Generalist Social Work Practice, Twelfth Edition, presents the knowledge, values, and skills needed for entry-level social work practice with individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities. This comprehensive and celebrated text describes a variety of approaches to social work practice including assessment, intervention, and evaluation. Learning objectives and chapter summaries reinforce key concepts, while skill-building exercises incorporated throughout each chapter give students the opportunity to apply what they've learned. A range of case examples broadens students' sense of cultural diversity. The twelfth edition of this classic text provides the theoretical and practical knowledge needed for students to become change agents.

New to This Edition

- Coverage of self-care and mindfulness encourages student to develop skills that contribute to resilience and prevent burnout
- Exploration of issues involving technology such as social media and ethics and telehealth
- Information on working with clients who face substance use and abuse highlights an important ongoing social issue
- New chapter, "Transitions and Ending in Social Work Practice," explores termination and emphasizes the importance of transitions in social work
- Increased focus on evidence-based practices throughout the text

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GENERALIST SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

TWELFTH EDITION

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GENERALIST SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

A WORKTEXT

Charles H. Zastrow & Sarah L. Hessenauer | TWELFTH EDITION

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GENERALIST SOCIAL

Work Practice

GENERALIST SOCIAL Work Practice

A Worktext

Twelfth Edition

Charles H. Zastrow and Sarah L. Hessenauer
University of Wisconsin
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Contents

Exercises

Preface

Carlos is a sophomore in a social work program at a university. He recently decided to try out social work as a major after doing well in his Introduction to Social Work course and in his two Human Behavior and Social Environment courses. He still has a number of questions about whether he really wants a career in social work. He recognizes that friends and a number of relatives view him as a "good listener," and they seek him out to share their personal challenges. Carlos as yet is somewhat unaware of what social workers actually do. He is interested in being a protective services worker but is keeping an open mind about other areas of social work that might be a "good fit" for him. He has a number of questions about whether he truly has the skills to be of help to other people.

The focus of this text is to facilitate Carlos (and other BSW students) in comprehending what social workers do and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and values needed for generalist social work practice.

Prior editions of *Generalist Social Work Practice: A Worktext* (11th ed.) were titled *The Practice of Social Work: A Comprehensive Worktext*. The title was changed in this edition because of (a) the increasing emphasis of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) on "generalist practice" and (b) the added material on generalist practice in this edition.

The CSWE is the national organization in the United States that accredits baccalaureate and master's degree programs in social work education. In 2015, CSWE published *Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS)* for baccalaureate and master's degree programs. A major thrust of *Generalist Social Work Practice: A Worktext* is to present material that is consistent with the mandated content on social work practice in EPAS.

This text provides the theoretical and practical knowledge needed for entry levels of practice in social work. Material is presented covering generalist practice; social work values; confidentiality; principles of interviewing; social work with individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities; assessment; evaluation; evidence-based practice; general systems theory; cross-cultural social work; self-care and burnout; and the frustrations and satisfactions of being a social worker. Numerous case examples are included to illustrate the theory that is presented.

Generalist Social Work Practice: A Worktext is designed for use in practice courses in social work at the undergraduate level. Social work practitioners also will find the text valuable because it describes a variety of approaches to social work practice, including relaxation approaches, family counseling concepts, reality therapy, rational therapy, and behavior therapy. An eclectic approach is used in presenting these diverse types of therapies. After each therapy approach is described, a critical review of the theory is presented to help the reader assess its merits and shortcomings.

The skill-building exercises in this text may be used in a variety of ways. The instructor may request that students complete certain exercises as a homework assignment before the next class period; the exercises are then reviewed when the class next meets. The instructor may have students complete one or more exercises during class. The instructor may assign certain exercises as written homework to be submitted for evaluation. The instructor may have each student complete several exercises and then place them in a portfolio, which the instructor may periodically review for evaluation purposes.

This book is unique in that it combines the key components of existing practice texts, both traditional and contemporary, into one volume. As much as possible, jargon-free language is used so the reader can more readily grasp the theory. Exercises for students are presented in each chapter to illustrate key concepts and to help students learn how to apply the theoretical material to social work practice. These exercises are largely skill-building exercises that are designed to facilitate students' developing social work practice skills. Exercises also are presented at the end of each chapter to facilitate students' learning how to apply the theoretical material to social work practice.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

The chapters in this text (1 through 14) describe various components of generalist social work practice. The following is a brief summary of each chapter.

Chapter 1, "Overview of Social Work Practice," conceptualizes generalist practice in social work. It describes what social workers do, explains how social work is distinct from other professions, and summarizes the knowledge, values, and skills needed for beginning-level social work practice. This chapter also describes the goals of social work practice, gives a brief history of social work, indicates that social work is a multi-skilled profession, and summarizes professional activities performed by social workers, including casework, case management, group work, group counseling, family counseling, and community organization. Various role models of social work practice are defined, including that of a counselor, broker, advocate, and activist.

Chapter 2, "Surviving and Enjoying Social Work," focuses on the importance of social workers taking care of themselves. To be of help to others, social workers must first take care of themselves. Suggestions are presented for resolving common concerns of students receiving professional training in social work. Techniques to manage stress and prevent burnout are described. Mindfulness is summarized. This part concludes with a discussion of the importance for social workers (as well as other people) of developing a positive identity and provides guidelines on how to develop a positive sense of self.

Chapter 3, "Social Work Values," summarizes social work values. Values described include self-determination, individualization, confidentiality, belief in the institutional approach for the delivery of social services, focus on family, advocacy for those being discriminated against, and accountability.

Chapter 4, "Assessment," describes the components of assessments in social work, including attending to bio-psycho-social and cultural aspects. Material is presented on assessing individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Chapter 5, "Social Work with Individuals: Interviewing," describes three types of social work interviews: informational or social history, assessment, and intervention. Guidelines are provided on how to begin and end interviews, how to phrase interview questions, safety guidelines related to interviewing, and how to take notes while interviewing.

Chapter 6, "Social Work with Individuals: Problem-Solving and Intervening," presents material on counseling from the worker's perspective and from the client's perspective. Eight stages of a problem-solving approach to counseling clients are presented.

Chapter 7, "Social Work with Groups: Types of Groups and Guidelines for Leading Them," describes a number of groups that social workers are involved in, including recreation, recreation-skill, task, problem-solving and decision-making, focus, self-help, socialization, counseling, and encounter. The chapter discusses three group development models, describes five leadership approaches, and presents material on group dynamics. Conflict resolution strategies are summarized. Guidelines are presented on starting, leading, ending, and evaluating groups.

Chapter 8, "Social Work with Families," describes family problems and the nature of social work with families. Eco-maps and genograms are described.

Chapter 9, "Social Work with Organizations," indicates that most social workers are employed by an agency (i.e., organization). Several models of organizational behavior are described. Generalist skills for working in an organization are shared, along with goals of supervision and organizational self-care.

Chapter 10, "Social Work Community Practice," describes three models of community practice: community capacity development, social planning, and social action. Knowledge and skills needed for community practice are summarized. The community assets model to community practice is presented.

