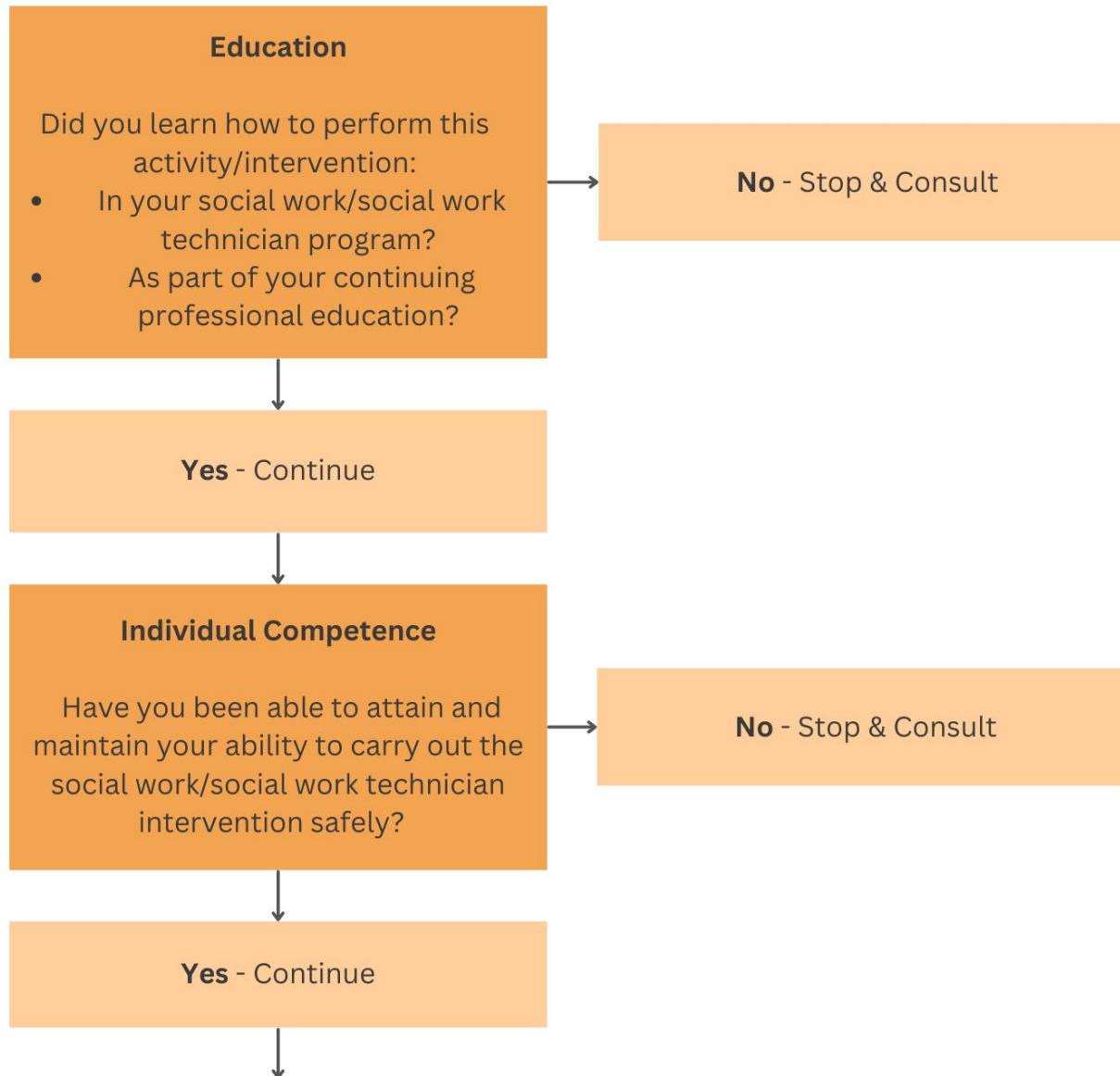


# When You're Unsure

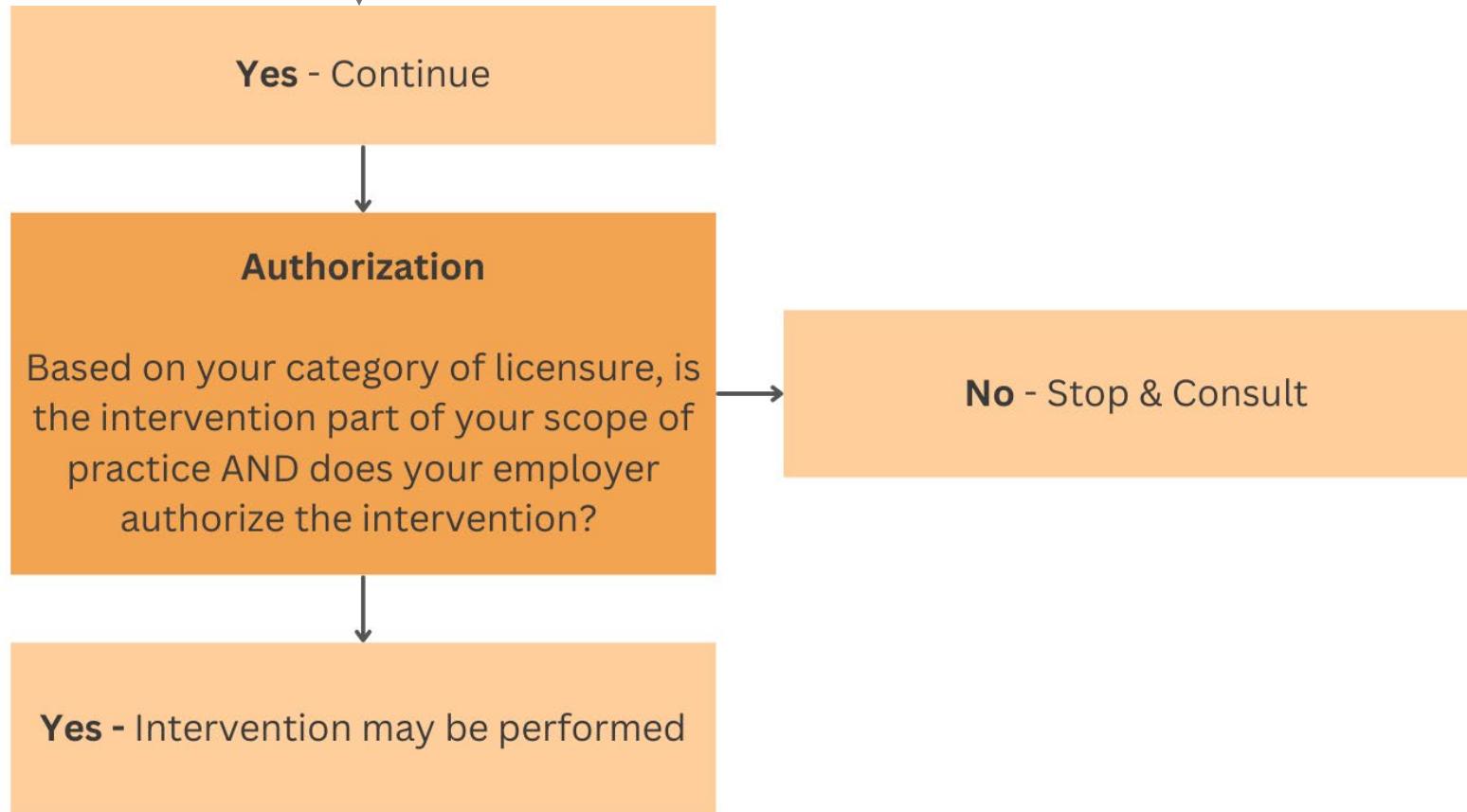
- ✓ Pause
- ✓ Consult
- ✓ Document

# Appendix B: Intervention Decision-Making Tool

# Part 1



# Part 2



# Ethical Responsibilities

- Ethical Practice
- Competence
- Ongoing reflexivity
- Supervision / Case Oversight  
(if applicable)
- Accountability

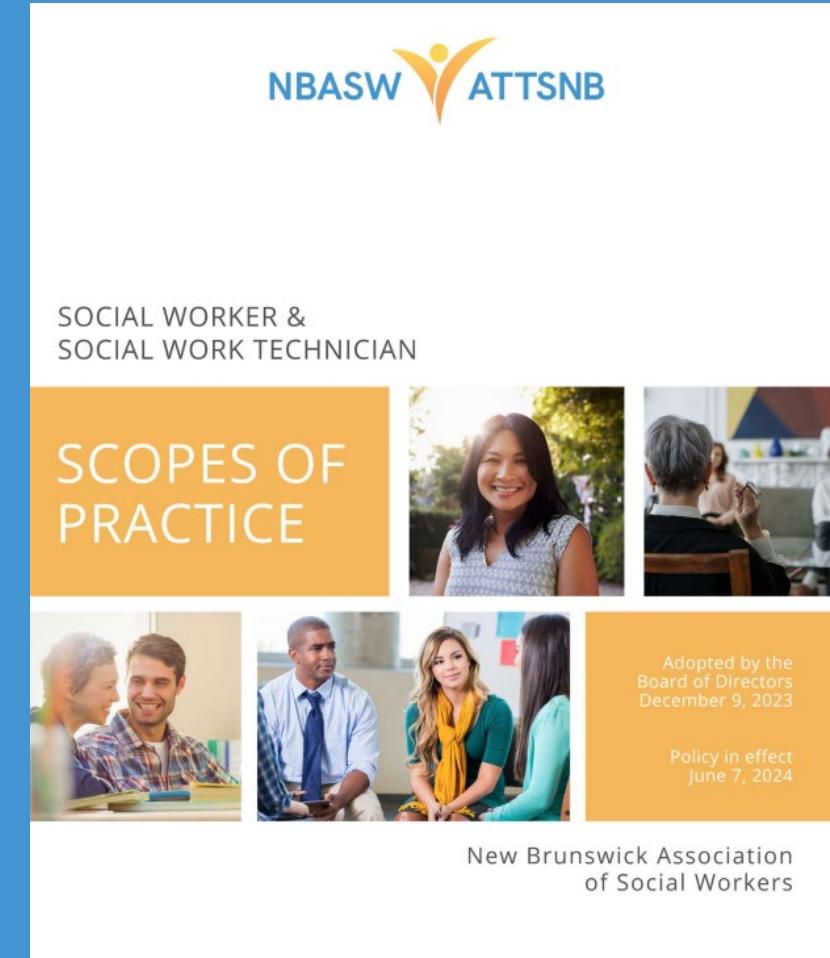


# Key Takeaways

- Different roles, shared purpose
- Overlap exists, but purpose, approach, breadth, intensity and autonomous practice can differ.
- **Social workers** are responsible for activities related to psychosocial well-being, including assessment, interpretation, decision-making, planning, and evaluation.
- **Social work technicians** are responsible for activities related to social well-being, including the implementation of the case plan, hands-on support, observation and communication of progress, and contributing information to the care.
  - Social Work Technicians may perform some activities autonomously; others require case oversight.
- Scope of Practice contributes to protecting the clients, the professionals and the employer
- Collaboration works best with clarity

# Resources

- Social Worker & Social Work Technician Scopes of Practice Document



# References

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