The Merrill Social Work and Human Services Series

7TH EDITION

THE SOCIAL WORK EXPERIENCE

An Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare

MARY ANN SUPPES | CAROLYN CRESSY WELLS

CSWE's Core Competencies and Dimension Examples in this Text

SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCIES FROM EPAS 2015	1. Ethics and Professional Behavior	2. Diversity and Difference	3. Human Rights	4. Research	5. Policy Practice	6. Engagement	7. Assessment	8. Intervention	9. Evaluation
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SEVENTH EDITION

The Social Work Experience

A Case-Based Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare

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Preface

Developing this text has been an absorbing project for its two authors for many years. The venture began one beautiful, crisp fall day in Wisconsin when two friends, both experienced social work educators, set off by car for a conference 200 miles to the north. We were those friends, and our conversation during that drive sparked the ideas that resulted in the first edition of *The Social Work Experience*. We were both teaching introductory courses in social work that semester and, because our roots were in social work practice, we were frustrated by the lack of well-developed, contemporary case study materials. Authentic, current case material, we were convinced, would help students to identify with the real people who are served by social workers across the United States and with the social workers themselves.

It occurred to us that we could create those materials from our own professional practice experiences and from the field learning experiences of our students. Our case studies could portray diverse populations in both client and social worker roles. Some could illustrate baccalaureate social work students in field practicum settings. We could synthesize real-life situations of people we had known and thus avoid exact duplication of any actual cases. With these ideas and commitments, the book emerged.

In the seventh edition, the primary focus remains entry-level generalist social work practice, but the linkage between generalist and specialist practice is presented as well. The generalist professional practice competencies as revised in the Council on Social Work Education's *2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards* are highlighted throughout the text. The CSWE's nine revised competencies and four new competency *dimensions* (by which attainment of competencies are measured) are introduced: knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective reactions. The competencies are well integrated into the seventh edition of the text, and critical thinking questions in every chapter challenge readers to think about how the competencies and their dimensions apply to chapter content.

The common themes of previous editions remain integrated into every chapter: generalist practice, social research, ethics and values, and human diversity. Augmenting the human diversity theme, we have integrated discussions of poverty, populations most vulnerable to experiencing poverty, and significant social, economic, and environmental justice issues throughout the book. Many chapters include historical information pertaining to different cultural groups, especially those reflected in the chapter-opening case studies.

Every chapter begins with a well-developed case study. Didactic content in the chapter flows from the case study. The seventh edition, as the name of the text suggests, draws readers into the text content through the addition of short case studies within

the chapters. Throughout the text, case studies continue to reflect our concern for special issues relevant to women and other vulnerable populations in the United States plus issues and concerns in the international community.

New to This Edition

As with every revision of this text, we have carefully edited and updated the content, references, and statistics from the previous edition. Beyond that, however, the seventh edition has gone through even more extensive revisions that include the following:

- CSWE 2015 revised competencies, with examples in every chapter
- CSWE's four new competency *dimensions*, with examples in every chapter
- Revised case studies plus new, additional case studies provided in every chapter
- Summaries with major points aligned with learning outcomes and section headings in every chapter
- New instructive photos provided in every chapter

Ancillaries

The following resources are available for instructors to download at **www.pearsonhighered.com/educators**. Instructors enter the author or title of this book, select the seventh edition of the book, and then click the "Resources" tab to log in and download instructor resources.

Instructor's Resource Manual and Test Bank (0-13-454491-9)

This updated manual includes chapter summaries, lecture guides, discussion prompts, classroom activities, out-of-class assignments, and additional resources for each chapter. Test items in multiple-choice and essay format are also available.

TestGen (0-13-454488-9)

TestGen is a powerful test generator program containing the same items included in the test bank. You install TestGen on your personal computer (Windows or Mac) and create your own tests for classroom testing and for other specialized delivery options. Assessments may be created for both print and testing online.

Tests can be downloaded in the following formats:

TestGen Testbank file – PC

TestGen Testbank file – Mac

TestGen Testbank – Blackboard 9 TIF

TestGen Testbank – Blackboard CE/Vista (WebCT) TIF

Angel Test Bank (zip)

D2L Test Bank (zip)

Moodle Test Bank

Sakai Test Bank (zip)

Online PowerPoint® Slides (0-13-454490-0)

PowerPoint slides of key concepts from the text are organized by chapter. Colorful, simple, and straightforward, the slides may be customized to fit instructors' needs.

Acknowledgments

Today, as we put the finishing touches on the seventh edition, we wish to express appreciation to some of the many people who have assisted us with this project. We wish to thank our editors, originally Julie Peters and later Kevin Davis, for assisting us throughout the publication process. We wish to thank Andrea Hall, editorial assistant, for coordinating initial correspondence among members of the publication team, including reviewers. We are grateful to Rebecca Fox-Gieg, Portfolio Manager, and and Pamela D. Bennett, Content Producer, from Pearson for their leadership and assistance in the production of this text. We wish to thank our project managers from Lumina Datamatics, initially Jenny Vittorioso, later Kristy Zamagni, Saraswathi Muraldihar, and finally Udaya Harisudan, for their invaluable feedback and guidance. We owe special thanks to Christina Robb, for her encouragement and her careful instruction in preparing our manuscript for the Enhanced eText. Lastly, we wish to thank Frances Bernard Kominkiewicz, Ph.D., Saint Mary's College (IN) for the exceptional quality of the ancillaries that she developed for this text.

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We would also like to express our gratitude to those who provided materials for or helped to design our composite case studies: Isaac Christie, Maria DeMaio, Jason Dietenberger, Joe Dooley, Linda Ketcher Goodrich, David Kucej, Julie Kudick, Maureen Martin, Melissa Monsoor, Malcolm Montgomery, Dolores Poole, Wanda Priddy, Colleen Prividera, David Schneider, Nicholaus P. Smiar, Sara Stites, Victor Sudo, Delores Sumner, Jody Searl Wnorowski, and Ellen Zonka. In addition, we are grateful to Elisha Branch, and Heidi Walter for their technical assistance.

We both owe enormous gratitude to our husbands, Dennis Loeffler and Fritz (Fred) Suppes, for their patience, support, and contributions to our research and resource exploration and for stimulating and nurturing our thinking on social issues.

We continue to be indebted to two prominent theorists, Betty L. Baer and Ronald C. Federico, whose vision of generalist social work practice remains alive today in baccalaureate social work education and within the pages of this book. It is our sincere hope that faculty and students alike will find our book helpful in their professional journeys.

Brief Contents

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The Social Work Profession

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Describe the social work profession.
- Explain the context and work environment of social workers.
- Discuss the professional curriculum of social work and the career opportunities available to social workers.
- Explain how the social work profession is legally regulated through licensure and credentialing.
- Describe the major professional social work organizations.
- Compare and contrast the roles and responsibilities of social workers and those of professionals that social workers frequently work with.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

CASE STUDY: Susan Dunn

The telephone rang shrilly at the women's shelter at about 6:15 in the evening. The caller's voice was urgent, frightened, and intense, although little louder than a whisper. "I just called the crisis telephone line that was advertised on the radio," the woman began, "and the person who answered told me to try you. I need a safe place to stay, right now. Can you take me?"

"We may be able to," the social worker replied. "It depends on your situation. Our agency has been set up to help women who have been physically abused. Can you tell me something about yourself? What makes you need a place to stay just now?"

"I can't talk very long because I'm so afraid he'll come back soon," the caller responded, her voice slightly louder this time. "My

CHAPTER OUTLINE *(Continued)*

husband just beat me up again, but he ran out when I threatened to call the police. The children saw the whole thing. I've decided I've had enough. But I don't know where to go. My friends are afraid to get involved. I've got two kids who have to go with me. I don't have any money of my own."

"Sounds like you're in a tough spot. My name is Pamela Wright. I'm a social worker here. Tell me if you need to stop talking. Call me back if you have to hang up. If you're in danger right at this moment, I can take your name and address and call the police for you."

"Oh, no," the woman said. "The reason I didn't call the police in the first place is that I don't want to get my husband in trouble. I make him upset. Calling the police would embarrass the whole family. I couldn't possibly do that."

"You said your husband hurt you. Do you have injuries that may need immediate medical attention?"

"When he hit my face, I tried to defend myself. I didn't want my face covered with bruises again. I put my hands up to my face. My right arm and shoulder hurt pretty badly now. I don't think I need to see a doctor or go to the hospital. I just need to get away from here."

"Do you feel it is safe for you to talk with me for a few minutes now?"

"Yes. The last time my husband got mad at me and left, he stayed away for a couple of hours. I'm pretty sure he'll do that again this time."

"Well," Pamela Wright said gently, "from what you say, this isn't the first time your husband has physically abused you. I take it that you want to be gone this time when he gets home?"

"Yes. He might come home drunk and hit me again. That's what happened last time. If it weren't for the children, I might take a chance and wait for him because he might come home sorry and ready to make up. But the kids are awfully upset and scared. I want to get out of here this time."

"Have you any relatives who might be able to take you and the children tonight? You might feel a lot better if you had some family members around you to support you and help with the kids this evening. We'd be happy to help you here even if you were staying somewhere else. You could come in tomorrow, in fact, to talk with one of our counselors about things you could think about doing to deal with the physical abuse by your husband."

"I haven't got any family of my own around here. My parents live in another state, and so does my sister. My in-laws live near here, and they're good to me, but they would break down and tell my husband where I was. Then he'd come and he might beat me up again. So I don't want anybody to know where I am."

Recognizing that this was an emergency situation, Pamela Wright said quickly, "We do have a room available in our shelter right now. I

think that it is important for you to leave your home as quickly as possible. Will you be able to get yourself over here on your own if I give you the address?"

"Oh, I don't think I can. I don't have a car. My arm really hurts. I don't think I can carry anything. My 6-year-old can make it on her own, but the 2-year-old is too much trouble to take on the bus the way my arm hurts. And I'll need to bring some clothes and things."

"Have you any money at all right now?" Pamela asked. "We do have some special funds to send a cab in emergency situations, but those funds are very tight. Could you pay for a cab to get yourself and the kids over here?"

"Well, I have about $15 in my purse. My husband always keeps the checkbook with him, and he just gives me cash a little bit at a time. But if I spend what I have on a cab, I won't have any money at all to pay for my stay with you, or for anything else, for that matter."

"Our services are free. We can supply you with a small room for yourself and your children. We also provide meals. You can stay with us for up to a month. We will help you to decide what to do next. There will be rules about sharing household tasks and some other things, but I can explain more when you get here. You need to know, though, that we may want you to get checked out by a doctor. Sometimes people are more seriously injured than they initially think they are. Do you think you want to come?"