Chapter 11, "Practice Evaluation and Program Evaluation," describes the importance of both practice evaluation and program evaluation. Process evaluation, outcome evaluation, evidence-based practice, and the ethics of evaluation are described. Approaches to outcome evaluation include single-subject design, goal achievement scaling, task achievement scaling, and satisfaction questionnaire.

Chapter 12, "Social Work Practice with Diverse Individuals, Families, Groups, and Communities," describes key terms related to diversity. Culturally competent practice is described. Generalist skills for working with diverse populations are presented. Macro strategies are presented on promoting social and economic justice.

Chapter 13, "Spirituality and Religion in Social Work Practice," presents a rationale for the use of spirituality and religion in social work practice. Material is presented on assessing the spiritual and religious beliefs of clients and on spiritual and religious interventions with clients. The limited partnership between social work and religious organizations in providing social services to people is discussed.

Chapter 14, "Transitions and Endings in Social Work Practice," focuses on the importance of transitions and endings in social work. Learning to understand the process of termination is presented.

The instructors do not have to cover all the knowledge, values, skills, and theories of social work practice presented in this text. Rather, faculty (with the consultation of other faculty in the program) should decide which of the intervention theories described are most important for students to learn to best serve clients in the school's geographic area.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

Content has been added on:

- The new 2015 EPAS statement of the CSWE
- Material and exercises on assessing the extent to which students are attaining the competencies and behaviors of 2015 EPAS
- Student learning objectives for each chapter and module
- Motivational interviewing
- The servant leadership approach
- New material on improving one's self-concept
- Instructions for three relaxation exercises
- Force field analysis
- Culturagrams
- Mindfulness
- Cultural humility
- New technology and social work
- Termination and next steps
- Enhanced focus on evidence-based practice

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—Sarah L. Hessenauer and Charles H. Zastrow

1

Overview of Social Work Practice

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Generalist Practice of Social Work, Twelfth Edition, is intended for social work practice courses. The focus of this book is on the theoretical and practical knowledge students need to perform the tasks of workers in entry-level positions in social work. This book is designed to be read by students preparing for, or already in, a generalist field placement. This chapter will help prepare students to:

Understand a brief history of social work
Define social work
Define generalist social work practice
Understand the roles of social workers in practice
Describe the relationship between social work and social welfare
Understand that social workers use a systems perspective
Understand the medical model and the ecological model of human behavior
Describe levels of social work practice
Understand the knowledge, skills, and values needed for social work practice

THE HISTORY OF SOCIAL WORK: A REVIEW

It is important to review material learned in introductory social work courses when thinking about generalist practice. Social work as a profession is of relatively recent origin. The first social welfare agencies appeared in urban areas in the early 1800s. These agencies, or services, were private and were developed primarily at the initiation of the clergy and religious groups. Until the early 1900s, these services were provided exclusively by individuals who had no formal training and little understanding of human behavior or of how to help people. The focus of these services was on meeting the basic

physical needs of food and shelter and on attempting to cure emotional and personal difficulties with religious admonitions.

By the latter half of the 1800s, a fairly large number of private relief agencies had been established in large cities to help the unemployed, the impoverished, those with medical diagnoses, persons identified as having physical or mental disabilities, and orphans. Their programs were uncoordinated and sometimes overlapping and so an English invention—the Charity Organization Society (COS)—soon caught the interest of a number of American cities (Cohen, 1958). In charity organization societies, private agencies joined together (1) to provide direct services to individuals and families (in this respect, they were the forerunners of social casework and of family counseling approaches) and (2) to plan and coordinate the efforts of private agencies to meet pressing urban social problems (in this respect, they were the precursors of community organization and social-planning approaches). Concurrent with the COS movement was the establishment of settlement houses in the late 1800s. Toynbee Hall was the first settlement house, established in 1884, in London; many others were soon formed in larger US cities. The workers, who tended to be from middle and upper classes, lived in poor neighborhoods to experience the harsh realities of poverty. Simultaneously, in cooperation with neighborhood residents, they sought to develop ways to improve living conditions. These agencies sought to improve housing, health, and living conditions; find jobs; teach English, hygiene, and occupational skills; and change environmental surroundings through cooperative efforts. The change techniques that settlement houses used are now called "social group work," "social action," and "community organization."

The first paid individuals in social work-type positions were the executive secretaries of COS (Dolgoff & Feldstein, 1980, pp. 233–234). In the late 1800s, COS received some contracts from the cities in which they were located to administer relief funds. To administer these programs, COS hired people as executive secretaries to organize and train their "friendly visitors" and to establish accounting procedures to show accountability for the funds received. To improve the services of friendly visitors, the executive secretaries established standards and training courses. In 1898, a training course was first offered by the New York COS. By 1904, the New York School of Philanthropy offered a 1-year program. Soon after, colleges and universities began offering training programs in social work. Initially, social work education focused on environmental reform approaches to meet social problems. Such approaches focused on changing the system to better meet people's needs. The enactment in 1935 of the Social Security Act to meet the needs of the poor and the unemployed is an example of an environmental reform approach.

Richard Cabot introduced medical social work into Massachusetts General Hospital in 1905 (Dolgoff & Feldstein, 1980, pp. 233–234). Gradually, social workers were employed in schools, courts, child guidance clinics, and other settings.

In 1917, Mary Richmond published *Social Diagnosis,* a text that presented for the first time a theory and methodology for social work. The book focused on how the worker

should intervene with individuals. The process is still used today and involves study (collecting information), diagnosis (identifying symptoms and providing a term to describe the collection of those symptoms; this is similar to the current *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* [DSM]), sharing outcomes, and treatment planning (what we refer to today as examining options of evidence-based interventions to help clients improve). This book was important because it formulated a common body of knowledge for casework.

Not until the end of World War I did social work begin to be recognized as a distinct profession. The Depression of the 1930s and enactment of the Social Security Act in 1935 brought about an extensive expansion of public social services and job opportunities for social workers. Since 1900, there has been a growing awareness by social agency boards and the public that professionally trained social workers are needed to provide social services competently. In 1955, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) was formed to represent the social work profession in this country. Its purpose is to improve social conditions and promote high-quality and effective social work practice.

Social work is one of the most important professions in our society in terms of the number of people affected, the human conditions treated, and the amount of money spent.

A DEFINITION OF SOCIAL WORK

The definition of social work has changed over time as its focus shifted from providing charity to a casework model to a multiprofessional practice model with a focus on self-determination of the client (Payne, 2007). Currently, the NASW (2020) defines *social work* as follows:

> Social work is a profession for those with a strong desire to help improve people's lives. Social workers assist people by helping them cope with issues in their everyday lives, deal with their relationships, and solve personal and family problems.
>
> Some social workers help clients who face a disability or a life-threatening disease or a social problem, such as inadequate housing, unemployment, or substance abuse. Social workers also assist families that have serious domestic conflicts, sometimes involving child or spousal abuse.
>
> Some social workers conduct research, advocate for improved services, engage in systems design, or are involved in planning or policy development. Many social workers specialize in serving a particular population or working in a specific setting.

