

# National Social Work Program VA Care Management and Social Work Services

## Branding & Style Guide

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**MARCH 2013**



*VA Care Management and Social Work Services*  
Care and Compassion across the Continuum

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## Introduction

We are pleased to present this Branding & Style Guide. This product is designed to enhance our understanding of communications disseminated through Care Management and Social Work Services, Office of Patient Care Services, VA Central Office. The content in this guide provides the essential elements of the VA Care Management and Social Work Services brand, style and professional writing requirements.

By adhering to these guidelines, we will enhance the professional appearance of VA Social Work communications, which will increase the credibility and positive reputation of the service. Consistent use of the Branding & Style guide will serve to communicate immediate recognition among the intended audience, as well as the knowledge that VA Social Work branded communications are consistent, well written and easy to understand.

The Branding & Style Guide includes sections describing proper use of the VA Care Management and Social Work Services logo, colors and fonts, and grammar guidelines. Since consistent use of all of these elements will enhance our message and help us provide better service to our customers, it is important to adhere diligently to these guidelines.

After a document has been edited and branded by the originating committee, send the document to the Chair of the National Social Work Public Relations Committee for further editing and branding. See the SWLC flow map process below for how documents will move through the process of approval by the SWLC.



SWLC Committee  
Product Flow Map Prc

The Branding & Style Guide is a product of the National Social Work Public Relations Committee, the current members of which are credited by name at the end of the document. It was created in response to interest from the field and developed in conjunction with the annual National Social Work Strategic Plan. There are eight national Social Work Committees whose function is to report to the Social Work Leadership Council (SWLC). The SWLC serves as an advisory council to the National Social Work Program, Care Management and Social Work Services in VA Central Office. All products created and updated by the National Social Work Committees are maintained on the Social Work SharePoint site (<http://vawww.infoshare.va.gov/sites/cmsws/SocialWork/default.aspx>).

## **Section I: Basic Elements of Branding**

### **Logo**

- Use the two-color VA Social Work and Care Management Services logo on a white or light background.
- The relationship between the logo and the tagline “Care and Compassion across the Continuum” should never be changed.
- There must always be clear space around the VA Care Management and Social Work Services logo to prevent any nearby text, illustrations, photographs, or other graphics from interfering with the legibility of the logo.
- Right-click, Copy, Paste over logo below to utilize in another document.



### **Title/Cover Page**

- See detailed guidance under [Cover Page](#).

### **Table of Contents (TOC)**

- The National Social Work Public Relations Committee generally recommends that a document exceeding ten (10) pages and/or five major topics should have a TOC immediately after the Title/Cover page.
- To ease navigation, a TOC with hyperlinked pages is preferable.
- It is recommended to utilize the “Automatic TOC” in the References tab of Microsoft Word, including the use of “Headings” in the “Styles” section. This will make it easier to create an “Automatic TOC”, and also help update the document’s page numbers as revisions/edits are made.

### **Introduction**

- Each document requires an introduction section. In the introduction state why the document was created and how it relates to the National Social Work Strategic Plan.
- Introduction text: Utilize Arial 14, Color: VA Social Work Blue (RGB 8, 61, 117), Alignment: Left
- Statement text: Utilize Arial 12, Color: Black, Alignment: Left, Wording as follows:  
We are pleased to present this (Toolkit, FAQ, etc.). This product is designed to enhance our understanding of (topic).

It is a product of the national Social Work (\_\_\_\_\_) Committee, the current members of which are credited by name at the end of the document. It was created in response to interest from the field and developed in conjunction with the annual National Social Work Strategic Plan. There are eight National Social Work Committees whose function is to report to the Social Work Leadership Council (SWLC). The SWLC serves as an advisory council to the National Social Work Program, Care Management and Social Work Services in VA Central Office. All products created and updated by the national Social Work Committees are maintained on the Social Work SharePoint site (<http://vaww.infoshare.va.gov/sites/cmsws/SocialWork/default.aspx>).

