

Social Work is Essential

National Social Work Month 2021



Closing Statement from CASW President National Social Work Month

As we close this year's National Social Work Month celebrations, we also pause and reflect on the incredibly difficult year it has been but also one that has proven social workers more essential than ever.

Social workers, the communities and people we are honoured to work with, have been challenged like never before. The arrival of a novel virus thrust us into unfamiliar situations: social workers rapidly adapted to these new, uncertain times, meeting the needs of our clients and communities while also managing our own personal and professional challenges.

But although these are unprecedented times, the worst social, health, and economic outcomes of this past year are anything but novel. COVID-19 has served as both magnifying glass and accelerant, exacerbating deep structural inequalities and exposing the true inadequacy of our social safety net.

CASW has long fought against the very injustices which many seem shocked to see revealed by this virus. Our Association has loudly advocated for a host of policies to shift Canada away from relying on a deficient 'social safety net' towards a stable floor upon which we can all stand. We are committed to demanding better from government, and to push for just, inclusive policies for recovery including a basic income, mental health and economic parity, the decriminalization of the personal use of substances, amongst more.

This year we have seen racial tensions come to a boiling point in profoundly necessary ways. Atrocities against Black, Indigenous, and most recently Asian communities have been most prevalent in the news cycle, all racialized communities have suffered disproportionately from -- and during -- COVID-19: symptoms of the deeply rooted and pervasive racism that exists in our country.

CASW joins the Association of Black Social Workers in their commitment to fight the enduring psychological trauma of racism, and in supporting African Canadian communities in pursuing justice. CASW also continues to strive to uphold the principles of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on the ongoing journey of reconciliation. We remain deeply committed to our 2019 Statement of Apology and Commitment to Reconciliation, and all of its powerful truths about our profession's history and the important work that must now take place. In difficult times, we must also always return to our foundational Code of Ethics, which guides us in actively fighting discrimination and injustice against all those who call Canada home.

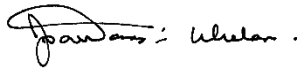
As individuals, as professionals, and as members of movements and communities, we have seen social

workers address incredible challenges with amazing resourcefulness, ingenuity and strength.

At the same time, we recognize our members' exhaustion. and that Social workers have also suffered personal loss. Your clients and communities continue to need more from you. Your roles have never been more demanding -- challenges you have handled with grace and commitment to your profession.

And though this statement is written in a professional capacity as CASW President, I will end on a personal note: I have never been more proud to be part of this amazing profession. And I have never been more certain that social workers are essential to a just and equitable recovery. As the celebrations of National Social Work Month come to a close, CASW will continue to champion our profession and push for the changes needed for a better Canada for social workers, their clients, and all those who call this country home.

Sincerely,



Joan Davis-Whelan, MSW, RSW
President
Canadian Association of
Social Workers