The term "social worker" is generally applied to graduates of accredited social work educational programs (with a bachelor's or master's degree) in social work who are employed in the field of social work or social welfare.

WHAT IS THE PROFESSION OF SOCIAL WORK?

The NASW (2020) describes the social work profession as follows:

> Social work practice consists of the professional application of social work values, principles, and techniques to one or more of the following ends: helping people obtain tangible services; counseling and psychotherapy with individuals, families, and groups; helping communities or groups provide or improve social and health services; and participating in legislative processes. The practice of social work requires knowledge of human development and behavior; of social, economic, and cultural institutions; and of the interaction of all these factors.

Additionally, NASW (2020) describes the goals of the social work profession as follows:

- Social workers help individuals, families, and groups restore or enhance their capacity for social functioning and work to create societal conditions that support communities in need.
- The practice of social work requires knowledge of human development and behavior of social, economic, and cultural institutions, and of the interaction of all these factors.
- Social workers help people of all backgrounds address their own needs through psychosocial services and advocacy.
- Social workers help people overcome some of life's most difficult challenges: poverty, discrimination, abuse, addiction, physical illness, divorce, loss, unemployment, educational problems, disability, and mental illness. They help prevent crises and counsel individuals, families, and communities to cope more effectively with the stresses of everyday life.

Examples of other professional groups (Figure 1.1) who provide services within the field of social work include attorneys providing legal services to the poor; urban planners in social planning agencies; physicians in public health agencies; teachers in residential treatment facilities for those identified as having emotional and behavioral disorders; psychologists, nurses, and recreational therapists in mental health hospitals; and psychiatrists in mental health clinics. Social work is distinct from other professions (such as psychology and psychiatry) because it has the responsibility and mandate to provide social services. However, social workers do engage in interprofessional social work in which they work closely with these other professional groups to meet clients' needs.

GENERALIST SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

A social worker needs training and expertise in a wide range of areas to effectively handle problems faced by individuals, groups, families, organizations, and the larger community. Although most professions are increasingly becoming more specialized (e.g., most

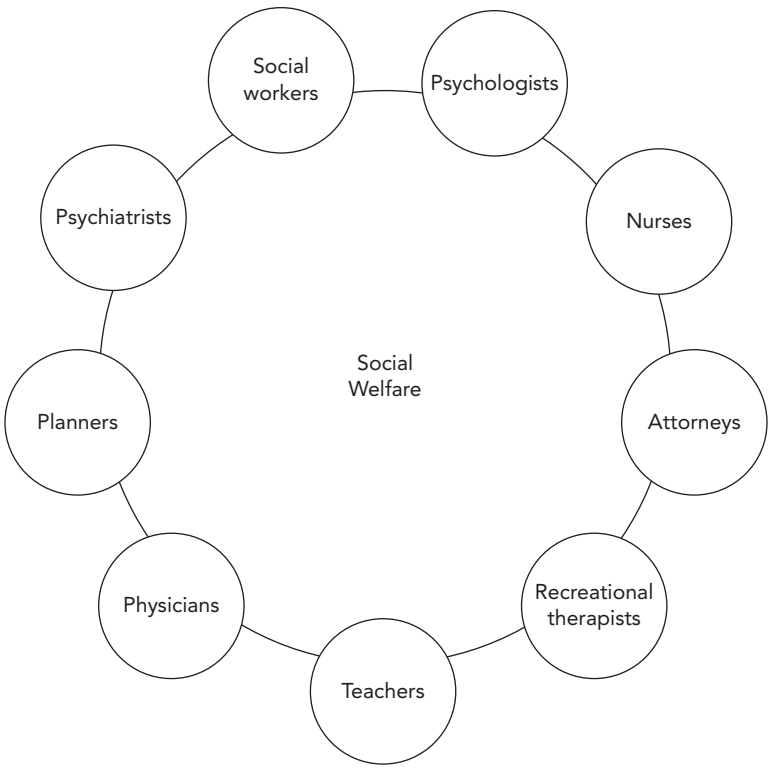

FIGURE 1.1
Examples of professional groups within the field of social welfare.

medical doctors now specialize in one or two areas), social work at the bachelor's level continues to emphasize a generalist (broad-based) approach, with a focus on adhering to evidence-based practices. According to the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE, 2015), generalist practice is described as

> grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Generalist practitioners engage diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice.

The CSWE (2015) requires specialization to occur at the master's degree level, with students building on generalist practice and developing advanced knowledge, values, and

skills to work in an area of specialization (e.g., advanced generalist, addiction, medical, children and family, veterans, clinical).

In recent years, considerable energy has been expended to increase the regulation of social workers. The goal of this regulation is to ensure those who are granted the title of social worker have demonstrated competency in the knowledge, values, and skills of the social work profession (known as *title protection*). Such a system helps assure the public that qualified personnel are providing social work services and advances the recognition of social work as a profession. Nearly every state has passed legislation to license or certify the practice of social work at the bachelor's level. Every state has licensure for master's level and clinical social workers (socialworklicensure.org).

EXERCISE 1.1: YOUR AREAS OF INTEREST IN SOCIAL WORK

Goal: This exercise is designed to help you identify the social work areas that you desire to work in.

Step 1: Rank the following five client systems that you prefer to work with (with 1 being your first choice).

____ Individuals
____ Families
____ Groups
____ Organizations
____ The larger community

Step 2: Describe the reasons for your ranking.

Step 3: Describe the areas of social work (such as services to battered spouses) that you prefer to work in. Also, specify your reasons for your selected areas.

Generalist Practice Approach

This text teaches the generalist practice approach in social work by describing a variety of assessment and intervention strategies throughout the text. Once you have learned these strategies, you can select the approaches that hold the most promise in facilitating positive changes in your clients.

In working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, social workers use a problem-solving approach. The process can be described in a variety of ways but includes these steps:

1. Identify as precisely as possible the problem or problems.
2. Generate possible alternative solutions.
3. Evaluate the alternative solutions.
4. Select a solution or solutions to be used and set goals.
5. Implement the solution.
6. Follow-up to evaluate how the solution worked.

The Case Example "Domestic Violence" highlights some of the skills that social workers need and implements the problem-solving approach (see italics).

CASE EXAMPLE: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Sherry Gulag lived in an eight-unit two-bedroom apartment building in a medium-size city. She frequently heard screaming in the next-door unit where Richard and Julie Landel lived with their 6-year-old son, Alan. The screaming between the spouses frequently went on for over an hour at a time, with Alan crying much of this time. Sherry Gulag hated to interfere in her neighbors' business, but she was fearful someone was being physically abused. Sherry could not stand it anymore, so she picked up the phone and reported what she knew to protective services at the public Social Services Department. She asked that the Landels not be told who had reported the situation. She was assured that the report would remain confidential (some state laws protect persons who report suspected child abuse or neglect by ensuring their anonymity if they desire).

Guillermo Gomez was the protective services worker assigned to the case. He visited the Landel's home the next day. All three members of the Landel family were at home. He explained to them that he had come to investigate potential child abuse. Mrs. Landel became very angry, grabbed her coat, and left the house. While leaving, she stated that it was outrageous someone was suspecting her of child abuse. Mr. Gomez examined Alan's arms, legs, neck, and face—and did not see any bruises. He also asked Alan if either parent had ever hit him. Alan stated that his dad had slapped him on "his butt" a few months ago when he did something wrong, but otherwise said his parents never hit him.

