

# The Deontology of Social Worker Assistant in Romania

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**ABSTRACT:** The Law no 292/2011 of social assistance framework law recognizes the profession of social worker assistant has a protected field and clearly described in the article 47 paragraph 1 “The initial evaluation and the intervention plan are made by the social assistant worker” after continue to the article 121 paragraph 1 “in the field of social assistance activates social worker assistants, other professionals in social assistance, as well as staff with various professions, qualifications and skills, but in paragraph 2 from the same article”. The social assistance staff in accordance with the status of the profession and in accordance with the provisions of the Labor Code, as well as other legal provisions by case. According to the Deontological Code no 1/December 14, 2007 of the social worker assistant, profession and based on the provisions of the article 27 (a) from The Law no 466/2004 of the Status of the social worker assistants in Romania establishes the obligatory norms of deontology represents a set of norms, rules, prescriptions and dispositions conduct of the social worker assistant, as well as members of the National College of Social Worker Assistants in Romania.

**KEYWORDS:** deontology, social worker assistant, social worker

## **Introduction**

The Deontology of social assistance represents a set of norms, rules, prescriptions and dispositions about duty and professional obligations, about all kinds of responsibilities of the social worker assistant. The professional deontology is formalized in special codes. The ethical codes of social assistance, developed in different countries. Codes of ethics stipulate the human value, dignity and uniqueness of all persons, as well as their rights and responsibilities. They affirm the will of professionals to always act according to moral principles and legal norms (Bulgaru 2013, 6).

The social assistance is an art and Felix Biestek in 1949 said “the art in which the knowledge of the science of human relations and relationship skills is used to mobilize latent capacities existing in any individual, so that it is better adapted to daily stress (Socialworkarea n.d., 3)”.

The beginning of social assistance as a profession in Romania is marked by the social, political and cultural context of the period between the early 1920s and the beginning of the Second World War, which promoted a new perspective on social issues.

This fact has a positive impact on the evolution of the social worker profession. In fact, this period marks the transition from the form of Christian help to those in difficulty, to the professionalized form of providing support through social services.

The state has assumed the main role in the training of social workers, starting with their schooling in prestigious institutions, their training through postgraduate and professional courses and by setting up the National College of Social Workers. Here we must make mention about their schooling. In Romania the social workers have courses of 6 months or less and the social workers assistant have 3 or 4 years of higher education. The mission of the social worker is to participate in solving community social problems, ensuring a decent minimum standard of living and increasing the quality of life.

Nowadays, every profession has a professional code and an ethics commensurate with the profession, each with different contents and as broadly described as possible. The specialized studies that have appeared are numerous, and the deontology of social assistance and its workers occupies a special place in our society.

Based on the Code of Ethics, social worker assistants can identify the correct course of action from a moral point of view. Thus, the Code of Ethics of the profession of social worker in Romania according to art. 1 “aiming to regulate the principles and rules of conduct of social workers to prevent situations, which could affect their reputation and good practice, the development and consolidation of the National College of Social Workers, as well as the image of the teaching staff social in general”.

The Code of ethics is a moral contract between beneficiaries and organizations, between members of an organization, a means of guiding the decisions and actions of professionals concerned in their relationship with beneficiaries. The Code of ethics offers a standard, an ideal, enunciating unanimously recognized values and principles. Through this, “the Code gives everyone a sense of security, of collective strength”, the maintenance of such regulations being “in order to protect the public interest” says C-J. Bertrand with conviction (Bertrand 2000, 66-67).

The Code of ethics informs the public about the profession, signalling that it has rules of conduct. By increasing the credibility of the profession, the code of ethics guarantees the loyalty of the beneficiaries and protects them. The Code of ethics also creates solidarity within the group of professionals. Professional groups, imposing through the code of ethics certain responsibilities and obligations of their members, aim to ensure a professional competence, as well as the trust in them from the society.

Through such tools, deontology “supports the morality of a profession and protects society from inappropriate and unwanted manifestations of its members in concrete situations” (Gosselin 1992, 8). In conclusion, the codes of ethics are presented as a commitment of the profession to the community, ensuring its trust in the profession, a trust without which it could not gain authority, says Bulgaru in her comparative study (Bulgaru 2013, 8).

The Law no 292/2011, the framework law on social assistance, resumes and recognizes once again that this professional:

- The social worker has a protected, assigned field, clearly described in art. 47. par. (1)
- The initial evaluation and the intervention plan are made by the social worker ... Then, it continues to art. 121 (1): “In the field of social assistance, social workers, other specialized personnel in social assistance, as well as personnel with various professions, qualifications and competencies are active” and at par. (2)

“The personnel in the field of social assistance carry out their activity in accordance with the statute of the profession, the provisions of the Labor Code, as well as other legal provisions, as the case may be” (Law 292, 2011).

According to the Deontological Code No 1/December 14, 2007 of the social worker profession and based on the provisions of art. 27 a) of Law No 466/2004 regarding the Statute of the social worker, establishes the obligatory norms of professional conduct of the social workers, respectively of the members of the National College of Social Workers from Romania.

It is further specified that the exact observance of the provisions of this code constitutes a professional obligation for each social worker and the development of social assistance activities will be carried out only under the conditions of this code and of the legislation in force (Codul ..., 2008).

From an ethical point of view, the social worker must:

- 1) To provide professional services in emergency situations, in accordance with the law and the norms regarding the exercise of the social worker profession;

2) To recognize the fundamental importance of interpersonal relationships and to promote them in professional practice, encouraging relationships between people in order to promote, restore, maintain and/or improve the quality of life;

3) To ensure the respect of fundamental human rights and the application of the international legislation to which Romania has acceded;

4) To treat with priority the cases of minors in difficulty, being automatically activated the principle of their best interest, in the conditions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in this sense having the obligation to notify itself;

5) To treat all cases given for assistance, depending on the conclusions of the risk, needs and resources assessment;

6) Always keep in mind that their own behaviour is a model for community members, acting accordingly;

7) To contribute to the promotion of the social worker profession, as well as to the support of the guild spirit.

According to Doru Buzducea, the mission of the social worker is to participate in solving community social problems, ensuring a decent minimum standard of living and increasing the quality of life of vulnerable social groups, in improving the social functioning of people (Buzducea 2005). Hence the need for the social worker to have some specific skills, and theoretical knowledge (psychology, sociology, law etc.), but not ultimately have a vocation. In fact, this is a prerequisite for practicing this profession.

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