## Page Layout

- Headings: Utilize Arial 14 for main headings- underline, Arial 12 bold for sub-headings, Color: VA Social Work Blue (RGB 8, 61, 117).
- Text: Utilize Arial 12, Color: Black, Alignment: Left
- Spacing: Recommend single or 1.5 spacing
- Margins: 1 inch margins on all sides, top, and bottom
- Headers: Recommendation for no header in body of document
- Footers: VA Care Management and Social Work Services logo, left justified, sized using the aspect ratio, measuring 0.5" x 3.14"
- Page Numbers: Right justified, located in footer

## References

- Follow APA Guidelines for: Footnotes and Appendices.
- Internet Page References: Writing out "www." addresses is discouraged. Preference is for inserting a hyperlink to that web page, and editing that "text to display" to reflect an appropriate title/wording. If the Committee wishes, an Appendix can be included with all internet addresses spelled out.
  - For example, the 2<sup>nd</sup> option is preferable:
    - "To see more info, go to the VA's web site at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)."
    - "To see more info, go to the [VA's web site](#)."
- Embedded Documents: Embedding large documents (e.g., reports, spreadsheets, etc.) is also discouraged, because it will add considerable size of the overall document. Any such documents should be stored on the Committee's folder on the National SW SharePoint, and hyperlinks to those documents inserted in their place. It may be helpful to include a short note at the beginning of your document alerting people that your document contains links to documents on the National SW SharePoint site, and individuals may need to contact their local Social Work Chief or Executive to obtain access. You may also want to provide a Committee

Contact for those non-social workers who would like to access these links.

### **Publisher of Document**

- The last page should acknowledge the name of the National Social Work Committee publishing the document.
- “Published by [name of Committee], 20xx-20xx”
- List all Committee Members, with credentials, in the following order: Chair; Co-Chair; Alpha Committee Members (in alphabetical order); Ad-Hoc Members/Others
  - e.g., John Smith, LCSW – Chair
  - Jane Jones, LCSW – Chair-Elect
  - Sarah Burns, LCSW
  - Adam Taylor, LCSW
  
  - Ad-Hoc Committee Member
  - Carol Hart, LCSW
  
  - VHA Liaison
  - Wendy Thompson

### **Distribution/Protection**

- For distribution, and to protect the content of the document, the Final Copy should be saved as a “pdf” file.

## Section II: Branding for Different Platforms

### **Cover Page**

Directions for branding for a cover page. Please follow all guidelines for spacing, fonts, color and effects. See embedded sample document below.

#### **Heading**

Centered, Single Spacing

Font: Calibri 23, bold

Color: Red 0, Green 32, Blue 96

Wording: **National Social Work Program VA Care Management and Social Work Services**

*5 blank spaces (Calibri 23 font)*

#### **Title of Document Name**

Centered, Single Spacing

Font: Arial 22, bold

Effects: Emboss

Color: Red 0, Green 0, Blue 255

**Line** to separate the two items (go to borders and shading to add this line)

Color: Red 0, Green 0, Blue 255

Font: ½ pt

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*1 blank space*

#### **Original Date**

Centered

Font: Arial 16, bold

Effects: Shadow

Color: Red 0, Green 0, Blue 255

Wording: **MONTH, Year**

#### **Revision Date**

Centered

Font: Arial 16, bold

Effects: Shadow

Color: Red 0, Green 0, Blue 255

Wording: **Revised MONTH, Year**

#### **Footer**

Footer contains the VHA Health Care Logo and SW Care Management and Social Work Services Logo at bottom of page

VA Health Care Logo

Height: 0.88", Width: 3.42"

Scale height: 80%, width: 80%

Lock aspect ratio on

VA Care Management and Social Work Services Logo

Height: 0.82", Width: 4.48"

Scale height: 101%, width: 100%

Lock aspect ratio on



Sample Cover Page Template:



Cover Page.doc

**National Conference Calls**

The National Social Work Conference Call template (see embedded document below) should be used to announce all National Social Work Conference Calls.