Mr. Gomez then asked Mr. Landel what was happening in the family between him and his wife. Mr. Landel gradually revealed that he had been married to Julie for the past 9 years. He indicated that their marriage was one that had a long history of marital discord (*identifying a possible problem*). Mr. Landel stated Julie has been diagnosed as bipolar 1, with a number of cycles of manic behavior and depression every month. Mr. Landel indicated that he also has been diagnosed as having bipolar 1 and has been on lithium (a mood-stabilizing medication) for the past 10 years. With both spouses reporting having frequent mood swings, Mr. Landel stated that their marriage was full of severe tension, some episodes of hitting one another, and rarely times of happiness. Mr. Landel indicated that both he and his wife love Alan and had never struck him. (Mr. Gomez was aware that Alan could be suffering emotional abuse from the marital discord, but he knew that the court system is unlikely to remove a child from a home for marital turmoil.)

Mr. Landel stated that he had tried numerous strategies to persuade his wife to enter marital counseling with him. For example, a year ago he had voluntarily admitted himself to an inpatient psychiatric hospital for depression because he was informed that part of his treatment would involve mandated couple's counseling at the hospital. However, his wife refused counseling, and Mr. Landel was then released after staying for a few days.

Mr. Landel added that occasionally there were physical confrontations with his wife. He reported she had a pattern of screaming at him and shoving him when she was upset with

him. He admitted that there were times when he shoved back at her. She then would respond by calling 911. When the police came, they usually calmed the situation, but twice the police took one of them to jail for a night because of domestic violence.

Mr. Gomez asked Mr. Landel if he had ideas about how to work on this problem. Mr. Landel said he was willing to see a counselor. Mr. Gomez referred Mr. Landel to Rachel Torrez, a counselor at the Social Services Department, to work on his marital challenges (*generating a solution*). Mr. Gomez added that he hoped Mrs. Landel would agree to join in the counseling. Mr. Landel thought that was a good idea as he reported that other solutions he had attempted in the past did not help (*generate alternative solutions*). Mr. Gomez said he would leave the protective services case "open" for the time being while Mr. and Mrs. Landel received counseling.

Mr. Landel did receive counseling for several months (*select and implement a solution*) from Ms. Torrez. Mrs. Landel refused to attend. Mr. Landel did learn some strategies to better handle conflict with his wife when he sensed a potentially violent situation might occur: one strategy was for him to leave by either taking a walk or going for a drive. After several months of little improvement in their relationship, Ms. Torrez asked Mr. Landel to complete a homework assignment of writing down a "pro-con" list as to whether it would be desirable to continue the marriage. The next week, Mr. Landel came in with his list. Practically all of his items were on the side of ending the marriage. After considerable discussion, including the possible impact of the divorce on Alan, Mr. Landel decided to retain a divorce attorney and file for divorce.

The divorce took 11 months to obtain. Mr. and Mrs. Landel had major confrontations on custody issues, visitation schedules, and dividing the finances. Mr. Landel occasionally met with Ms. Torrez during this time to vent his emotions and to problem-solve present and future issues. Ms. Torrez also referred Mr. Landel to a "Rebuilding" support group (a self-help group), which Mr. Landel found to be quite helpful because it was a group of men and women who were also going through a divorce and working on rebuilding their lives.

During this time period, Mr. Gomez occasionally kept in contact with Ms. Torrez on the progress that Mr. and Mrs. Landel were making (*follow-up to evaluate how the solution worked*). Mr. Gomez noted there were no additional child abuse complaints occurring. After the Landels obtained a divorce (and joint custody was arranged), Mr. Gomez closed the protective service case involving Alan. A few months after the divorce was granted, Mr. Landel stopped seeing Ms. Torrez. He indicated that he and Alan were now "doing better," and he thanked her and Mr. Gomez for their help.

EXERCISE 1.2: APPLYING THE PROBLEM-SOLVING APPROACH

Goal: This exercise is designed to help you understand the problem-solving approach.

Step 1: Identify a situation in your past where you faced a challenge or an issue in which you used the problem-solving approach. What was the situation?

Step 2: Specify as precisely as possible the problem or problems.

Step 3: Specify the resolution strategies that were generated by you (and perhaps by someone else).
Step 4: Specify how these resolution strategies were evaluated.
Step 5: Specify the resolution strategy that was selected to be used to seek to resolve the issue.
Step 6: Specify how the resolution strategy was implemented.
Step 7: Specify how the resolution strategy (after it was implemented) was evaluated.
Step 8: Was the outcome judged "successful/satisfactory"? If not, what was the next resolution strategy that was tried?
Step 9: What do you see as the strengths and shortcomings of the problem-solving approach?

ROLES PERFORMED BY SOCIAL WORKERS

In working with individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities, a social worker is expected to be knowledgeable and skillful in filling a variety of roles. Particular roles should (ideally) be determined by what will be most effective given the circumstances. The following list identifies some, but certainly not all, of the roles assumed by social workers.

Counselor. In this role, a worker assesses clients and helps individuals or groups articulate their needs, clarify and identify their problems, explore resolution strategies, select and apply an intervention strategy, and develop their capacities to deal with their own problems more effectively.

Broker. A broker links individuals, families, and groups who need help (and do not know where to obtain it) with community services. For example, a wife who is frequently hit by her husband, causing physical and emotional harm, might be referred to a shelter for battered women. Nowadays even moderate-size communities have 200 or 300 social service agencies/organizations providing community services. At times, human services professionals are often only partially aware of the total service network in their community.

Advocate. When a client or a citizens' group is in need of help and existing institutions are uninterested (and sometimes openly negative and hostile) in providing services, the advocate role may be appropriate. The advocate provides leadership for collecting information, arguing the correctness of the client's need and request, and challenging the institution's decision not to provide services. The object is not to ridicule or censure a particular institution but to modify or change one or more of its service policies. In this role, the social worker is a partisan who exclusively serves the interests of a client or of a citizens' group.

Case Manager. A case manager is responsible for pulling together the services required to assist individuals, families, and groups. The case manager identifies resources needed,

identifies goals, builds relationships with others involved in the client's life, and follows-up to ensure all goals are being accomplished by the client and others providing services/support.

Empowerer. A key goal of social work practice is *empowerment*, the process of helping individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities increase their personal, interpersonal, socioeconomic, and political strength and influence by improving their circumstances. Social workers who engage in empowerment-focused practice seek to develop the capacity of clients to understand their environment, make choices, take responsibility for their choices, and influence their life situations through organization and advocacy. Empowerment-focused social workers also seek to gain a more equitable distribution of resources and power among different groups in society. This focus on equity and social justice is a hallmark of the social work profession, as evidenced through early settlement workers such as Jane Addams (1959).