After a moment's hesitation the caller whispered, "Yes, I do. Can I come with the kids right away?"

"Certainly," Pamela said. "But how bad is your arm? Will you be able to manage?"

"I think I can. I'll just have to pack with one hand. My 6-year-old can help. Is there anything in particular that we should bring?"

"Just bring the routine stuff—you know, toothbrushes, pajamas, toys, extra clothes, anything to keep you and the children as comfortable as possible."

"Okay. Thank you very much. I hope I'll be there soon."

"Fine. I'll give you our address. You are asked to tell it to no one but the cab driver because, for safety reasons, we need to keep it secret." Pamela gave the woman the address of the shelter. "Now," she continued, "if your husband comes home before you get a chance to leave in the cab, do call the police right away, the minute you see him approaching. Or call us, and we'll call the police. Don't take the chance of another beating. Now, what is your name and address? I need to take your phone number, too, just in case." The address that the caller, Susan Dunn, gave turned out to be from a rather affluent suburban subdivision.

When Susan Dunn and her two children arrived at the shelter, their appearance betrayed some of their trouble. Susan's left eye was swollen and turning black. She held her sore right arm awkwardly, and several fingers were bleeding and discolored. The eyes of both children were red from crying. Susan's clothes were rumpled and torn. She carried a small suitcase, and her 6-year-old daughter was wearing a backpack full of school supplies.

The newcomers entered the shelter, a crowded house in a busy city neighborhood, quite hesitantly and looked anxiously about the first-floor hallway with its worn brown rug and cheerful, hopeful posters. A dark-eyed child of 5 or 6 ran up to greet them. Pamela Wright introduced herself and the child, waiting for Susan to introduce herself in turn along with her own children, Martha and Todd.

As Pamela Wright completed the introductions, Susan slumped into a chair and tears streamed down her face. She apologized, saying how grateful she was to be there. Pamela asked again about her injuries, and this time Susan replied, "Maybe I do need to see a doctor. My arm and my fingers hurt so much. Maybe something really is broken."

Pamela immediately unloaded the children's and Susan's few belongings. "Would it be okay if Sara, our student social worker, helped the children get settled in with something to eat while I take you over to the emergency room to get checked out?"

Susan reached for 2-year-old Todd and hugged him to her. She brushed away her tears and said, "I'd really like to get the children comfortable first. Then I think it would be a good idea to get my arm checked out."

An hour later, with the children in Sara's gentle care, Pamela drove Susan to the hospital. In the car, Susan talked more about her husband, Jason, a recent college graduate who was building his future in the business world but with increasing stress and a growing reliance on alcohol. X-rays demonstrated that Susan's right arm and two fingers were fractured. Pamela stayed at Susan's side as the medical staff attended to her fractures. The hospital staff contacted the police, and reports were filed. The ride back to the shelter was a quiet one. As they approached the shelter, Pamela told Susan, "You have had a really difficult day, but you have made some really important decisions for yourself and for your family. You have been amazingly strong today. Please remember that we are here to help you." Susan smiled weakly through her pain and tears and then hugged herself gently and nodded her head in agreement.

The Susan Dunn case was designed to introduce readers to this book and also to the profession of social work. As a reader, you will quickly discover that the entire text is case-based. Every chapter begins with a well-developed case study, and brief case scenarios in the chapters further illustrate text content. The case-based design of this book illustrates the wide range of social problems social workers address, the diversity of both the social workers and the people they serve, and the values and ethics that permeate this profession.

This text is entitled *The Social Work Experience* because it provides a glimpse of what it would be like to practice social work. Chapter 1 gives you a basic understanding of the profession, professional values, the educational preparation for practice, and employment opportunities. In Chapter 2, readers learn about the theories that guide social work thinking. Chapter 3 describes the social justice issues that impact the populations that social workers serve. Chapter 4 explains how social welfare programs of today evolved over time, along with the social work profession. Building on this understanding, Chapters 5 through 12 depict social work practice in mental health, schools, health care, child and family services, and other interesting fields of practice. Chapter 13, the final chapter, considers demographic trends, environmental sustainability, and other social forces that create opportunities and challenges for the future.

The Council on Social Work Education, which is the national accrediting organization for social work in the United States, has mandated a set of competencies that must be attained by students in schools of social work. These competencies are frequently referred to in the book and, because of their importance to social work education, they appear along with critical thinking questions in each chapter. Notice, too, the terms that

appear in bold print throughout the book. Because you should understand these terms, their definitions appear at the end of each chapter. Video clips of interest are another special feature of this text. And, last but not least, in order to help you quickly assess how well you understand the material, quizzes appear at the end of each chapter's major topical sections. Short-answer review questions at the end of chapters further enable you to check your understanding.

UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

As the case study of Susan Dunn begins, you can probably imagine Pamela Wright's quick glance at Susan and her observation of the painful way Susan was moving her body and the grim, anxious expression on Susan's face. In her professional practice, this social worker had come to know well the terror and panic that threatened to overwhelm the women that arrived at the door of the shelter. Pamela's heart went out to Susan. She looked so frightened, so unsure of her decision. But, as a social worker, Pamela also had a good intellectual understanding of the dynamics of domestic abuse and the vulnerability faced by adults and children in at-risk situations. Pamela would review quickly in her mind the information she would need to obtain from Susan and the decisions that might need to be made quickly. She would prepare to use her social work expertise to listen to Susan's story and to offer Susan emotional support. Pamela, a baccalaureate-level social worker (BSW), was proud of her profession and confident in her ability to work with the people served by the shelter.

Defining and Differentiating Social Work from Other Professions

We begin our exploration of this profession with a definition of **social work**:

> The major profession worldwide that helps individual people, families, groups, organizations, and communities to prevent or resolve problems in social and psychological functioning, meet basic human needs, achieve life-enhancing goals, and create a just society.

This definition underscores several important aspects of the profession that may not be readily apparent in the definition. First, in conjunction with its focus on preventing and resolving problems in psychosocial functioning and ensuring that basic human needs are met for all people, the social work profession seeks to empower people and to identify and build on the strengths that exist in people and within families, groups, organizations, and communities. In addition, social and economic justice emerges as a focus of social work that is distinctive among the professions. Finally, because the profession of social work delivers social services within governmental and private organizations of nations, it is grounded in the human social welfare systems of countries.

While there are areas of overlap between social work and other professions, there are several ways in which social work is unique. Its dual focus on both the social environment and the psychological functioning of people differentiates social work from

professions such as teaching, psychology, and psychiatry. The social work approach of building on strengths within people and their communities further differentiates social work from most health care, legal, and criminal justice professions. Nonetheless, this text will demonstrate how all of these professions work collaboratively to achieve the goals of individual people and society.

A Profession Based on Values and Ethics

A characteristic that sets true professions apart from occupations is that professions have a formal code of ethics that is recognized by courts and state licensing bodies for determining the parameters of appropriate professional practice. The *National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics*, initially developed in 1960, has been revised many times, most recently in 2008. The current NASW Code of Ethics consists of four parts: a preamble, which identifies the core values of the profession; a statement of purpose; identification of ethical principles; and the ethical standards (NASW, 2015c). A brief summary of the NASW Code of Ethics follows, but the entire document can be readily reviewed at the National Association of Social Workers website. The code is referred to frequently throughout this book because it is so essential to social work practice.

The NASW Code of Ethics begins with the key (core) values. In general, **values** can be thought of as the philosophical concepts that we cherish as individuals, within our families, and as a nation. The NASW Code of Ethics discusses the profession's core values, which are taught in social work classes. Why are values important pieces of the social work curriculum? To begin, society in the United States and in many other countries holds contradictory values concerning the needy. Some values found in society guide people toward helping the poor; others guide people away from helping the poor, either because poor people are viewed as unworthy or because they are viewed as potential competitors. Because we are all products of our society, an honest assessment of our own personal values may reveal that we have absorbed some quite negative values about certain people—the poor, for example. Yet that clearly conflicts with the profession's valuing of social justice.

Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Dimension of Competency **Values: Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values.**

Critical Thinking Question: What might the outcome be if the NASW Social Work Code of Ethics did not contain a set of values?

Few other professional ethical codes actually incorporate a set of values. Often, when people have difficulty understanding the profession of social work or why it is that someone would want to be a social worker, they do not know about the values of social work. The core values guide and define the ethical practice of social workers; they are the basic building blocks of the code of ethics. These six core values are as follows:

- service
- social justice
- dignity and worth of all persons
- importance of human relationships
- integrity
- competence (NASW, 2015c, p. 2).

The next section of the NASW Code of Ethics explains how the ethical code is used. A primary purpose of the code is to help social workers determine appropriate actions when questions or dilemmas arise about potential violations or conflicts among different sections of the code. The NASW Code of Ethics also provides a basis for adjudication of malpractice or ethical complaints by courts of law and insurance companies, and it also helps the general public understand appropriate professional conduct by social workers.

The social work values form the basis for the third part of the NASW Code of Ethics, the ethical principles. Like the ethical code of the social work profession, some other professional ethical codes (the law profession, for example) incorporate aspirations—the ideals that members should strive for but are not held accountable to perform. Like the law profession, the NASW Code of Ethics' value of service encourages social workers to provide free, volunteer services and to make service to their clients their primary priority. (Volunteer services, when provided, are often offered outside the place of employment and do not decrease the social worker's salary.) The social work value of social justice instructs social workers to pursue social and economic justice on behalf of people who are poor, discriminated against, unemployed, and subject to other forms of oppression. The next ethical principle calls for social workers to value the dignity and worth of people in ways such as honoring clients' self-determination. In recognizing the importance and value of human relationships in human well-being, social workers are expected to help individuals, families, groups, and communities to develop, promote, and restore relationships. The final principle mirrors the core social work value of competence: It states that social workers should continually develop their professional knowledge and skills (NASW, 2015c).

The heart of the NASW Code of Ethics consists of six ethical standards, each of which has many distinct sub-standards. Each standard relates to an area of ethical professional responsibility. While the six standards are unique to social work, the format of the NASW Code of Ethics and even some of the specific items, are also found in other professions' ethical codes. The six areas identified for social workers involve their responsibilities to clients, to colleagues, within their practice settings, as professional persons, to the profession of social work, and to the broader society. The social work core values are readily identified within the six standards. The first standard, for example, reflects the value of service when it states that social workers' primary responsibility is to their clients. This is the first item in Standard 1. The only exception to this commitment to clients is if there are legal obligations (such as reporting child abuse) or if clients are a danger to themselves or others. Not surprisingly, some of the sub-standards address confidentiality, the prohibition of sexual contact or sexual harassment, and the use of derogatory language in communications with or about clients (NASW, 2015c).

