



Alberta College of Social Workers (ACSW)
Indigenous Social Work Committee (ISWC)
Terms of Reference/Relationship Agreement

Indigenous Social Work Committee Terms of Reference/Relationship Agreement

Preamble:

The ACSW recognizes the inherent individual and collective rights of Indigenous peoples and the importance of working together to support, educate and evaluate the practice of Social Workers who identify as Indigenous as well as to those who we identify as allies – those working with Indigenous people but who are not of Indigenous ancestry.

ACSW recognizes that in order to change the oppressive systems that Indigenous people face every day they must be in relationship with Indigenous social workers. It is the belief in these relationships that ACSW created space on Council for Indigenous ways of knowing to exist, ACSW relies on the collective wisdom of the ISWC to guide our work with Indigenous people. The Terms of Reference guides the committee's work.

The ACSW acknowledges the historical trauma that Indigenous people have endured and how that trauma impacts Indigenous people, communities and Nations/Settlements today.

The ACSW also recognizes that our Allies also require unique support, education and opportunities to be able to practice competent and relevant Social Work within an Indigenous paradigm.

Together, ACSW and ISWC believe that wise Indigenous practice is an approach that focuses on restoring balance to all areas of one's whole life. The focus moves from a helping to a healing one. Using the medicine wheel as a visionary tool, Indigenous Social Work practice aims to examine the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual beings one's self. In doing so, change can begin on both an individual and collective level.

Through this process, Indigenous Social Workers and Allies will be empowered to assist in changing the systems that have negatively impacted the lives and communities of Indigenous people.

Values:

We agree that the following values will provide the foundation of the work that we will do together:

We value that children are a gift from the Creator.

We value the concept of **sharing**. No one in the circle has more power than anyone else. Everyone is seen as valuable and will be given the opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings and concerns. In doing so, we reduce the conditions of greed, envy and arrogance and demonstrate **shared leadership and shared responsibility**.

We value **respect**. We show respect by honoring the relationships we have with each other, our families, our communities and to the physical and spiritual worlds. We will hold each other "relationally accountable" to those relationships. We demonstrate the value of respect and humility by being **honest** in all of our relationships.

We value **good conduct**. This involves not interfering in or judging the affairs of others since this limits a person's self-determination.

We value that there are "**many ways of knowing**" and that in order to provide the best quality of care to children, youth, families communities and Nations we need to honor that everyone person brings a unique set of skills and abilities (gifts) to the circle.

TERMS OF REFERENCE/RELATIONSHIP AGREEMENT OF THE INDIGENOUS SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE NAME	Indigenous Social Work Committee (ISWC)
COMMITTEE TYPE	Standing Committee of Council
PURPOSE AND MANDATE	The ISWC (Leadership Circle) acts in an advisory capacity to the Council of ACSW on issues related to Indigenous social work practice. The ISWC is also a mechanism for Indigenous Social Workers and Allies to access support and knowledge to strengthen their own Social Work practice.
ACCOUNTABILITY	The ISWC has its foundational beliefs in the principle of relational accountability. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) We are accountable to ourselves. As Social Workers, we are bound by a Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. 2) We are accountable to each other. 3) We are accountable to our clients, the communities and Nations/Settlements we serve.
KEY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To advise Council of the diversity of Indigenous protocols customs, traditions, culture, spirituality and rituals. - To identify and advise Council on Indigenous issues at the international, national, provincial and grassroots level. - To advocate for the recognition of inherent rights and traditional holistic healing practices. - To assist in the development, practice and ongoing support of competence requirements and standards of practice for work with Indigenous people, communities and Nations. - To identify, engage support and celebrate Indigenous Social Workers and their Allies for wise Indigenous practice. - To assist in the creation and support of an on-going review process that critically examines the practice of ACSW on all levels to ensure that practice remains respectful of and acknowledges the past, present and future of Indigenous people. - To share, assist with accessing, and provide Indigenous knowledge learning opportunities for ACSW staff, Council and membership. - Assist in supporting Indigenous Social Workers to become registered. - To increase the number of self-identified Indigenous Social Workers and engage their involvement on ACSW committees, projects and activities - Participate in regular ACSW business and to respond to requests as necessary.
MEMBERSHIP	The ISWC shall form a Leadership Circle that will be comprised of a maximum of 14 voting members. Of which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8 must be Indigenous Registered Social Workers (self-identified).