Activist. An activist seeks basic institutional change; often the objective involves a shift in power and resources to a disadvantaged group. An activist is concerned about social injustice, inequity, and deprivation, therefore making this a role central to all social workers. Tactics involve conflict, confrontation, and negotiation. Social action is concerned with changing the social environment to better meet the recognized needs of individuals. The methods used are assertive and action-oriented (e.g., organizing disabled clients to work toward improvements in accessing disability services). Activities of social action include fact-finding, analysis of community needs, research, dissemination and interpretation of information, organization of activities with people, and other efforts to mobilize public understanding and support on behalf of some existing or proposed social program. Social action can be geared toward a problem that is local, statewide, or national in scope.

Mediator. Mediators intervene in disputes between parties to help them find compromises, reconcile differences, and/or reach mutually satisfactory agreements. Social workers use their value orientations and unique skills in many forms of mediation between opposing parties (e.g., divorcing spouses, neighbors in conflict, landlord–tenant disputes, labor–management disputes, and child custody disputes). A mediator remains neutral, not siding with either party in the dispute. Mediators make sure they understand the positions of both parties. They clarify positions, recognize miscommunication, and help the parties present their cases clearly.

Educator. Educators give information to clients and teach them adaptive skills. To be an effective educator, the worker must first be knowledgeable. In addition, the worker must be a good communicator so that information is conveyed clearly and is readily understood by the receiver. Examples include teaching parenting skills to young parents, instructing teenagers in job-hunting strategies, and teaching anger-control techniques to individuals with difficulties in this area.

Initiator. An initiator calls attention to a problem or to a potential problem. A problem does not have to exist before attention can be called to it. For example, a proposal to renovate a low-income neighborhood by building middle-income housing units may raise the

problem of dispossessing current residents who cannot afford the cost of the new units. Because calling attention to problems usually does not resolve them, the initiator role must often be followed by other kinds of work.

Coordinator. In this role, the worker brings components together in an organized manner. For example, in the case of a multiproblem family, several agencies often work together to meet the complicated financial, emotional, legal, health, social, educational, recreational, and interactional needs of the family members. Frequently, one social worker assumes the role of case manager and coordinates services from the different agencies to avoid duplication of services and conflicting objectives.

Researcher. At times, every worker is a researcher. Research in social work practice includes researching the literature on topics of interest, evaluating the outcomes of one's practice, assessing the merits and shortcomings of programs, and studying community needs.

Group Facilitator. A group facilitator is a leader for some group experience. The group may be a counseling group, an educational group, a self-help group, a sensitivity group, a family counseling group, or a group with some other focus.

Public Speaker. Social workers occasionally talk to a variety of groups (e.g., high school classes, public service organizations such as Kiwanis, police officers, staff at other agencies) to inform them of available services or to advocate for developing new services for clients whose needs are not being met. In recent years, various new services have been identified as being needed (e.g., family preservation programs and homelessness resources for LGBTQ+ population). Social workers who have public speaking skills may be better able to explain services to groups of potential clients and also are likely to be rewarded (including financially) by their employers for their public speaking services.

EXERCISE 1.3: YOUR INTEREST IN VARIOUS SOCIAL WORK ROLES

Goal: This exercise is designed to help you identify the social work roles that you want to become involved in.

Step 1: With a checkmark, indicate your interest in each of the indicated roles.

	I want to become involved in	Uncertain	I do not want to become involved in
Counselor			
Broker			
Advocate			
Case Manager			
Empowerer			
Activist			
Mediator			
Educator			

Initiator			
Coordinator			
Researcher			
Group Facilitator			
Public Speaker			

Step 2: Describe your reasons for wanting to become involved in some roles.
Step 3: Describe your reasons for not wanting to become involved in other roles.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL WELFARE

The goal of social welfare is to fulfill the social, financial, health, and recreational requirements of all individuals in a society. Social welfare seeks to enhance the social functioning of all age groups, both rich and poor. When other institutions in our society (such as the market economy and the family) fail at times to meet the basic needs of individuals or groups of people, social services are needed and demanded. Ritter (2019) defined *social welfare* as follows:

> Our nation's complex set of programs and services to address the health, social, economic, and educational needs of its citizens. (p. 12)

Examples of social welfare programs and services are foster care, adoption, daycare, Head Start, probation and parole, public assistance programs, public health nursing, social security, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), recreational services (Boy Scouts and YWCA programs), services to persons with HIV, services to people with developmental disabilities, rehabilitation services, and many more.

Almost all social workers are employed in the social welfare field. There are, however, many other professional and occupational groups working in the field, as illustrated in Figure 1.l.

A SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE

When working with individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities, it is important for social workers to review material learned in human behavior classes. Social workers are trained to have a systems perspective in their dealings with individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities. A systems perspective takes a strength-based approach by emphasizing looking beyond the presenting problems of the client and instead assessing the complexities and interrelationships of problems.

Ecological theory is a subcategory of systems theory. Ecological theory has emerged as a prominent force in social work practice, as discussed in the next section.

THE MEDICAL MODEL VERSUS THE ECOLOGICAL MODEL OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR

The Medical Model

From the 1920s to the 1960s, most social workers used a medical model for assessing and changing human behavior. This model, initiated primarily by Sigmund Freud, views clients as *patients.* The service provider first diagnoses the causes of a patient's problems and then provides treatment. The patient's problems are viewed as being inside the patient.

The medical model has a lengthy classification of mental disorders defined by the American Psychiatric Association (and documented in the DSM).

The medical model conceptualizes emotional and behavioral problems as *mental illnesses.* People with emotional or behavioral problems are then given medical labels/diagnoses such as major depressive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, schizophrenia, intellectual disorder, and/or bipolar. Adherents of the medical approach believe an affected person's mind has some generally unknown internal condition that is thought to result from a variety of possible causative factors: genetic endowment, metabolic disorders, infectious diseases, internal conflicts, unconscious uses of defense mechanisms, and traumatic early experiences that cause emotional fixations and prevent future psychological growth.

The medical model arose in reaction to the historical notion that patients were possessed by demons, were "mad," and were to be blamed for their disturbances. These people were "treated" by being beaten, locked up, or killed. The medical model viewed clients as in need of help, stimulated research into the nature of emotional problems, and promoted the development of therapeutic approaches.

There has been criticism of the medical model and the DSM (Hogan, 2019). Critiques focused on the medical model creating stigma and being political in nature by blaming the person and not focusing on systematic changes. Barsky (2015) stated that focusing on a diagnosis puts the social worker in a position of power over the client by assuming the role of an expert. He encouraged social workers to not focus on a diagnosis, but instead provide a more holistic approach in working with clients.

The Ecological Model

In the 1960s, some social work scholars began to question the usefulness of the medical model, for concerns similar to those just listed. Environmental factors were shown to be at least as important as internal factors in causing a client's problems.

In the 1960s, social work shifted at least some of its emphasis to a *reform approach*, which seeks to change systems to benefit clients. The enactment of antipoverty programs (such as Head Start) is an example of an effort to change systems to benefit clients.