The second standard focuses on the nature of relationships between colleagues (either other social workers or other persons that are also involved in serving clients). This standard also promotes respect of colleagues and development of collaborative interdisciplinary relationships, but the standard also provides clear guidelines when colleagues exhibit serious personal problems, incompetence, or unethical conduct that interferes with their practice or endangers clients. The third standard discusses responsibilities within social workers' practice settings (places of employment). Timely and accurate documentation of client service is a necessity as well as a commitment to employers (except when an employing organization has policies or procedures that are inconsistent

with the NASW Code of Ethics). For social workers who are administrators, supervisors, or students' field instructors, clear expectations for performance evaluation and interpersonal relationships with staff are identified (NASW, 2015c).

Standard 4 clarifies the responsibilities of social workers as professionals. These responsibilities include acquiring the necessary competence before applying for a job or having a clear plan to obtain the needed competence. The standard is very clear that social workers must not discriminate and it lists race, religion, sexual orientation, age, immigration status, and disability, among other areas of potential bias. Standard 4 also requires social workers to take responsibility in the event that they, themselves, develop personal problems that could interfere with their professional performance. This standard also explicitly addresses the need to take credit only for written work that social workers have authored; plagiarism, when students fail to cite the correct authors in their term papers, would be a violation of this standard. Standard 5 cites areas in which social workers hold responsibility to their profession such as upholding the integrity of the profession by advancing the knowledge, values, and ethics of the profession. Sustaining high standards for social work research and evaluation is a central concern of Standard 5. Standard 6 concludes the NASW Code of Ethics. It points to social workers' ethical responsibilities to the broader society. The standard calls for promoting social, political, and economic justice for all people from local to global communities. Preventing exploitation of and discrimination toward people is expected of social workers. In public emergencies, social workers are expected to provide professional services as needed (NASW, 2015c).

A Brief History of the Social Work Profession

Social work is an evolving, relatively young profession, but it has a longer history than some related fields, such as counseling. As Morales and Sheafor (2002) point out, the profession of social work grew out of and has sustained commitment to a threefold mission: caring, curing, and changing society. All three components are intrinsically related to social justice. From its earliest beginnings, the predecessors of social work have cared for the most vulnerable groups of people in society. Sometimes society's caring was (and still is) prompted by humanitarian concerns; at other times it was mixed with less noble objectives. Persons who were not valued by society because they were too ill, too old or too young, too disabled, or otherwise not productive tended to be the very persons that social workers recognized as needing services and assistance. Social workers have a strong history of helping people change, grow, and develop new skills. Some of the earliest social workers also were reformers who advocated for human rights through labor laws, political action, and community development.

The Civil War in the United States is probably responsible for the first paid social work–type positions. These jobs were created in 1863 by the Special Relief Department of the U.S. Sanitary Commission to assist Union Army soldiers or their families with health and social problems related to the war. The impact of these workers and other humanitarians such as Clara Barton, who later founded the American Red Cross, helped pave the way of the future social work profession. Three subsequent social movements arising in the late 1800s significantly contributed to the development of the profession.

One major movement was the Charity Organization Society (COS); it began in England and took hold in Buffalo, New York, in 1877. Its most famous leader was Mary Richmond. Volunteers for the COS, usually wealthy women who were not permitted by social norms of the time to be employed, visited people in their homes to provide food, clothing, and other needs.

A second major movement contributed a strong social justice thrust to the developing young social work profession. This was the settlement house movement, which, like the COS, began in England. In the United States, Jane Addams was its most famous leader. Addams established Hull House in Chicago in 1889. Settlement workers believed that poverty resulted from unjust and unfortunate social conditions. Settlement workers often chose to live among the poor. They assisted in developing needed services such as day care for children of factory workers through mutual aid. They also advocated for better working conditions and protective legislation through various governmental bodies.

A third movement, more diffuse and often not recognized for its historical impact on the development of the profession, was the child welfare movement. This began with the Children's Aid Society, founded in New York in 1853, and was strengthened by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, founded in 1875, also in New York City. The child welfare movement, over time, evolved into the entire area of foster care, adoptions, child protective services, and juvenile court services.

A growing desire for professionalization emerged by the late 1890s. Charity organization work and settlement house work were increasingly salaried, but as yet there was no name for this profession. By the early 1900s, the broad field of applied philanthropy began to be called social work or social casework. The New York School of Philanthropy, established in 1904, was the first professional education program. Mary Richmond, leader of the COS, was among the original faculty. The school is now known as the Columbia University School of Social Work.

Gradually, the theory base of the profession was developed, and research began to be published. Freudian theory was widely adopted in the 1920s. The Great Depression turned public attention to the economic and social forces causing poverty. The result was the passage of the Social Security Act in 1935, legislation in which social workers played a prominent role. From its earliest days, the profession of social work embodied focus on social reform and the psychosocial problems of individuals, families, and communities.

World Wars I and II further increased social workers' involvement in mental health as psychiatric casualties of the wars brought large numbers of social workers into military social work. Social workers with master's degrees dominated the profession by the early 1950s, but they tended to work in specialization areas such as child welfare, medical social work, or psychiatric social work. In a remarkable move toward unity, seven specialty areas merged to found the NASW in 1955. Until 1970, when BSWs were added, NASW membership was exclusively limited to MSWs. The founding of NASW and the enactment of the NASW Code of Ethics to ground the practice of all social workers firmly established social work as a profession.

In the years since the birth of the profession, social work has grown dramatically in numbers, in areas of practice, in the people it serves, and in status. It has

achieved legal regulation (licensure or certification) in every state. The profession retains its social reform legacy by lobbying against discriminatory legislation and by supporting social policies that promote human welfare and well-being. Social work and social welfare, therefore, remain intertwined today. Because of its commitment to social and economic justice and its mission to work on behalf of people who are discriminated against, the profession of social work is sometimes not well understood or even well accepted. Its values make social work a truly unique profession.

Social Work and Social Workers: BSWs, MSWs, and PhDs

Building on this basic understanding of the history of social work, we will next explore the different levels of professional practice in social work. We begin with the baccalaureate level, the **BSW**. This book will emphasize social work at the baccalaureate level; therefore, more substantial information will be provided about BSW practice than the two more advanced areas, the master's (**MSW**) and doctorate degree levels of the profession (**PhD**).

The BSW is the first, or entry, level into the profession. The degree is generally referred to in conversation as a BSW, but the actual degree awarded by colleges and universities ranges from a BA, BS, BSSW, to the BSW degree. All of these baccalaureate degrees are of equal value, assuming that the social work educational program in which the degree is earned is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The BSW can be completed in four years of college or university work, longer if the student is enrolled on a part-time basis. The BSW social worker, like Pamela Wright in the chapter case study, is professionally prepared as a generalist to provide services to people in a broad range of circumstances. (Generalist practice will be defined and explained in Chapter 2.)

Advanced, specialized social work practice usually requires additional education. The MSW is designed as a two-year degree following completion of a baccalaureate degree. In actuality, an MSW can be completed in as little as one year for students who are awarded advanced standing because they have already completed a BSW. The MSW prepares social workers for an area of specialization. Although they differ among MSW programs, specializations include various methods of practice (such as group work and administration), fields of practice (clinical social work or health care), social problem areas (poverty and substance abuse), special populations (older adults and a cultural groups such as Hispanic Americans), or even advanced generalist practice.

The domestic violence shelter in the case study employed an MSW social worker as well as Pamela Wright, BSW. Amy Sacks, MSW, received specialized training in working with individuals, families, and groups. This specialization at the graduate level may be called direct practice or clinical social work. Amy's work is rather narrowly defined. It is structured by appointments for individual and family therapy, regularly scheduled group sessions, and staff meetings. Amy is responsible for overseeing the shelter's program in crisis couples' counseling and for the batterers' intervention program, where she works with groups designed specifically for people like Susan Dunn's husband who abuse their

Box 1.1 Amy Sacks's Domestic Violence Group

Amy Sacks, MSW, was the facilitator for a group of men who had been involved in domestic abuse. Susan Dunn's husband, Jason, was not under court order to attend this group, as were several other participants, but Jason was referred to the group by his pastor after Susan and the children had not returned home in two weeks.

Jason initially resented the approach of the groups and he often found the group meetings confrontational and difficult. Amy's weekly group sessions were based on a curriculum that required focus on topics like alternatives to physical confrontation and shared decision-making, including family financial planning. On more than one night after returning home to any empty house following the group meeting, Jason found himself in tears, both angry and desperately wanting Susan back. In his loneliness, he became terribly aware of how badly he had treated her and how much he needed to change.

In time, Amy Sacks and the group helped Jason to understand that it would take time to replace harmful behaviors and be alone at home safely with his family. Jason did not know how he could ever recreate his relationship with Susan, but he realized that he wanted very much to become a nurturing father for his children. This became Jason's goal when the first group series ended and he voluntarily signed up for another group on fathering.

partners. (The Box 1.1 scenario illustrates how Susan Dunn's husband might respond in one of Amy's groups.)

Pamela Wright's BSW role at the shelter is broader and more flexible than Amy's. She too counsels individuals, families, and groups, but usually in a less formal manner and not necessarily by appointment. In addition, she responds to crisis calls, intervenes in problems among the residents, trains volunteers, and supervises the myriad tasks involved in running a residential facility. She does not live at the shelter, but coordinates the schedules of evening staff and occasionally receives calls at night from staff for help during emergencies.

The fact that the BSW is educated to be a generalist does not mean that on occasion she or he does not develop or learn specialized skills in a particular field of practice (or, for that matter, that an MSW cannot be a generalist). In the real world, where funding may not provide the means to hire enough professionals to do a given job, both BSWs and MSWs may carry similar responsibility, but the MSW is able to work at an advanced practice level. MSWs are also more likely to be promoted to administrative positions, especially in larger organizations. The work of the BSW is usually more diverse and it usually involves mobilizing a wide variety of skills and resources.

Doctorate degrees are also offered in social work. Doctorates are the highest degrees awarded in higher education. In social work, a doctorate could take three to five years to complete beyond the master's degree. The doctoral degree in social work, usually a PhD or a DSW, prepares people for teaching in colleges and universities, for advanced specialized practice, or for research and organizational administrative positions.