**Header** – is set and should not be changed.

**Body** – Fill in the information on the template that is bold. Be prepared to input the following information into the template:

- Name of call
- Sponsors of Call
- Upcoming Call Date
- Call schedule
- Call in number and code
- Call is designed for
- Call topics
- Moderator
- If CEU Credits will be offered or not

**Footer** – is set and should not be changed.

Logo size height: 1.62", width 6.32"  
Scale height 122%, width 128%  
Lock aspect ratio on

The National Social Work Public Relations Committee recommends that national conference calls are announced one month prior to the call date and then a reminder sent out one week prior to the call date.

Remember to proof read document prior to sending out.

Sample Conference Call Template:



Call Format.docx

## Power Point

Directions for branding a PowerPoint presentation. Please follow all guidelines for spacing, fonts, color and effects. See embedded sample document below.

**Introduction Slide** – has preset graphics. Only update the title/committee.

**Body** – Keep all slide backgrounds blank.

- Headers: Font, Arial 32 – Color, Social Work Red, Red: 163 Green: 18 Blue: 32
- Social Work Logo: Must be on all slides, bottom right corner, Height: 0.57", Width: 3.14"

**Published By Slide** – same guidelines as [Publisher of Document](#).

Sample PowerPoint Template:



National SW PPT  
template.pptx

*Right click on the ppt template icon, select presentation object and then select edit. You can save as a new document and start creating your PowerPoint.*

## Brochures

Directions for branding for a brochure. Please follow all guidelines for spacing, fonts, color and effects. See embedded sample document below.

- Preset Graphics – please do not remove.

- Front Page Headings: Utilize Arial 24 for main title, Arial 16 for subtitle, Color: White
- Back Panel Heading: Utilize Arial 24, Color: White
- Internal Headings: Arial 14, Color: VA Social Work Blue (RGB 8, 61, 117)
- Text: Utilize Arial 12, Color: Black (except on the back panel, text to be white)
- Alignment: Left – for all wording including headings and body
- Spacing: Recommend single

Sample Brochure Template:



Brochure.pub

## SYNERGY

Editor-in-Chief: Lesley S. Reece, MSW, LCSW  
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SYNERGY provides an excellent opportunity to share information with thousands of social work peers and VA stakeholders. SYNERGY welcomes articles on leadership and innovation in practice relating to social work within the Department of Veterans Affairs. Talented social work photographers are encouraged to submit digital photography for use in SYNERGY.

Submissions to be sent, with Chief’s/SW Executive’s approval, to: [Lesley.Reece@va.gov](mailto:Lesley.Reece@va.gov) and [Jana.OLeary@va.gov](mailto:Jana.OLeary@va.gov). All articles and photographs with Veteran information must be accompanied by a signed Release of Information form. Photographs of VA employees also must be accompanied by a signed Consent to Use Picture form.

## Toolkits & Other Formats

The National Social Work Committee publishes a variety of information and material in various formats. These documents must be somewhat consistent with the [Branding Format](#). Definitions are below:

**Toolkit** – an assembly of tools, often the elements can be used to do something (example: **Social Work Month Toolkit**)



SWMTToolkit2013.pdf

**Guidebook** – contain non-mandatory and non-directive procedures for development of a program.

**Guidelines** – document that aims to streamline a particular process according to a set routine.

**Manual** – set of instructions, often step by step.

**Handbook** – Prescribe mandatory VHA Procedures and/or operational requirements a source of useful information (example: VHA Social Work Program Guide). Handbooks have a formal format and do not fall under the “branding format.”

### Email Guidelines

While there is no official branding or policy regarding the appearance of emails, there is an occasional need to reference general guidelines for signature blocks, general email appearance, and general email etiquette.

**Signature Blocks / Email Appearance** – Your VA emails and signature block represent not only you, but your profession, and the VA itself, and will be seen by numerous people in and outside the VA. Therefore, some consideration and discretion should be given with how much personalization is added to your Outlook “Email signature” and email “stationery.”