Social work has increasingly focused on an *ecological model.* This model integrates both treatment and reform by conceptualizing and emphasizing the dysfunctional transactions

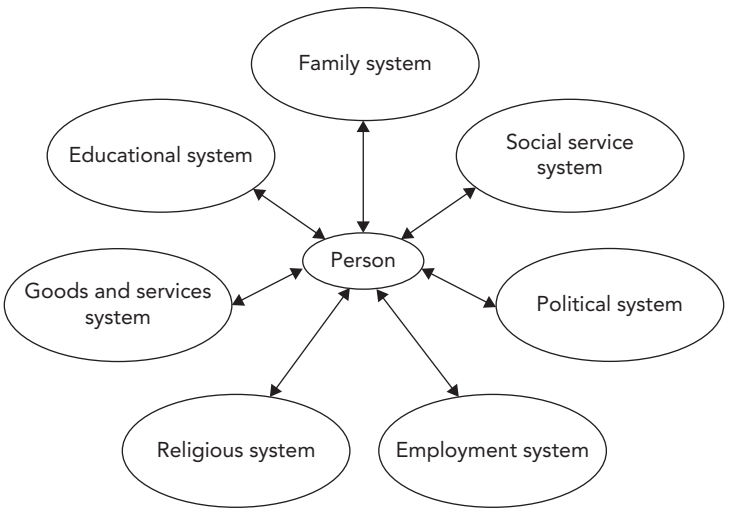

FIGURE 1.2
Person-in-environment conceptualization.

between people and their physical and social environments. Human beings are viewed as developing and adapting through transactions with all elements of their environments, also referred to as the *person-in-environment approach*. An ecological model gives attention to both internal and external factors. It does not view people as passive reactors to their environments but rather as being involved in dynamic and reciprocal interactions with them.

The ecological model also helps us to become more aware of the complexities of trauma. Trauma and the response to traumatic situations varies based on factors such as the age of onset, the number of traumatic events, economic stressors, social supports, family dynamics, community supports, cultural background, etc. (Guarino & Decandia, 2015). Harvey (1996) stated that an individual's response to trauma is impacted by the role of the larger environment, the involvement of "natural supports," and community interventions.

The ecological model tries to improve the coping patterns of people and their environments so that a better match can be attained between an individual's needs and the characteristics of his or her environment. One emphasis of the model is on the person-in-environment. The person-in-environment conceptualization is depicted in Figure 1.2.

As is evident in the figure, people interact with many systems. With this conceptualization, social work can focus on three separate areas. First, it can focus on the person and seek to develop his or her problem-solving, coping, and developmental capacities. Second, it can focus on the relationship between a person and the systems he, she, or they[1] interact with and links the person with needed resources, services, and opportunities. Third, it can focus on the systems and seek to reform them to meet the needs of the individual more effectively.

[1] The authors will be using the singular pronouns "he," "she," "they" (gender-neutral) and plural pronouns "they" and "them" interchangeably throughout the book.

The ecological model views individuals, families, and small groups as having transitional problems and needs as they move from one life stage to another. Individuals face many transitional changes as they grow older, such as learning to walk, entering first grade, adjusting to puberty, graduating from school, finding a job, getting married, having children, having children leave home, and retiring.

Families also have a life cycle, although family life cycles are not experienced in the same order or include the same events for all families. A few of the events that require adjustment are engagement, marriage, birth of children, parenting, children going to school, children leaving home, and loss of a parent (perhaps through death or divorce).

Small groups have transitional phases of development as well. Members of small groups spend time getting acquainted, gradually learn to trust one another, begin to self-disclose more, learn to work together on tasks, develop approaches to handle interpersonal conflict, and face adjustments to the group eventually terminating or some members leaving.

Organizations also have life cycle phases. These phases range from the emerging growth of a new organization to the maturity stage, when a longer existing organization may need to develop ways to renew itself in order to avoid decline (Lewis, Packard, & Lewis, 2012).

The model's central concern is to articulate the transitional problems and needs of individuals, families, and small groups. Once these problems and needs are identified, intervention approaches are then selected and applied to help individuals, families, and small groups resolve the transitional problems and meet their needs.

An ecological model can also focus on maladaptive interpersonal problems and needs in families and groups, including communication processes and dysfunctional relationship patterns. These difficulties cover an array of areas, including interpersonal conflicts, power struggles, double binds, distortions in communicating, scapegoating, and discrimination. The consequences of such difficulties are usually maladaptive for some members. An ecological model seeks to identify such interpersonal obstacles and then apply appropriate intervention strategies. For example, a family may have adapted poor communication skills. An appropriate intervention is to help the family find ways to open up communication patterns and help each family member understand that, if they really want stronger communication, they need to learn to be more willing to listen to each other and hear each other's thoughts.

Our society continues to grow in complexity. There are increasingly more systems that individuals interact with, both in person and via technology. Today, a person's life and quality of life are interwoven with and interdependent on many systems, as shown in Figure 1.2.

The ecological model "opens up many more doors" of intervening with clients, in contrast to the medical model. With the medical model, the problems faced by clients are viewed as being inside the clients, which limits the interventions to be focused on clients making changes to improve themselves. With the ecological model, interventions can focus not only on clients making changes to improve their well-being, but also on (a) linking clients to systems and resources which will improve their lives, (b) changing ineffective systems and resources to better serve clients, and (c) changing broader social

policies to better serve clients (e.g., establishing a universal healthcare system to meet the medical needs of all residents in a country).

EXERCISE 1.4: UNDERSTANDING THE MEDICAL MODEL AND THE ECOLOGICAL MODEL

Goal: This exercise is designed to help you understand the medical model and the ecological model.

In understanding why people become involved in dysfunctional behavior (such as not eating, committing a crime, or turning to violence), which model (the medical model or the ecological model) do you believe is more useful? State the reasons for your choice.

MICRO, MEZZO, AND MACRO LEVELS OF PRACTICE

Social workers practice at three levels: (1) *micro*, working on a one-to-one basis with an individual; (2) *mezzo*, working with families and other small groups; and (3) *macro,* working with organizations and communities or seeking changes in statutes and social policies.

The specific activities performed by workers include but are not limited to the following categories.

Social Casework: Micro

Aimed at helping individuals on a one-to-one basis to meet personal and social problems, casework may be geared to helping the client adjust to his or her environment or to changing certain social and economic pressures that adversely affect an individual. Social casework services are provided by nearly every social welfare agency that provides direct services to people. *Social casework* encompasses a wide variety of activities, such as providing resources to runaway youths, helping a person who has become unemployed to secure training or employment, providing crisis counseling to someone who is suicidal, securing an adoptive or foster home for an unaccompanied child, providing protective services to children who have been abused and providing education to their families, referring families to day services for individuals who were identified as having a stroke and who no longer need to be hospitalized, supporting individuals who report they are in recovery from a drinking problem, being a probation and parole officer, providing education and services to single parents, and working in medical and psychiatric hospitals as a member of a rehabilitation team.