THE CONTEXT AND WORK ENVIRONMENT OF SOCIAL WORKERS

Social Work Practice Settings

Regardless of the degree they receive—BSW, MSW, or PhD—social workers practice their profession in a remarkably wide array of settings. By contrast, teachers tend to be employed in schools, physical therapists and nurses in health care organizations, and psychologists in mental health settings. A misconception about social work, held by some people, is that all social workers are employed by governmental organizations and work with the poor or in child welfare, where they take children away from their parents. Social workers do have special concerns about poverty and social injustice, but people of all income levels are clients of social workers. Social workers do not work only in governmental offices, and social workers do make every possible effort to keep families together.

There are so many misunderstandings about the profession of social work! Many people would be surprised to learn about the range of settings in which social workers are found. To begin with, while most social workers are employed by organizations, some social workers are in private practice similar to the private practice of doctors. Like many other professionals (e.g., teachers, lawyers, rehabilitation therapists), some social workers are government employees; however, a declining number of social workers are employed in federal, state, or local tax-supported organizations. Increasingly, social workers are likely to be employed by nonprofit private agencies (such as the American Red Cross), denominational (church-sponsored) organizations, or for-profit businesses (most nursing homes fall into this category). A sampling of the amazing variety of social work practice environments is shown in Box 1.2.

New environments for social work practice constantly evolve. Genetic counseling, for example, has grown in recent years. Social workers who once specialized in child adoption placement now find themselves helping people locate their birth parents. War, terrorism, natural disasters, and even home or apartment building fires have resulted in a need for social workers, who can help people get their basic needs met and deal with physical as well as psychological trauma.

Box 1.2 Social Work Practice Settings: Selected Examples

- Hospitals, emergency rooms, nursing homes, home health care, hospices
- Police departments, probation and parole offices, juvenile detention facilities
- Child welfare: foster care, adoptions, child safety services
- Group homes or residential facilities that care for runaway children, persons with disabilities, or frail elderly persons
- Legislative offices at all levels of government
- Employee assistance programs, victim/witness programs
- Senior centers, older adult day care, planning councils for older adult programs
- Immigrant and refugee centers, disaster relief services
- Schools, after-school group and counseling programs, gang prevention programs
- Mental health hospital and outpatient services, substance abuse programs

Where do most social workers spend the majority of their working hours? Social work is an active profession. Many social workers go wherever people are experiencing problems—to the places where people live, work, study, and play. Social workers who make home visits know that entering into the natural environment of people—entering into their world—often makes people more comfortable and may be much less frightening than an office visit. Sometimes social workers meet their clients in a coffee shop, in a school or hospital, or even on the streets if they are doing outreach work to persons who are homeless. When working with children in foster care, detention, or contested custody cases, social workers may spend hours in court. Meetings in the community occur frequently as groups of professional people, including social workers, come together to advocate for new legislation, fundraising, or for professional education.

Regardless of their settings, social workers have offices where, generally, some clients, family members, or other professionals meet with them. Here, too, social workers have access to computers, telephones, fax machines, files, and other staff including administrative assistants and supervisors. Even those social workers who primarily do outreach work or home visits need to spend time in their offices. Students doing an internship or field placement would also use the office as a home base.

A Broader Ecological/Environmental Perspective

Today the profession is beginning to awaken to the significance of our global physical environment. Natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and hurricanes destroy homes and communities, and they seem to be occurring with increased frequency throughout the world. War and industrial pollution claim victims in many parts of the world. Our asthma-infected children and health threats from toxic contamination of the produce being sold in our supermarkets have given many Americans a renewed concern about the physical environment.

Social workers and social work students are increasingly interested in the relationship between human social welfare and ecology. As early as 2009, the National Association of Social Workers' publication, *Social Work Speaks*, pointed to growing ecological concerns for American social workers. These included rural areas where resident farmers and migrant workers alike expose themselves and their families to the hazards of agricultural pesticides. The land along the Mexican-United States border, where Mexican workers live in unsanitary, badly constructed housing, was of special concern. Urban low-income neighborhoods were identified as so polluted by industrial waste, in some cases, that asthma occurs in high rates, especially among children of color. As this article points out, environmental degradation is clearly linked to poverty and health disparities (p. 122).

What this means is that social workers need to be invested in building a healthy environment for all people. Social workers need to develop an understanding of the relationship between poverty and the risks emanating from degraded environments. In their daily practice, social workers have to take special care not to further endanger people by placing them in unsafe housing. We can work with landlords, volunteer groups, neighborhoods,

Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Dimension of Competency **Cognitive and Affective Reactions: Social workers understand that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.**

Critical Thinking Question: When you think about your home or campus community, what environmental hazards, especially in areas occupied by poor people, cry out for advocacy? What should be done? By whom?

and communities to clean up degraded areas and create environments that will nurture children, families, and older adults. Of great importance is the advocacy that we engage in together with other environmental activists. Whether we are students or full-fledged social workers, whether we are working with individual clients, families, or groups, or within organizations or communities, our professional behaviors must reflect a sense of responsibility for environmental concerns.

EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL WORK AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

The Baccalaureate Social Work Curriculum

When Pamela Dunn, the BSW social worker in this chapter's opening case study, was a sophomore student in college, she declared social work as her major. At that time, she did not realize that the course of study for the major had been designed to be consistent with the standards of the CSWE. In fact, since 1974 CSWE has required BSW programs to design a professional curriculum, one that is built on a liberal arts base. If a college or university's program is to be accredited, it must adhere to the educational policies set by CSWE.

Generally, students begin the social work major with just a few social work courses in the freshman and sophomore years. These courses usually introduce the social work profession and focus on social welfare, its history, current policies, and the impact of political decisions on the people whom social workers seek to help. The first and second years of the social work major are primarily taken up with liberal arts courses, which may include introductory courses in psychology, sociology, biology, college writing, philosophy, literature, and the arts—all courses that provide content that will be used later as professional courses unfold.

Important concepts for professional development appear in the introductory social work and social welfare courses generally taken in the first year or two of college. Professional ethics and values are among these concepts. Probably persons who do not relate to those values identified earlier in this chapter will drop out of social work courses or will leave the profession early in their careers. By contrast, persons who value human diversity and respect the dignity of others are more likely to be good candidates for a career in social work.

In the junior and senior years, the focus on ethics and values becomes deeper. This is when the professional curriculum dominates the courses students are enrolled in. Building on earlier liberal arts and social work courses, students in their junior and senior years develop their knowledge of human behavior. Studying the phases of human development promotes understanding of why people behave as they do. Learning about social systems and how they interact to promote or deter human well-being adds other important dimensions to the social worker's knowledge base.

To work effectively on behalf of the people they serve, social workers also need to understand the basic structures of local, state, national, and even international social welfare systems. Social workers are social change agents and they want to be able

to influence the evolution that is constantly underway in the social welfare system. **Policy practice** is the term used for the conscious effort to effect change in the laws, regulations, and provisions of services of governmental and nongovernmental policies and programs.

In junior- and senior-year courses, social work majors also study practice theory. In these courses, they learn how to interview effectively; how to develop respectful, effective relationships with the people they serve; and how to use the social work intervention process that is at the heart of social work practice. Students learn how to uncover strengths in people and their environments. They learn how to assess problem situations and work collaboratively with clients, not imposing their own solutions but engaging people in discovering new and more effective means for dealing with difficult situations. Research is interwoven in the curriculum, often in practice courses that help social work majors learn how to use systematic approaches for gathering data from interviews (**qualitative research**) and/or to use statistical, numerical data gathering and analysis to arrive at valid, reliable conclusions (**quantitative research**). Research skills will help students evaluate the effectiveness of their own practice and also the effectiveness of social programs. Students learn to appreciate the necessity of using research findings to inform their practice and, as they achieve practice skills, they increasingly see how their understanding of social work practice can make them better as researchers.

Respect for human diversity and growing understanding of the amazing diversity of the people they serve is another thread that weaves its way through social work courses. Students learn about cultures, lifestyles, physical and mental health factors, socioeconomic differences, gender identity and expression, age-related issues, and spiritual values and practices that differ from their own. Understanding and valuing differences is not enough, however. Social workers must learn how to actively explore diversity in practice because it affects every phase of the intervention process. Because social justice is the ultimate goal of the profession, social work education provides special attention to populations that are most at risk of poverty, discrimination, and oppression. These are the unloved people of our society. Social work students learn strategies that will be effective in assisting individuals, families, and often whole communities of people. Advocacy strategies can be learned to attain social and economic justice for an individual (**case advocacy**) or whole groups of people (**cause advocacy**).

Field education generally occurs in the junior and/or senior year, when most, if not all, of the other required social work courses have been completed. This is the part of the curriculum that students look forward to most eagerly. BSW students spend a minimum of 400 hours working with clients in one or more supervised field placements. The settings for field placements range widely but may include courts; child or adult protection settings; health care organizations such as hospitals, home health care, or nursing homes; adoption or foster care agencies; community centers; youth-serving organizations; domestic violence shelters; or mental health facilities. Field education is closely monitored and evaluated by social work faculty. By the time students complete field education, they have demonstrated all of the competencies and required practice behaviors of the generalist social worker. In other words, they are ready to begin professional practice!

Selecting a Career in Social Work

College students typically experience a great deal of pressure to select a major and begin a career path. Selecting a career is surely one of life's most exciting and most difficult challenges. Fortunately, many resources are available to help with decisions about the choice of career. Career counseling centers in colleges and universities offer a variety of aptitude and interest tests. The Internet and libraries offer resources such as the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* of the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Professors and advisers are yet another source of career advice and information. In the end, however, the choice is a very personal one.

> Many college students know little about the profession of social work, yet some might think that social work could potentially be a career that would enable them to accomplish their desire of helping others. This book seeks to help you determine if a social work career is right for you.
>
> You will find that every chapter in this book begins with a case study describing social workers in action. The case studies introduce some social workers who struggled with career decisions, just as readers of this book may be struggling. "I want to help people. Which profession should I pursue? Am I in the right major?" These questions are asked over and over again by college students. Social work is an exciting career. There are few "dull moments" in a day for social workers. It is a career that enables people to make a difference in the lives of others. It offers opportunities to transform the world. But it isn't the right profession for all people. Students are encouraged to talk with social workers, do volunteer work, or perhaps test their ability to work with others through a part-time job in the broad area of human services. Taking an introductory course in social work or social welfare is a very useful way for students to further explore their suitability for a career in social work. We hope this book will increase our readers' understanding of social work as a profession. We hope, too, that it will provide a sense of the remarkable opportunities this profession offers to people who sincerely want to make a difference in our world.