Signature blocks should use a clearly legible font (typically not a “script” variety), between size 10 and 12, and should clearly identify the following:

- Name\*
- Degree / license / certification
- Title / professional role
- Facility Name\* / address
- Phone number(s)
- Additional necessary contact information (fax, email)
- \*strongly encouraged*

Signature blocks may contain additional items, such as the following logos (that are appropriately sized using the aspect ratio):

VA Care Management and Social Work Services logo:



VA logo:



Program Specific Logo:



“Confidentiality Note” disclaimer paragraph

*Confidentiality Note: This e-mail is intended only for the person or entity to which it is addressed and may contain information that is privileged, confidential, or otherwise protected from disclosure. Dissemination, distribution, or copying of this e-mail or the information herein by anyone other than the intended recipient is prohibited. If you have received this e-mail in error, please notify the sender by reply e-mail and destroy the original message and all copies.*

It should be noted that these additional logos will appear as “attachments” on emails, so they can add to the size of the email, or cause confusion since there is no attachment on the email. For this reason, and keeping in mind that your emails represent the VA, it should be discouraged to include unprofessional logos, quotes or pictures that are not necessarily part of the VA mission.

On a similar note, consideration should be given to significant changes to your Outlook default email appearance with respect to the “themes” or “stationery.” Dark backgrounds and busy patterns can cause difficulties when emails are printed and can obscure the message as well.

**Email Etiquette** – Email is a vital tool to help disperse important information and resources to a large group of people, or even to communicate with individuals. It is also a representation of your professional role your organization. However, email can also become a nuisance if used inappropriately or indiscriminately. Again, while there is no official branding or policy regarding the content of emails, there are generally agreed-upon and established set of behaviors we call Email Etiquette. While much of this etiquette is common sense, and typically part of your facility’s annual mandatory training, it bears reminding some important points here:

Consider *Reply* instead of *Reply to All*. When emails are sent to a large group of people, you should give consideration as to whether your response will help everyone else on that email, or if it is more appropriate to merely reply to the original sender. Also, when an email is sent to a group via a “distribution list” you should consider that distribution list may contain hundreds *or more* people (you can typically click on the small “+” sign to see the names of everyone in that list). If you are on a large group email, you should generally refrain from using the *Reply to All* function,

especially if it is just to say “Good to know” or to make your humorous comment (no matter how funny it may be, to you).

Consider if you even need to Reply to the email. As much as you may want to reply to an email with “Thanks” or “Congrats” consider who is receiving that email, and how many dozens other emails they are already receiving (that they will either need to Open or Delete).

Do not use ALL CAPS in your message unless you are trying to emphasize a point; it generally looks more aggressive than standard upper and lower case letters.

Do not use PKI/Encrypted email unless you are sending Protected Health Information. Encryption does not enable the recipient to read the email in a preview pane, and takes additional steps/time to open.

Refrain from forwarding emails indiscriminately, especially with respect to jokes, rumors, or other “information” (e.g. “chain letters”). Consider asking a peer if they want you to forward an email with a large attachment before you send it; they may already have it.

As mentioned above about signature blocks, be mindful of the images and size of your emails/attachments. Larger sized emails take longer to download, and some agency email servers limit the size of an individual’s email space such that you may be infringing on that person’s ability to open/send other email. If you need to share a picture or document, consider if you can make the file smaller, use a compression program, or utilize a network/SharePoint folder.

Refrain from highly-critical sentiments or emails that could be considered as “highly personal” or attacking. It is one thing to offer constructive-criticism or to ask questions clarifying a point, but email is not a good forum for ironing out personal differences or sending emotional statements. Email is also a bad forum for sarcasm.

Your emails should always positively represent you professionally and personally. Don’t send any email that you wouldn’t want your boss and/or everyone in your organization to read. Remember, once you send a message, you have no control over who will forward or print that message, and who will ultimately read the content. If you are upset about something, it is generally a not a good idea to shoot off an email quickly. Clicking “Send” will only take a second, but the impact of that email could last a very long time.

## **Published By**

National VA Social Work Public Relations Committee, 2012-2013

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