Case Management: Micro

Many social service agencies use job titles such as *social workers, case managers, patient navigators, care coordinators*, etc. The tasks performed by these individuals in case

manager roles are similar to those of caseworkers. Job descriptions vary from service area to service area but generally include managing client's needs through the development of a treatment plan, supporting the client directly, coordinating care with other agencies, referring clients to resources, and ensuring everyone involved with the client fulfills their responsibilities in the care of the client. For example, case managers in a juvenile probation setting supervise clients, provide some counseling, monitor clients to make certain they are following the rules of probation, link clients and their families with needed services, prepare court reports, and testify in court. Case managers at a sheltered workshop are likely to provide job training, arrange transportation, teach appropriate social skills to clients, act as an advocate, and act as liaison with the people who supervise clients during their non-work hours (which may be at a group home, foster home, residential treatment facility, or their parents' home).

Group Work: Mezzo

The intellectual, emotional, and social development of individuals may be furthered through group activities. In contrast to casework or group counseling, *group work* is not primarily therapeutic, except in a broad sense. Different groups have different objectives, such as socialization, information exchange, completing tasks, providing support, recreation, changing socially unacceptable values, and helping achieve better relations between cultural and racial groups. For example, through group activities, a group worker at a neighborhood center may seek to mentor youth and provide resources for obtaining a job, or a worker at an adoption agency may meet with a group of applicants to explain adoption procedures and help applicants prepare to become adoptive parents. Activities and focuses of groups vary: arts and crafts, dancing, games, dramatics, music, photography, sports, nature study, woodwork, first aid, home management, information exchange, and discussion of such topics as politics, relationships, coping skills, religion, and selecting a career.

Group Counseling: Mezzo

Group counseling is aimed at facilitating the social, behavioral, and emotional adjustment of individuals through the group process. Participants in group counseling usually have emotional, interactional, or behavioral difficulties. Social workers at the bachelor's level tend to run educational or support groups, whereas master's-level social workers may be trained to facilitate psychotherapy groups. Group counseling has several advantages over one-to-one counseling, such as the operation of the *helper therapy principle*, which maintains that it is therapeutic for the helper (who can be any member of a group) to feel they have been helpful to others. In contrast to one-to-one counseling, group pressure is often more effective in changing individuals' maladaptive behavior, and group counseling is a time-saver because it enables the group facilitator to treat several people simultaneously. For example, group counseling might be useful for individuals who report lacking tools to deal with their depression, are having consequences related to drinking or drug use, are rape survivors, have a relative who is terminally ill, need support related to being a single parent, are recently divorced, or are diagnosed with an eating disorder.

Family Counseling: Mezzo

A type of group counseling aimed at helping families with interactional, behavioral, and emotional problems, *family counseling* can be used with parent–child interaction problems, marital conflicts, and conflicts with grandparents. A wide variety of problems are dealt with in family treatment or family counseling, such as communication problems and disagreements between parents and youths on choice of friends, drinking and other drug use, domestic tasks, curfew hours, sexual values and behavior, study habits and grades received, and choice of dates.

Community Organization: Macro

The aim of *community organization* is stimulating and assisting the local community to evaluate, plan, and coordinate efforts to provide for the community's health, welfare, and recreation needs. Although it is not possible to define precisely the activities of a community organizer, they often include encouraging and fostering citizen participation, coordinating efforts between agencies or groups, public relations and public education, research, planning, and being a resource person. A community organizer acts as a catalyst in stimulating and encouraging community action. Such specialists are apt to be employed in community welfare councils, social planning agencies, health-planning councils, and community action agencies.

The CSWE Macro Specialization Curricular Guide (2018) defined community organization thus:

> Social workers in community practice educate, engage, and mobilize community constituents and stakeholders to address community-identified needs and issues. In mobilizing community constituencies and stakeholders, these social workers help to foster collective power that can be used to engage or persuade external stakeholders and decision-makers to address community needs and issues and to organize grassroots community members and stakeholders to sustain a mobilized community constituency toward its goals.

Policy Analysis: Macro

Policy analysis involves systematic evaluation of a policy and the process by which it was formulated. Those who conduct such an analysis consider whether the process and results were clear, equitable, legal, rational, compatible with social values, superior to other alternatives, cost-effective, and explicit. Such an analysis frequently identifies shortcomings in the policy. Those conducting the policy analysis then usually recommend modifications to the policy that are designed to alleviate these shortcomings.

Administration: Macro

Administration involves directing the overall program of a social service agency. Administrative functions include setting agency program objectives, analyzing social conditions in the community, making decisions about what services will be

provided, employing and supervising staff members, setting up an organizational structure, administering financial affairs, and securing funds for the agency's operations. Administration also involves setting organizational goals, coordinating activities to achieve the selected goals, and monitoring and making necessary changes in processes and structure to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of processes that contribute to transforming social policy into social services. In social work, the term "administration" is often used synonymously with "management." In a small agency, one person may carry out administrative functions, whereas several people may be involved in administrative affairs in a larger agency.

EXERCISE 1.5: IDENTIFYING YOUR INTEREST IN VARIOUS SOCIAL WORK ACTIVITIES

Goal: This exercise is designed to help you reflect on the kinds of activities you want to engage in as a social worker.

Step 1: Use a checkmark to indicate your interest in engaging in the following social work activities.

	Highly Interested	Somewhat Interested	Uncertain	Somewhat Disinterested	Not Interested
1. Social Casework					
2. Case Management					
3. Group Work					
4. Group Counseling					
5. Family Counseling					
6. Community Organization					
7. Policy Analysis					
8. Administration					

Step 2: For the activities that you checked "Highly Interested," state the reasons for these selections.

Step 3: For the activities that you checked "Somewhat Disinterested" or "Not Interested," state your reasons for these selections.

Other areas of professional activity in social work include research, consulting, supervising, planning, program development, policy development, and higher education (requiring an MSW or DSW/PhD). Social casework, case management, group work, support, and community practice constitute the primary professional activities that beginning-level social workers are likely to provide. Caseworkers, case managers, group workers, group counselors, and family counselors need to develop interviewing, assessment, intervention, and evaluation skills. Community organizers need to be perceptive, and they need skills in relating to other people in assessing problems and developing resolution strategies. Caseworkers also need to be able to construct social histories and

link clients with other human services. Some agencies require skills in public speaking, preparing and presenting reports to courts and other agencies, and teaching parents better parenting techniques. Research capacities to evaluate one's own practice and other programs are also important. The essential skills needed for social work practice are further described in the next section. As you will see, generalist social workers are expected to have an extensive knowledge base and numerous skills and to adhere to a well-defined set of professional social work values.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND VALUES NEEDED FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

In the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), the CSWE (2015) identified knowledge, skills, values, and cognitive and affective processes that accredited baccalaureate and master's degree programs are mandated to convey to social work students. EPAS is based on a competency approach. The following material is reprinted with permission from the CSWE (2015); the mandated EPAS content that BSW and MSW programs are required to provide to students is summarized in nine competencies.

SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCIES

The nine social work competencies are listed here. Programs may add competencies that are consistent with their mission and goals and respond to their context. Each competency describes the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that comprise the competency at the generalist level of practice, followed by a set of behaviors that integrate these components. These behaviors represent observable components of the competencies, while the preceding statements represent the underlying content and processes that inform the behaviors.