In selecting a career, it is helpful for college students to understand the concept of the career ladder, which includes a progression of career advancement opportunities within a single, recognized profession. A **career ladder** is constructed of the steps one must take to progress upward and therefore to advance in a profession or occupation. The notion of a career ladder is based on the assumption that it is possible to begin at a low level and then to move from one position to another, continuously progressing toward the top of the ladder. In some occupations or professions, obtaining an entry degree enables a person to progress up the ladder without returning to school for graduate or postgraduate degrees, advancing based primarily on performance. In other professions, the career-ladder concept is viable only if additional academic credentials are obtained. Social work reflects an interesting mix. Academic credentials are a significant component of the social work career ladder. Experience alone does not necessarily provide access to the next rung of the career ladder in social work. As Figure 1.1 shows, there are multiple educational levels within the profession. We will explain each level, along with typical responsibilities.

At the lowest rung of the ladder is the **preprofessional** (also referred to as paraprofessional) or **human service aide**. Although they do not have access to membership in

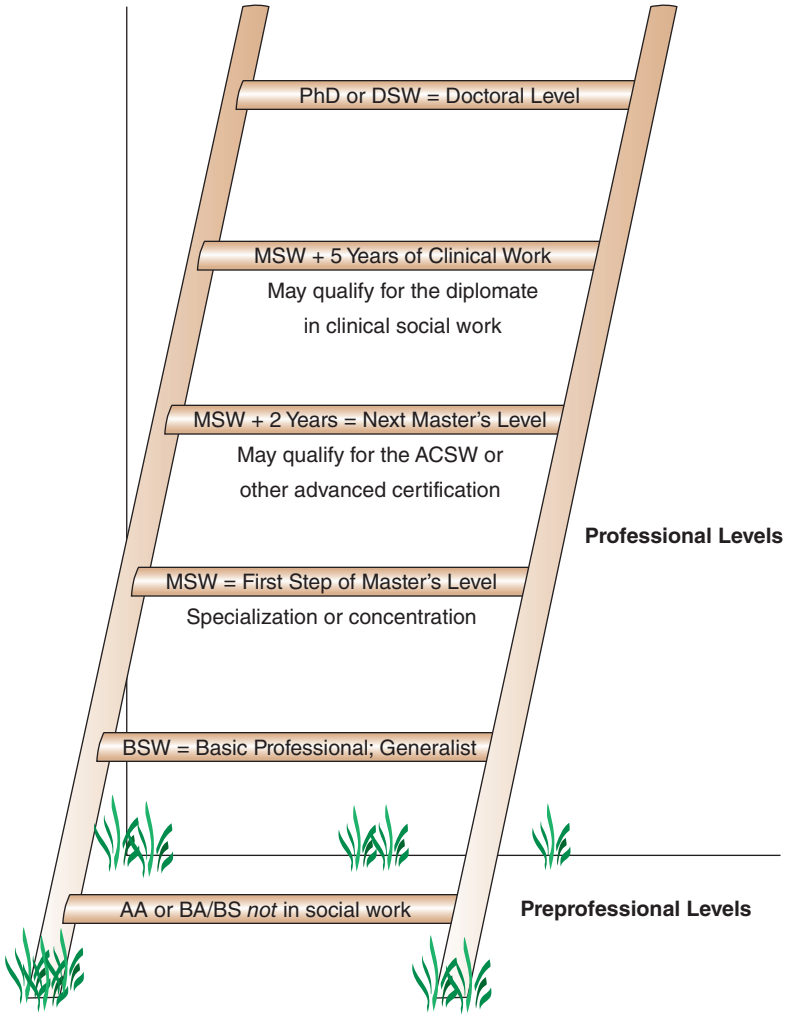


Figure 1.1 The Social Work Career Ladder and Professional Education

NASW or to professional status, persons with bachelor's degrees in areas related to social work (e.g., human services, psychology, and sociology majors) and persons with associate degrees are employed in human services. They assist clients by helping with complicated paperwork or performing tasks such as assisting chronically mentally ill persons, frail elderly people, or persons with disabilities to obtain needed resources. Some preprofessional staff members are hired without regard for their academic credentials but, instead, for their extensive, firsthand knowledge of the community served by the agency.

The BSW is the basic entry level. The academic credential for this category is precisely defined: a bachelor's degree from a college or university social work program that is accredited by the CSWE. The **basic professional level** social worker has been prepared as a generalist and is able to engage in practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. In this chapter's case illustration, a distinction is made between the responsibilities of Pamela Wright, the BSW, and those of Amy Sacks, who

has an MSW degree. Pamela conducted intake interviews for the domestic violence shelter, worked with the children as well as the mothers, and ran group sessions with all the women in the shelter. As a recognized professional person, Pamela was able to engage clients, do an assessment of strengths as well as the problem situations, design and carry out an intervention plan, and then terminate the intervention. Amy Sacks, in contrast, functioned at the MSW professional level.

The master's degree in social work, the MSW, must also be from a program accredited by the CSWE. The curriculum of master's degree programs builds on generalist content to develop specialization in a practice method or social problem area; some master's degrees focus on advanced generalist practice. The MSW social worker should be able to engage in generalist social work practice and also function as a specialist in more complex tasks. Amy Sacks, the MSW social worker at the shelter in the case study, received specialized graduate training in clinical social work. At the shelter, Amy's role is more focused, and the service she provides is in greater depth than Pamela Wright's. Amy does individual, family, and group therapy, usually by appointment. In addition, Amy is the executive director of the shelter.

At the top of the professional education classification system is the social work doctorate. Some doctoral programs have a teaching focus, whereas others prepare for advanced clinical practice or for careers in research, planning, and administration.

Employment Opportunities and Employment Patterns

Testing out and exploring career and employment opportunities actually begin with social work students' field placements. BSW students, as noted previously, complete a minimum of 400 hours in one or two different field settings just prior to graduation. MSW students complete 900 hours of fieldwork in two settings, although students who enter MSW programs with advanced standing may have as little as 450 hours of MSW fieldwork in a single location. Fieldwork offers exceptional opportunities to explore areas of interest. Social work organizations benefit, too, as they observe students' ability to provide meaningful, ethical service to the people served by the organization. Not surprisingly, BSW and MSW students are often hired by their field placement agency or by an organization in the same field of practice that they connected with during their field placements.

The CSWE's annual field placement data (see Box 1.3) provide insight into the array of BSW and MSW students' field placements. These data do not represent students' actual employment following graduation, but they do reflect the areas of career interest and potential employment opportunities for new graduates. While considerable overlap exists, it is interesting to note the differences that emerge. BSW students are more likely to be in child welfare field placements than MSW students. This is consistent with employment data; historically, child welfare has been the primary field of BSW employment following graduation. By contrast, Box 1.3 lists mental health as the primary field placement for MSW students. This clinical area tends to be the most frequently selected specialization of MSW students and, not surprisingly, mental health is prominent among the employment areas of MSW practice following graduation. The family services provided by BSW students include counseling as well as provision of basic needs such as food, referral services, and case management. Family services are third on the list of field

Box 1.3 Primary Practice Areas for BSW and MSW Student Field Placements (In order of priorty)

BSW Student Field Placements	MSW Student Field Placements
Child Welfare	Mental Health
School Social Work	Health
Family Services	School Social Work
Aging	Child Welfare
Health & Mental Health	Family Services
Criminal Justice	Aging
Substance Abuse/Addictions	Substance Abuse/Addictions
Homelessness	Community Development
Domestic Violence	Criminal Justice
Developmental Disabilities	Domestic Violence
Other	Other

Source: Based on the *2014 Annual Statistics on Social Work Education in the United States*, Field Education section, Tables 29 & 36, pp. 26 and 32. Alexandria, VA: Council on Social Work Education.

placements of BSW students, but it is in fifth place among the field placements of MSW students. School social work is rapidly emerging as a field placement of BSW social workers. Until recently, the MSW was the required credential for all school social workers. The field of aging, also known as gerontological social work, has recently been promoted by the CSWE; increasingly, schools are providing field placements in this area and more graduates are selecting the field of aging for employment. In the remaining prioritized list of field placements, the field of homelessness emerges for BSW student field placements, but it is not among the top 10 field placements for MSW students. Community development, similarly, does not appear among the top 10 BSW field placements in the CSWE field placement data.

Unfortunately, it is rather difficult to find current research data that accurately describe the full scope of employment of social workers once they have received their diplomas. One very plausible reason for this is that social workers are so often employed by other titles. In a few states, too, it is still possible for persons without degrees from accredited social work programs to obtain licensure or certification as social workers; research that included these persons would not provide a true picture of social work employment in that state. Researching the NASW membership base also fails to provide a clear picture of social work employment because not all social workers, whether BSWs, MSWs, or PhDs, hold membership in that social work national organization. While not providing a truly comprehensive survey of the profession, selected past and current studies can demonstrate patterns in social work employment for BSWs and MSWs.

Several past social work employment studies offer information that is still relevant. Quite consistent trends, for example, were established across many years of annual data gathering of post-BSW degree graduates by the Baccalaureate Education Assessment Project (BEAP) sponsored by the Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors. The prioritized fields of BSW graduates' employment reported in 2010,

for example, included child welfare, followed by mental health, aging, family services, health, plus others with smaller frequencies (Buchan, Hamilton, Christenson, Rodenhiser, Gerritsen-McKane, & Smith, 2010). Notice the similarities between these data and the Box 1.3 report of BSW students' field placement sites.

A 2009 NASW membership workforce survey provides a picture of social work practice of persons holding primarily the MSW degree (Whitaker, Wilson, & Arrington). In this study, mental health was the employment category with the greatest number of employed social workers. Health care (combined inpatient and outpatient) was also well represented among MSWs as was private practice. In this study, private practice emerges as a strong area for MSWs, especially solo practice where social workers work independently out of their own offices. Psychotherapy is likely to be the service provided by most of these practitioners. The private practice of social work requires advanced expertise; therefore, it does not show up in Box 1.3, where MSW student field placements are shown, nor does it appear in the listing of BSW social workers' employment.

Salaries and Demand for Social Workers

In recent years, there has been a somewhat uneven job market for social workers. In some urban areas of the United States, it has been difficult for social workers to find employment. At the same time, however, states such as Texas, Iowa, and Arkansas were seeking social workers. Rural areas were so desperate for social work staff that they employed uncredentialed people because they were unable to attract professionally trained social workers.