Indigenous Social Work Committee Terms of Reference/Relationship Agreement

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 members will be represented as public members and may or may not be a Registered Social Worker and may or may not be of Indigenous ancestry (Allies). - A maximum of 2 Indigenous students (self-identified) from a social work program (registration not mandatory). A student may also fill one of the public member positions. - The remaining 2 positions on the Leadership Circle are held for Elders. - 1 Alberta College of Social Workers Council Member <p>The Leadership Circle may include one or two Elder(s). The Elder’s role is to assist in ensuring protocol is followed, provide guidance and spiritual advising (if requested), for leading and providing ceremony/teachings (or coordinating access to those that can) and to ensure that the Leadership Circle conducts itself in <i>a good way</i>.</p> <p>Elders play an important role in helping bring unity and build consensus to the Leadership Circle. There will be no more than 2 Elders on the Leadership Circle at any given time as voting members, although other Elders may participate in some form or capacity from time to time.</p> <p>Ideally, the ISWC Leadership Circle is composed of representation from the four directions. The ISWC acknowledges this might not always be feasible. The Elder(s) therefore, plays a vital role in ensuring we are respectfully representing all Indigenous people to the best of our abilities.</p> <p>A Chair and Vice Chair shall be selected by the Leadership Circle. The process then involves having ACSW Council confirm the selections. The Chair becomes a member of Council during their term. The Vice Chair serves in the absence of the Chair and assumes the role of Chair once the Chair has finished their term.</p> <p>The Leadership Circle will have a staff person from ACSW to support the work of the committee.</p> <p>A cultural knowledge keeper and/or an oskapios (Elder’s Helper) may be part of the Leadership Circle but will not have voting privileges.</p> <p>The Membership Circle is comprised of any Indigenous Registered Social Workers or Allies wishing to come together for support and/or to share knowledge. There is no limit to the number of members who wish to join the Membership Circle.</p>
<p>APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR</p>	<p>The Chairperson and members are chosen from within the community of Indigenous Registered Social Workers and acknowledged by ACSW Council. The Chairperson will attend Council meetings as a voting member of Council.</p> <p>The Chairperson may designate a member of the ISWC to attend Council meetings on the Chairperson’s behalf. First priority will always be given to the Vice Chair.</p>

Indigenous Social Work Committee Terms of Reference/Relationship Agreement

TERMS OF OFFICE FOR CHAIR, ELDER(S) and LEADERSHIP CIRCLE	The Chair and Members are appointed by the Council for two-year terms and may be re-appointed for a maximum of two additional terms.
MEETINGS	The Leadership Circle will meet minimally 8 times throughout the year. Minimally, 2 events throughout the year shall be planned across the province for the Membership Circle to attend.
QUORUM AND DECISION MAKING	<p>A quorum shall be 50% plus 1 of the Leadership Circle members in attendance.</p> <p>The process of voting to make decisions will be used as a last resort. The ISWC employs a consensus model for decision making as it reflects our Indigenous ways of knowing and our collective shared responsibility for and how we do the work that we do.</p> <p>In the event that quorum cannot be achieved, the Leadership Circle <i>may</i> choose to access the Executive Director/Registrar or designate to assist in decision making and the operations of the ISWC. If this was to occur, the Executive Director/Registrar would be granted voting rights with the Leadership Circle to ensure the business of the ISWC continues to move forward. They may remain in this position until ISWC can fill the vacancies on the Leadership Circle.</p>
BUDGET	ISWC will submit an annual budget to Council for approval.
COMPENSATION	<p>Leadership and Membership Circle members shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for allowable meeting/gathering expenses.</p> <p>Elders maybe provided with honorariums and reimbursed for allowable meeting/gathering expenses as discussed and approved by the Chair of the Leadership Circle and Council.</p>
REPORTING	<p>The ISWC will provide a written report to be submitted for the ACSW Annual Report.</p> <p>The ISWC will report updates at every Council Meeting.</p> <p>The ISWC will provide quarterly submissions to the Advocate.</p> <p>When possible, reports will be translated into Indigenous languages identified by the ISWC.</p>
ABSENTEEISM	Members missing more than two meetings will be contacted to discuss commitment. Failure to attend subsequent meetings may result in member being asked to resign. Members who wish to appeal any decision may do so in writing to the Chair. Following Indigenous protocol, the request will be presented to the Leadership Circle for a discussion and a decision (with member present and at least one Elder present). This demonstrates our value of <i>relational accountability</i> . If the member is not satisfied with the decision of the Leadership Circle the Chair will in turn, bring the request to Council for a decision. Council's decision is final.

Indigenous Social Work Committee Terms of Reference/Relationship Agreement

RESIGNING FROM THE COMMITTEE	Members of either Circle are asked to put their resignation in writing and give 30 days' notice.
REVIEW PERIODS	<p>The Terms of Reference/Relationship Agreement is a living document and a review of it may be called by any member of the ISWC Leadership and Membership Circles by submitting a request in writing to the Chair who will in turn add it to the agenda of the next meeting of the Leadership Circle and Membership Circle.</p> <p>At minimum, the Terms of Reference/Relationship Agreement will be reviewed minimally once a year (January) by the Leadership and Membership Circles. The Chair will submit any changes to Council for ratification.</p>
APPROVAL	The Terms of Reference/Relationship Agreement shall commence on the date approved by Council.

Date Approved by Council: September 7, 2018

Date of Last Review: August 27, 2018

Next Scheduled Review: September 2020 (Annual Review)