

**SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCIES AND PRACTICE INDICATORS
COUNSEL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SERVICE
ADMINISTRATION
ADVANCED LEVEL OF PRACTICE**

CLINICAL CONCENTRATION STUDENTS

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the profession's history, and its mission towards advancing a more socially and economically just society and the importance of engaging in anti-oppressive practice across micro, mezzo and macro system levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making, principles of critical self-reflection and how values influence the professional relationship, clinical judgment, and clinical processes. Social workers understand how to effectively collaborate in inter-professional teams while advancing the mission of the profession. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers demonstrate professional use of self with client(s) including clinical reasoning, appropriate boundaries and self-disclosure and effective self-care. Social workers:

- Meet professional requirements related to class, meetings and field requirements within a timely fashion; and utilize in person and electronic communication in an appropriate manner;
- Recognize and manage personal subjectivity and values as they affect professional behavior and judgement;
- Apply ethical decision-making framework and skills to issues specifically related to advanced clinical social work;
- Identify and understand professional strengths, limitations and challenges; engage in reflective practice-and ongoing professional development;
- Communicate professional judgements to other social workers and to professionals from other disciplines;-recognize and navigate incongruities with inter-professional relationships

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identities, problem formulation and solutions. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple identities including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, socioeconomic status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, because of difference, a person's life experiences may simultaneously include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and opportunity. Social workers also understand the societally embedded and self-perpetuating forms and mechanisms of privilege, oppression and discrimination and

recognize the extent to which societal structures, arrangements and policies may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power hierarchies. Social workers:

- Engage in reflective practice in order to promote anti-oppressive practice;
- Understand how their use of professional and personal power might perpetuate or challenge existing power inequalities;
- Appreciate multiple ways of developing knowledge and solutions from the perspectives of the various client identities they serve and support;
- Identify and use practitioner/client differences from a strength-based perspective; to incorporate diverse types of cultural knowledge and expertise to promote client identified change;
- Research and apply knowledge and intervention approaches differentially to enhance client well-being of diverse client groups.

Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position and identities in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, access to equal health care, and education. Social workers understand the global connections of oppression and human rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected. Social workers:

- Use knowledge of the multiple effects of structural and interpersonal oppression, discrimination, and historical trauma on client and client systems to guide planning and culturally responsive interventions;
- Understand how structural and economic processes promote the manifestation of social problems and behavioral health;
- Promote social and economic justice for client systems through bridging just-policy and practice;
- Work collaboratively alongside clients to enhance both client and worker expertise to promote interpersonal collaboration that promotes a more just society;
- Appreciate and understand that all forms of oppression are interconnected and the importance of promoting alliances across groups that are constrained, marginalized, and oppressed.

Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research- informed Practice

Social workers understand various research methods, including qualitative and quantitative, know how to critically evaluate the validity of research-generated information and data use research to guide and evaluate practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge and play an active role in advancing the science of social work. Social workers understand that evidence, which informs practice, must derive from multidisciplinary sources and multiple ways of

knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective and culturally responsive practice. Social workers:

- Use various research methodologies to evaluate clinical practice effectiveness and/or outcomes;
- Evaluate, select and implement appropriate multidimensional assessments, interventions, and practice evaluation tools;
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of multiple theoretical perspectives and differentially apply them to diverse client situations;
- Participate in the generation of new clinical knowledge and applications derived from practice and/or research.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are affected by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers educate themselves about the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. They are also knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation. Social workers:

- Follow the development of federal, state and local policies and policy change-that impacts-health and well-being;
- Dialogue with clients, colleagues, and stakeholders about the implications of federal, state and local policies and policy change for clients' health and well-being;
- Dialogue and collaborate with clients, colleagues and stakeholders to advocate for policies that advance human rights and social justice;
- Use evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence to advocate for policies that benefit the health and well-being of clients and improve the effectiveness of services.

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand the complex dynamics and power differentials that are involved in the relational process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance and strengths of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate. Social workers:

- Utilize cultural humility to develop a culturally responsive therapeutic relationship with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
- Utilize the principles, values and skills of anti-oppressive practice to create responsive collaborative relationships with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
- Attend to the interpersonal dynamics and unique contextual factors that both strengthen and potentially threaten the therapeutic alliance with individuals, families and groups;
- Attend to the interpersonal dynamics and contextual factors that both strengthen and potentially threaten effective relationships with organizations and communities;
- Identify and use knowledge of relationship dynamics, including power differentials, to develop effective relationships with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
- Establish a collaborative relationally based process that encourages clients to be equal participants in the establishment of goals and expected outcomes.

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing, dynamic, relational process with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social work assessment involves a partnership with a focus on both clients' and workers' expertise and limitations. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the unique assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment and the value of inter-professional collaboration with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers understand how the worker's and client's personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment and decision-making. Social workers:

- Use multi-dimensional bio-psycho-social-spiritual assessment approaches that are appropriate for the cultural experience of the client in light of changing needs, capacities and outcomes;
- Assess clients' focal concerns, strengths, and structural barriers to resources needed and the worker's role in promoting change;
- Assess structural factors that may impede clients' adaptation to life situations, circumstances, and events; incorporating principles of trauma-informed care and strength-based practice;
- Select and modify appropriate intervention strategies based on continuous clinical assessment; consider use and limitations of differential and multiaxial diagnoses;
- As approaches are revised in light of changing needs, capacities, and circumstances engage in self-reflection and assessment as part of the ongoing clinical process-to prevent future issues.

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that social change is an ongoing component of the dynamic and relational process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human mind, behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed techniques, therapeutic approaches, and interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. While developing expertise in specific intervention approaches, social workers value pragmatic and pluralistic approaches that allow them to flexibly address the needs of diverse client systems. Social workers value the importance of inter-professional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, inter-professional, and inter-organizational collaboration. Social workers:

- Engage in reflective practice in order to select, and apply best practices and evidence-based approaches, that demonstrate an understanding of power dynamics, target the unique concerns of client systems and address prevention;
- Demonstrate the use of appropriate clinical and relational techniques for a range of unique presenting concerns identified in the assessment, including trauma-informed care;
- Acquire expertise in specific practice approaches, while recognizing the value that techniques from other approaches might bring to their work; collaborate with other professionals to coordinate treatment interventions.

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating their practice and evaluation. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness. Social workers:

- Engage in reflective practice in order to evaluate evidence-based approaches, that target the unique concerns of client systems;
- Use clinical evaluation of process and outcomes to develop best practice interventions for the unique range of bio-psycho-social-spiritual concerns.
- Demonstrate the use of a flexible range of evaluative tools and depending on the level of analyses (e.g., individual, family, group, community, organization) to improve the overall functioning of client systems