The job search experiences reported in the BEAP studies previously referred to, however, were quite positive. Although some BSW respondents elected to go to graduate school after receiving their degrees and a small number sought employment in another field or were not successful in finding social work jobs, more than 75 percent consistently obtained social work employment (Buchan, Hamilton, Christenson, et al., 2010).

One of the most stable and reliable sources of employment information regarding social work employment and salaries comes from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). It is the primary source of information we will provide for salaries and future employment projections. When looking at salary data, however, it is important to consider several factors. First, it is essential to keep in mind that social work salaries tend to increase every year. In other words, the salary information that we provide in this chapter is outdated as soon as the book is published. The salary information we provide here is very likely to be *less* than the salary that social workers in the field are earning when you read this chapter. The salaries today's students are likely to earn when they graduate are expected to be *higher*. Social work salaries vary immensely by region of the country, years of experience, field of practice and auspice, and highest degree earned. Another important factor to remember is that commitment to vulnerable populations is a stronger motivation for some social workers than salary, and many accept employment with seriously underfunded organizations that pay small salaries. This factor tends to skew the earnings data on social work employment and to give an impression of lower salaries than the salaries that, in fact, may be available from other organizations.

The BLS tracks salaries for social workers according to their field of practice, as shown in Box 1.4. This makes it possible to compare salaries according to areas of

Box 1.4 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: Social Work Employment and Mean Annual Wages, for Selected Areas of Practice, 2015

Practice Areas of Social Work Employment	Numbers Employed	Mean Annual Wages
Child, Family, and School Social Workers, Total Category	294,080	$46,610
Elementary and Secondary Schools	37,030	$60,750
Local Government	51,380	$52,810
State Government	66,180	$45,730
Social Advocacy Organizations	4,250	$40,600
Individual and Family Services	69,820	$40,660
Community Food, Housing, Emergency, and Other Relief Services	8,670	$37,160
Medical and Public Health Social Workers, Total Category	155,590	$54,020
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	45,070	$59,650
Home Health Care	17,270	$58,580
Outpatient Care Centers	9,850	$55,170
Skilled Nursing Care Facilities	15,960	$48,760
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers, Total Category	110,070	$47,190
Offices of Other Health Practitioners	6,450	$66,730
Individual and Family Services	15,770	$43,930
Psychiatric and Substance Abuse Hospitals	9,130	$53,520
Local Government	11,140	$49,560
Outpatient Care Centers	24,430	$43,420
Residential Facilities	15,130	$41,450
Social Workers, All Other, Total Category	59,570	$57,970
Federal Executive Branch	13,890	$72,840
Insurance Carriers	490	$68,600
Local Government	16,370	$59,220
State Government	11,470	$47,540

Source: Based on "21-1021 Child, Family, and School Social Workers," "21-1022 Healthcare Social Workers," "21-1023 Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers," and "21-1029 Social Workers, All others." Occupational Employment Statistics: Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2015. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. Retrieved from http:data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/print.pl/oes/current/oes211021.htm; 211022.htm; 211023.htm; and 211029.htm

particular interest to students or beginning social workers. Notice, however, that the BLS places all of the very large number of diverse social work positions into only four categories: (1) child, family, and school, (2) medical and public health, (3) mental health and substance abuse, and (4) all others (BLS, 2015c&d). This provides valuable introductory information, but it requires the reader to do independent research to learn more about specific social work positions of interest, especially within specific regions or localities. The BLS does not differentiate BSW and MSW social workers; all are encompassed in their data. Keep in mind that this BLS information comes from 2015, not from the year

that you are reading Box 1.4. Also, only selected information is provided in Box 1.4 from the larger BLS report. For further information, see the website for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Compare the wages reported for social workers employed by governmental to those of non-governmental organizations; next, note whether differences exist between the different levels of governmental employers. In past years, governmental organizations fairly consistently paid higher salaries than non-governmental organizations, many of which were small, poorly funded denominational agencies. That pattern has not been sustained in recent years. Look at the data on numbers of social workers employed in each of the four major practice areas and notice the variation in salaries. Sometimes the mission of the employing organization is more important for job-seekers than what they can pay. Salary may be a more significant need for others.

The BLS offers a vast amount of information on social work employment and salaries. Another perspective that BLS data provide that is not addressed in Box 1.4 is data that reflect the identity of states that provide the highest social work wages. Staying with the four categories that the BLS used in Box 1.4, the states with highest mean wages in 2015 were the following:

- Child, Family, and School Social Workers:
  Connecticut $65,380; New Jersey $61,630; Rhode Island $61,190
- Medical and Public Health Social Workers:
  California $69,970; District of Columbia $67,450; Connecticut $64,450
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers:
  New Jersey $66,590; Connecticut $60,920; California $60,620
- All Other Social Workers:
  Rhode Island $74,080; Massachusetts $72,200, District of Columbia $70,940 (BLS, 21-1021, 21-1022, 21-1023, & 21-1029; 2015d)

An earlier 2010 NASW study reported by Whitaker and Wilson provided additional interesting data about social work salaries. In their survey, the median income for the study group (comprised primarily of MSWs but including some BSWs) was $55,000; this may seem low, but remember this was salary data from 2010. It was not surprising that there were some fairly low salaries reported, even among MSWs, as the study group included some social workers who chose to work in underfunded organizations because of the vulnerable populations they wished to serve. What was surprising to readers who assumed that social workers never earned high salaries was the fact that some salaries, even in 2010, exceeded $100,000.

The BLS 2015 data in Box 1.4 identified mean (average) wages, but if the upper limits of social work wages had been shown, it is very likely that figures over $100,000 would emerge. If it was possible to provide social work salary data for the time that you are reading this chapter, you could expect to see upper limits in excess of $100,000.

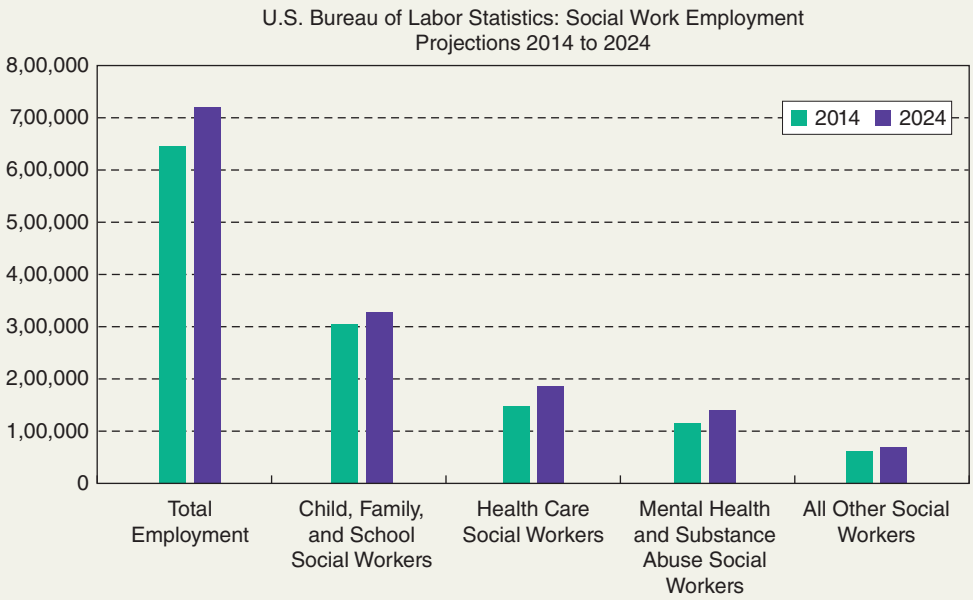
The annual salary data that we have reviewed serves as a reminder: Both MSW and BSW salaries tend to increase each year, so the salary information presented here won't be a true representation of social work salaries when you read them, and they will be even less representative of social work salaries by the time you graduate from college. In addition, salaries also vary considerably across the different geographic regions of the United States.

Employment Projections

Economic conditions, the political climate, social welfare policy decisions made by the U.S. government, even changing demographics, and technological advances—all of these factors affect employment prospects in social work and other fields. Replacement needs as some social workers retire or leave for other reasons also influence the number of positions available. There tends to be more competition in cities for social work jobs. This is especially likely in cities where professional educational programs are present. In rural areas, however, the need for social workers is often very great and shortages of social workers are very apparent. In fact, rural areas sometimes have great difficulty attracting and retaining social workers.

The BLS prediction for social work is very favorable: It projects social work employment to grow remarkably fast! The projected growth for all occupations combined is 7 percent, while social work projected growth is expected to be 12 percent. Within social work, however, there is variation among the different fields of practice. Box 1.5 illustrates the projected total growth of the social work profession from 2014 to 2024, with breakdowns for the fields of practice, by numbers of social workers employed. The total number of social workers employed in 2014 was 649,300 and by 2024 that number is expected to increase to 724,100. Within the Child, Family, and School Social Work category, an increase of 6 percent (19,000 new social workers) is anticipated by 2024. This social work category, though, is the largest of all, so the number is expected to increase from 305,200 to 324,200 by 2024. A far larger increase of 19 percent is expected for the Health Care

Box 1.5 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: Social Work Employment Projections 2014 to 2024



Source: Based on "Employment projections data for social workers, 2014-2024." Bureau of Labor statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook. 2016-2017 Edition, Social Workers. Retrieved from http:www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-socialservice/social-workers.htm

social work category, but that increases social work employment from 160,00 in 2014 to 191,000 by 2024 (an increase of 30,900). The 19 percent increase expected among Mental Health and Substance Abuse social workers is also impressive. The 117,800 social workers of 2014 are expected to increase to 140,000 by 2024 (22,300 new social workers) (BLS, Job Outlook, 2015c).

The employment outlook for some professions similar to social work is not quite as positive as that for others. Employment positions in psychology, for example, are expected to increase from 173,900 in 2014 to 206,400 in 2024) (BLS, 2015a) compared with an increase from 649,300 in 2014 to 724,000 by 2024 for social workers (BLS, 2015c). The BLS also notes that in psychology, a doctorate degree is required for most clinical work, although the master's degree is acceptable for some positions in schools and industry. Few opportunities are projected for persons holding only a bachelor's degree in psychology. In rehabilitation counseling, where a master's degree is usually required, 2014 employment of 120,000 counselors is anticipated to increase to 130,900 by 2024 (BLS, 2015b).

