

RECLAIMING HUMAN CONNECTION IN THE DIGITALIZATION OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

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Digital interventions are making significant inroads into social work practice worldwide, redefining modes of service delivery and reshaping how social work professionals engage with clients and communities. While tools such as tele-counseling, online support circles, digital case management, social media advocacy, predictive analytics, etc., provide greater access, flexibility, and efficiency, these advances also present profound ethical challenges that threaten the integrity of practice. Concerns regarding confidentiality, privacy, trust, authentic presence, and empathy persist, as digital interactions alter the dynamics of relationship-building between clients and social work professionals. Drawing on a review of contemporary literature and research studies, this paper synthesizes evidence to argue that while digitalization can complement the scope and quality of social work, it must not supersede the centrality of human connection that defines the field. The discussion reasserts the primacy of the relational nature of social work, offering a grounded framework for practitioners and educators to critically and thoughtfully embrace technological innovations without undermining the profession's core values and enduring commitment to human dignity and ethical practice.

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