Why will social work positions increase in the future? The increasing population of older persons is one compelling reason. Job prospects are expected to be especially favorable in areas involving social work with older adults. A rapidly growing aging population plus the aging baby-boomer generation will require services—services to assist with the stresses that accompany midlife crises related to health, career, and personal issues. Increased demand for social workers is also likely in home health care, hospice programs, assisted living, adult protective services, and adult day care centers. The number of persons of all ages with serious mental health and substance abuse problems is expected to increase as well. Child, family, and school social workers will be needed to work with issues of child abuse, domestic violence, and family relationship problems. Increased school enrollments will call for growing numbers of school social workers; however, budget constraints may reduce growth within school systems.

> Given the population demographics, especially among older adults, it is fortunate that a whole new generation of social work students is being prepared for effective, compassionate work with older adults. Thanks to the historic partnership of the Hartford Foundation and the CSWE, over 200 BSW and MSW schools of social work and well over 1,000 students have participated in and continue to be involved in gero-enriched curricula, field placements, and research. As a result, students who never imagined themselves working with older adults have become inspired by this field of practice (Hooyman, 2009).

LICENSURE AND PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALING

State Licensure and Certification

Can doctors practice their profession without being licensed? Can pharmacists? Dentists? How about social workers? While there are some situations in which doctors, pharmacists, and dentists may practice without a license, these are relatively few. Medicine, pharmacy, and dentistry were among the first professions to be legally regulated in the United States. The term **legal regulation** refers to governmental authority for the practice of

selected professions and occupations. Today doctors, pharmacists, and dentists are licensed by the states in which they practice.

Social workers, too, are legally regulated in all states in the United States. The first statute providing for the legal regulation of social workers was passed in Puerto Rico in 1934 (Thyer & Biggerstaff, 1989). There are several different forms of legal regulation governing social work. In most states, social workers are licensed, generally at both the BSW and MSW levels. In a few states, social workers are certified, not licensed. Canadian provinces generally use the term *registration* instead of licensure or certification for their legal regulation.

Licensure and certification in the United States are very similar. Both are created through the passage of state law, so they are born out of the political process. State boards of regulation and licensing are responsible for administering licensing and certification of all professions. Only persons with appropriate credentials (usually degrees from CSWE-accredited schools) are permitted to take the social work examinations that are required. A national organization, the Association of Social Work Boards, provides examinations to the states; each state determines its own passing score. There is one important difference between **certification** and **licensure**. While certification protects the title *social worker*, it doesn't prohibit uncertified people from practicing social work. Uncertified people simply may not legally call themselves social workers. Certification is not considered to be as strong a form of legal regulation as licensure, which legally restricts the practice of social work to persons who meet the state requirements.

Although states determine the categories of social workers they will license or certify, the four categories most commonly seen and the academic degree and practice experience required are as follows:

Bachelor's: a baccalaureate degree in social work
Master's: an MSW degree; no experience required
Advanced generalist: an MSW degree plus two years of supervised experience
Clinical: an MSW degree plus two years of clinical practice (Association of Social Work Boards, 2013)

Renewal of a state license or certification, which may occur every two years, usually requires documentation of completed continuing education. Earning a degree in social work is truly not the end of a social worker's education!

NASW Credentialing of Advanced Professional Practice

There is a growing demand by consumers and insurance companies for the affirmation of experienced professionals beyond the entry level and even beyond state licensure. NASW has met this challenge by creating specified credentials for social workers. NASW sustains authority over their credentialing process; it is not a form of governmental regulation such as licensing, although it often incorporates requirements for state licensing.

The ACSW was the first advanced practice credential offered by NASW. Developed in 1960, it is still the most respected and recognized social work credential. The Academy of Certified Social Workers (**ACSW**) designates membership into its organization. It is available to members of NASW who have an MSW degree, two years of additional MSW-supervised social work practice, professional evaluations that confirm

their practice skills and values, and 20 hours of related continuing education (NASW, 2015b). In 1986, following the development and broad acceptance of the ACSW, NASW created the **Diplomate in Clinical Social Work (DCSW)**. Among other requirements, the diplomate calls for 4,500 hours plus an additional three years of post-MSW or post doctorate clinical practice. The DCSW is the highest level of clinical practice authorized by NASW (NASW, 2015d).

NASW continued to expand its recognition across a range of specific areas of practice expertise, adding advanced practice credentials for several areas of BSW practice. In the area of military practice, NASW now offers recognition of advanced BSW practice with the credential of MVF-SW, Military Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families—Social Worker. Also offered is the MVG-ASW, the credential designating advanced practice at the MSW level with military families. The MVF-CSW is a credential related to MSW clinical practice with military families. There are three clinical practice credentials for advanced MSW practice: the QCSW (Qualified Clinical Social Worker); the CSW-G (Clinical Social Worker in Gerontology); and the C-CATODSW (Certified Clinical Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs Social Worker). There are three additional credentials in gerontological practice (one at the BSW level), two for hospice and/or palliative care social work (one BSW credential), two credentials in youth and family practice (one BSW), one MSW level health care and a school social worker credential, and two case management (a BSW and an MSW) credentials (NASW, 2015e). The specific requirements for all of these certificates can be accessed online in the "Practice & Professional Development/Social Work Credentials" area at the NASW website.

Credentials that testify to expertise in specialized areas of practice can provide a considerable competitive advantage in the job market. They are also a way of alerting potential clients or referral sources to the knowledge and practice expertise of the social worker.

PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK ORGANIZATIONS

This chapter has already referred to NASW and CSWE numerous times. Hopefully, this signifies the remarkable importance of these two national social work organizations in the leadership of the profession. NASW and CSWE are undoubtedly the most prominent, but many other professional social work organizations also exist.

The National Association of Social Workers

NASW, located in Washington, D.C., is the major social work professional membership organization in the United States. There are approximately 132,000 members of NASW (NASW, 2015a). It was founded in 1955 when seven existing but quite separate social work organizations (such as the American Association of Medical Social Workers) joined together. The NASW has four major functions:

1. Professional development
2. Professional action
3. Professional standards
4. Membership services

Many social work organizations hold conferences for social work students and professionals that allow them to stay current on social welfare issues and to share challenges and successes with others in the field

Graduates of schools of social work that are accredited by the CSWE are eligible for full membership in the NASW. Students in CSWE-accredited programs are eligible for student membership at reduced rates. NASW's journal, *Social Work*, is a respected source for research findings in various fields of practice (useful for writing term papers). The monthly publication of the national office, *NASW News*, provides information regarding new developments, social policy discussions, and updates on legislation of interest to social workers and their clients; it also advertises social work professional positions. All state chapters publish newsletters, keeping chapter members abreast of statewide developments. At the national level, NASW employs a lobbyist to represent members' views on policy issues known to Congress. Through the Political Action for Candidate Election (PACE) wing of NASW, candidates for national as well as state offices are endorsed, and information about their positions is disseminated. Political action on behalf of the people we serve is identified in the NASW Code of Ethics as a responsibility of all social workers.

NASW's strong commitment to service is dramatically evident in its online resource, *Help Starts Here*. This beautifully designed website provides stories of people who have experienced very difficult times but discovered organizations, experts (sometimes social workers), or even their own inner strength that enabled them to get through a problem or crisis. Helpful, readable, current information on subjects as varied as health and wellness, family problems, and issues facing older adults is offered. Readers are invited to share their own story about how a social worker helped them or a loved one. Under the heading of "Find a Social Worker," a link is provided that provides an anonymous electronic connection with a social worker.

The Council on Social Work Education

Like NASW, the CSWE is a private, non-governmental organization. It is located in Alexandria, Virginia; it has a membership of more than 2,500 individuals as well as institutional memberships of colleges and universities. CSWE is the only

organization in the United States that is authorized to accredit social work educational programs. CSWE's mission is to provide and sustain high quality in social work education through developing and maintaining standards for social work education in the United States. CSWE also encourages faculty development, advocates on behalf of social work education, and engages in global social work education collaboratives (CSWE, 2015).

CSWE has accredited MSW programs since its creation in 1952. In 1974, accreditation was expanded to include baccalaureate programs. Currently, 235 MSW programs and 504 BSW programs are accredited (CSWE, 2015). To date, doctoral programs in social work are not accredited by CSWE.

CSWE conducts a number of other activities in addition to accreditation. An annual conference, for example, showcases presentations of scholarly papers and current research. CSWE also publishes a scholarly journal (*Journal of Social Work Education*). A recent and ongoing project aims at strengthening the competence of social workers for work with the growing population of older adults. Through its members, CSWE also seeks to influence social policy and funding, both governmental and private, to support social work education.

The National Association of Black Social Workers

The National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) is a membership organization located in Washington, D.C. Its membership is open to any black person who is employed in social work or human services; unlike NASW, it does not specify academic credentials. NABSW was created in 1968 to address issues pertaining to racism and the delivery of social services to black people (NABSW, n.d., History section). The code of ethics speaks eloquently to the mission and purpose of this organization by asking that members promote the welfare of black people and the protection of black persons and communities from unethical practice. Members are also expected to work for improved social conditions and to provide volunteer service in support of black people and black organizations (NABSW, n.d., Code of Ethics section).

More than 100 chapters of NABSW exist throughout the United States. Student units exist on some college and university campuses. National conferences are held annually in key cities in the United States. Summer international conferences offer exciting opportunities to visit and experience the culture and heritage of Ghana, South Africa, and other global African communities (NABSW, n.d., History section).

The National Association of Puerto Rican and Hispanic Social Workers

Founded in 1983, the National Association of Puerto Rican and Hispanic Social Workers (NAPRHSW) offers membership to social workers, students, and other professionals in the field of human services. Like the NABSW, it does not restrict membership to credentialed social workers. It seeks to organize social workers and others to enhance the general welfare of Puerto Rican and Hispanic families and communities. The organization's objectives call for members to advocate for and promote the interests of Latinos and Hispanics, to connect with resources that support Latino people and communities,

to provide for professional development of members, and to encourage and recruit students (NAPRHSW, 2015, Mission).

Members of the NAPRHSW have opportunities to attend conferences dealing with issues such as strengths and diversity of the Latino family, immigration reform, and ethnic sensitive practice. The organization also shares information on employment opportunities and engages members in political, educational, and social activities.

Other Professional Organizations

A wealth of other professional organizations exists for social workers. In addition to the NAPRHSW, there is the Latino Social Workers Organization, which sponsors annual conferences and offers committee membership to students as well as professional social workers. Some of the emphases of this organization are training in cultural competency and recruitment and retention strategies. Founded in 1970, the National Indian Social Workers Association seeks to support Native American people, including Alaska Natives. It also provides consultation to tribal and other organizations. Still other groups exist for gay and lesbian social workers, Asian American social workers, and American social workers who live and work in other countries. In addition, there are practice-related organizations such as the National Association of Oncology Social Workers, the National Federation of Societies of Clinical Social Workers, and the North American Association of Christians in Social Work.

International Social Work Organizations

Social workers in countries outside the United States also have professional organizations. Some examples are the Australian Association of Social Workers; the Canadian Association of Social Workers; the Nederlands Instituut voor Zorg en Welzijn (The Netherlands); the Chinese Association of Social Workers; and national associations of social workers in Ghana, Nigeria, and Israel, among others.

One social work organization, the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), was initiated in 1956 to help social workers learn about the experience of their counterparts in other countries. Currently, the IFSW represents 116 countries and half a million social workers around the world. Although membership in the IFSW is limited to national social work organizations, individuals may join the Friends of IFSW. This organization provides a global voice for the social work profession. It has achieved so much international respect that it

- has been provided special consulting status by two UN organizations, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
- works with the World Health Organization (WHO).
- assists the Office of the UN's High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).
- provides services to the primary human rights office of the UN, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (IFSW, 2015).

The IFSW promotes the use of social development efforts and encourages international cooperation in its effort to seek global social justice.

Just as international trade has developed globally at a rapid pace so, too, have international efforts to improve the health and welfare of all people. Hopefully, the future will bring increasing cross-national and international social welfare development and advocacy efforts, especially to war-torn and economically devastated areas. What a challenge for the next generation of social workers!

COMPARING RELATED PROFESSIONS

To meet the challenges of the present as well as the future, social workers need to understand and develop cooperative working relationships with the professions and occupational groups that work alongside us. Currently, a great deal of overlap exists in the responsibilities and tasks of professions. In hospitals, for example, nurses as well as social workers assist patients with discharge planning. In mental health, the overlap appears even greater. Psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and professional counselors all engage in psychotherapy with individuals, groups, and families. Each profession, however, has its own area of expertise. This can be confusing. In the paragraphs that follow, we will try to identify and compare roles and responsibilities across a few professions that social workers frequently work with.

Psychology

Psychology is a field closely related to social work. Psychologists study individuals and try to understand how they develop over the human lifespan. Many psychologists study perception and learning in the laboratory setting and try to understand the inner workings of the mind through experimental means. Other psychologists spend their careers researching, testing theory, and teaching. One branch of psychology is applied; these psychologists counsel individuals and families and conduct IQ tests, personality tests, and the like. Psychologists who wish to specialize in psychotherapy usually earn a doctorate degree.

Social workers take psychology courses and they utilize information from psychology to assess their clients' problems appropriately and to develop workable intervention plans. Social workers cannot focus solely on the individual, as psychologists tend to do; instead, they also work with other persons involved in clients' lives and with groups and community organizations, as needed, to help solve clients' problems.

The BLS lists multiple specializations for psychology. The primary ones are licensed clinical psychologist and counseling psychologist. Both require a doctorate degree. These are the psychologists that social workers often work with, especially in mental health settings. Other specialization areas are school psychology; industrial–organizational psychology; and developmental, social, and experimental or research psychology (BLS, 2014a). School psychologists may need only a master's degree.

Counseling

Counseling is another profession that overlaps social work in many ways: counselors, too, serve the social and emotional needs of people in schools, mental health settings, and other settings where social workers are employed. Most counselors hold master's

degrees from university programs in education or psychology, although some doctorates are also available in counseling. There is an array of areas in this field including mental health counseling, school and career counseling, rehabilitation counseling, substance abuse and behavioral disorder counseling, and gerontological counseling. The vast majority of counselors, 273,400, are employed as school and career counselors (BLS, 2015b). Like social workers, counselors work with people who have personal, family, or mental health problems; however, many counselors have special expertise in helping people with educational or career planning.

Psychiatry

Psychiatry is related to social work, but psychiatry is a specialization of medicine. An M.D. (doctorate of medicine) must first be earned, and then the aspiring psychiatrist must complete a postdoctoral internship. Psychiatrists' primary focus on the inner person is grounded in their knowledge of physiology and medical practice. They may practice psychotherapy, but more frequently see patients to prescribe and monitor medications such as antidepressants and the drugs used to treat psychoses (severe forms of mental illness). Psychiatrists frequently see people for 15-minute medication monitoring sessions. They also serve in leadership roles in mental health organizations.

Human Services

In its broadest definition, human services include all occupations and professions seeking to promote the health and well-being of society: lawyers, firefighters, social workers, teachers, and so on. The narrower definition includes only those people who have completed an educational program with a major in human services or people who have been hired to work in the broad human services area without academic credentials. Human service academic programs range from two-year associate, four-year baccalaureate, master's, to doctoral degrees. While knowledge development is not ignored, associate and baccalaureate degree programs in the human service field often emphasize task completion and skill development. Graduates seek employment across multiple paraprofessional and professional job areas; these positions sometimes offer only minimal opportunities for advancement. The authority to accredit human service programs was obtained by the Council for Standards in Human Service Education in 2014.

Inter-Professional Collaboration

If social workers are to be truly effective, it is imperative that they achieve skill in inter-professional relationships. Future case studies in this text will illustrate social work practice involving other professions. Sometimes, especially in advocacy situations, these can be challenging relationships, but they may significantly impact the outcome for the client. Inter-professional relationships can also be a highly satisfying component of professional life.

How might some of the professions described in this chapter become involved in a case such as that of the Dunn family? In one potential scenario, the counseling they receive from the shelter social worker results in Susan Dunn and her husband deciding there is hope for change. They make the

decision to begin living together again. With encouragement, they follow up on the social worker's recommendation that they attend longer-term marriage and family counseling with a family service agency. The shelter social worker's professional relationship with the family service agency staff helped Susan Dunn and her husband trust their new counselor at the agency. The Dunn's counselor at the family service agency might be an MSW social worker, a PhD psychologist, or possibly a counselor. A consulting psychiatrist, also retained on the staff of the agency, would become involved if the primary counselor felt medication might be needed if one of the Dunns began to have serious depression. A collaborative working relationship between the Dunns' family service agency counselor and the psychiatrist could increase the Dunns' comfort in seeing the psychiatrist and could help the psychiatrist consider more carefully the need for medication.

But what would happen if, instead, Susan Dunn remained in clear physical danger? Let us say, for example, that while she was at the shelter, her husband refused to attend any kind of counseling with her and openly threatened future abuse. Susan might still choose to go home, believing that, if she behaved more carefully, she would be able to avoid causing her husband to physically abuse her. At some point, however, another crisis could require her to flee again to the shelter. If her husband was drinking or became violent at work and lost his job, Susan may find herself becoming involved with the government's financial assistance program called Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The staff she encounters with this program would probably not have professional training in social work as their role is a more clerical one. The shelter social worker may need to accompany Susan to the TANF organization and assertively advocate with agency staff on behalf of Susan.

Once Susan leaves her husband, she is at risk of poverty. Almost overnight, she could become a poor, single mother. The shelter social worker might work with attorneys to help Susan file a legal restraining order through the district attorney's office, thus prohibiting her husband from threatening or even contacting her. If she wanted to file for divorce and child support, Susan's social worker could advocate with attorneys at a legal aid society to obtain inexpensive legal assistance. As Susan's social worker helps her assess her evolving situation, other professional persons might be involved: A career counselor could help plan for employment or further education, a psychologist might become involved if Susan became seriously depressed and needed psychological testing for additional assessment, and a human services worker from the shelter might help Susan with the maze of paperwork needed as Susan's new life begins to unfold. In any event, the shelter social worker might work collaboratively with many other professional persons as she takes whatever steps are necessary to ensure that Susan and her children are safe from harm. Consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics, the social worker would respect whatever decisions Susan made.

SUMMARY

- The social work profession is described. Social work is defined, as it is a profession that is often misunderstood. It is a profession that has clearly identified values and a code of ethics that flows from those values. The history of social work evolved out of a sense of caring and concern for individuals and families as well

as need for social reform. Today the professional degrees in social work include the BSW, MSW, and PhD.

- The context and work environments of social workers are explained. Social workers work within private organizations like the American Red Cross and denominational agencies as well as governmental organizations. They are employed by hospitals, police departments, foster care and adoptions agencies, and senior centers, among numerous other locations.
- The professional curriculum of social work and the career opportunities available to social workers are discussed. The career ladder depicts progression upward from lower, entry levels of the profession to the highest levels of advanced practice. Employment opportunities and social work salaries are somewhat dependent on professional education and credentials. Salaries for social work vary considerably but tend to be higher than is generally suspected.
- The social work profession as a profession legally regulated through licensure and credentialing is explained. Social work, like most other professions, is legally regulated by state licensing boards to protect consumers from unethical and uncredentialed practice. In addition, advanced practice credentials are provided under the auspices of the NASW.
- The major professional social work organizations are described. Two primary national social work professional organizations are the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Other national and local social work organizations also exist as well as international organizations.
- Roles and responsibilities of social workers and those of professionals that social workers frequently work with are compared and contrasted. Psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and professional counselors all engage in psychotherapy with individuals, groups, and families. Each profession, however, has its own area of expertise.

2

Theoretical Perspectives for Social Workers

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Discuss the relationship between systems theory and the ecosystems perspective.
- Explain how ecosystems theory guides generalist social work practice.
- Identify several intersecting factors spawning social justice concerns, challenging social work values.
- Discuss the likelihood of support for social programs across the political spectrum.
- Explain Social Darwinism and discuss how Wheatley believes it impacts global economic systems.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

CASE STUDY: The Several Roles of Stephanie Hermann, BSW

Stephanie Hermann, BSW, waited impatiently for the mail that morning since her boss had told her to expect an important memo. Stephanie worked as an assistant administrator in a regional office of the Division of Community Services, a part of her state's Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS). The office interpreted new DHSS policies pertaining to health and social service agencies in the region, both public and private. Stephanie consulted with agency administrators to clarify state policies and to document agency compliance.

Recently, the state DHSS office had received notice from the Federal Health Care Administration that people with developmental disabilities would soon lose eligibility for Medicaid funding in nursing homes. The intent of this policy was to encourage the development of community-based living settings for people with disabilities. A survey had been conducted around the state, and 2,025 adults with disabilities were found to be living in nursing homes. Among them was Sandra McLean, whose story will be a focus of this chapter.

This large number worried DHSS officials. They did not believe there were existing alternative community placement options that