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession's history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in interprofessional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and

effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers

- make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, rules for ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
- use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power. Social workers

- apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
- present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and
- apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

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

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, healthcare, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural

barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected. Social workers

- apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and
- engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multidisciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice. Social workers

- use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;
- apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and
- use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

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

- identify social policy at the local, state, and federal levels that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;
- assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;
- apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

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

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may influence their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and interprofessional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate. Social workers

- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

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

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and value the importance of interprofessional collaboration in this process. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment and decision-making. Social workers

- collect and organize data and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;

- develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and
- select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

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

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers value the importance of interprofessional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, interprofessional, and interorganizational collaboration. Social workers

- critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance the capacities of client and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;
- use interprofessional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;
- negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and
- facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

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

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

- select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;
- critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and
- apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

TEXT OBJECTIVES

This text uses an integrative approach to present prominent methods in social work practice. Thus, the key objectives of this text are as follows:

- Provide content on social work practice, social work values and ethics, diversity, human rights, and promotion of social and economic justice that is consistent with the EPAS.
- Prepare students for generalist social work practice by informing them of contemporary assessment and intervention strategies.
- Develop students' interviewing skills and capacities so they can intervene effectively with individuals, families, and groups.
- Develop students' macro practice skills and capacities in intervening with organizations and communities.
- Help students develop a philosophical value orientation that is consistent with social work practice.
- Develop students' capacities to function effectively in a variety of social work roles, including counselor, empowerer, broker, case manager, advocate, activist, mediator, educator, initiator, coordinator, researcher, and group facilitator.
- Foster in students an awareness, understanding, and appreciation of how to intervene effectively with people of diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, social, and class backgrounds.
- Expand students' capacities to evaluate and modify human service programs and systems to make human services more equitable, humane, and responsive to consumers.
- Foster philosophical conceptual skills so that graduates can critically evaluate and further develop their own practice capacities throughout life.
- Help students develop a positive sense of self and an awareness and appreciation of the importance of continuing to evaluate their professional skills and professional growth.
- Inform students of the prominent theories of counseling that are used by social workers.

WHICH INTERVENTION STRATEGIES SHOULD SOCIAL WORKERS LEARN?

Literally hundreds of intervention approaches have been developed at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice. A partial list of available techniques that can be used at the micro and mezzo levels of practice appears in Exhibit 1.1.

It is impossible for social workers to have an effective, in-depth working knowledge of all of the different intervention approaches. What social workers can do, however, is to continue to learn additional approaches throughout their careers and learn to apply the approaches they already use more effectively. Social work agencies encourage this continual learning by offering in-service training and workshops, sending workers to conferences, and encouraging workers to take additional college courses in the helping professions.

Workers should continue to learn a wide variety of intervention approaches so they can select from their "toolbox" the approach that is likely to be most effective (given each client's unique set of problems and circumstances). Workers soon become aware that their own personalities also partially determine which intervention approaches they are most comfortable with and effective in applying.

Because there are so many intervention techniques (as suggested in Exhibit 1.1), students may be bewildered about which intervention approaches to learn. It is therefore crucial that faculty guide students by (1) making carefully thought out decisions, as a group, regarding the intervention theories that are most useful for students in their geographic area to learn; (2) giving an overview so that students are familiar with a wide number of theories; and (3) conveying material on each theory's merits and shortcomings, including research on the effectiveness of each intervention. Later chapters in this text summarize many of the intervention approaches listed in Exhibit 1.1. The instructor of this course, along with the other social work faculty members, should decide which intervention approaches to cover in this class.

Once you graduate and obtain employment, your work setting will be a deciding factor in which intervention approaches you should use. If you are working with shy or aggressive people, assertiveness training may be appropriate. Alcoholics Anonymous may be appropriate for people in recovery from an identified substance use disorder, cognitive therapy for people who need to examine their thoughts related to depression, in vivo desensitization for people who have phobias, and so on (see the Appendix for a description of these approaches).

A competent social worker generally has a working knowledge of a variety of intervention approaches. In working with clients, the worker should focus on selecting effective intervention approaches that help clients solve their problems rather than trying to redefine the problems in terms of the worker's favorite intervention approach (see the material on evidence-based practice in Chapter 11).

EXHIBIT 1.1

PARTIAL LIST OF INTERVENTION THERAPIES AT THE MICRO AND MEZZO LEVELS

Adlerian therapy
Analytical therapy
Assertiveness training
Aversive techniques
Behavior modification
Biofeedback
Client-centered therapy
Cognitive approaches
Contingency contracting
Crisis intervention
Deep breathing relaxation
Dialectical behavioral therapy
Ego psychology approaches
Encounter groups
Evidence-based
Existential therapy
Feminist intervention
General systems approaches
Imagery relaxation
In vivo desensitization
Meditation
Mindfulness
Muscle relaxation
Neuro-linguistic programming
Psychoanalysis
Psychodrama
Reality therapy
Role theory approaches
Self-hypnosis
Solution-focused therapy
Systematic desensitization
Task-centered therapy
Thought stopping
Time management
Trauma-informed

SUMMARY

The following paragraphs summarize the chapter's content in terms of the learning objectives presented at the beginning of the chapter.

1. *Understand a brief history of social work.* Social work as a profession is of relatively recent origin. The first paid social workers were COS executive secretaries in the late 1800s. Colleges and universities began to offer training programs in social work in the early 1900s.
2. *Define social work.* Social work is a profession for those with a strong desire to help improve people's lives. Social workers assist people by helping them cope with issues in their everyday lives, deal with their relationships, and solve personal and family problems.

   The term "social worker" is generally applied to graduates of bachelor's- or master's-level social work programs who are employed in the field of social welfare. A social worker is a change agent who is skilled at working with individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities.
3. *Define generalist social work practice*. The EPAS (CSWE, 2015) defines generalist practice as "grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Generalist practitioners engage diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice."
4. *Understand the roles of social workers in practice*. Some but certainly not all of the roles assumed by social workers include broker, advocate, case manager, empowerer, activist, mediator, educator, initiator, coordinator, researcher, group facilitator, and public speaker.
5. *Describe the relationship between social work and social welfare*. The goal of social welfare is to fulfill the social, financial, health, and recreational requirements of all individuals in a society. "Social welfare" describes a broader term than "social work." Social workers are one of several professionals employed in social welfare; other professionals include psychiatrists, psychologists, and guidance counselors.

   The profession of social work is distinct from other helping professions because it has the responsibility and mandate to provide social services, and it uses the person-in-environment concept.
6. *Understand that social workers use a systems perspective*. Social workers are trained to have a systems perspective in their dealings with individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities. A systems perspective emphasizes looking beyond the presenting problems of the client to assess the complexities and interrelationships of

problems. Ecological theory is a subcategory of systems theory. Ecological theory has emerged as a prominent force in social work practice.

7. *Understand the medical model and the ecological model of human behavior*.

   The medical model generally views clients as "patients." The patient's problems are generally viewed as being inside the patient. The ecological model has a person-in-environment conceptualization. This model integrates both the treatment approach and the reform approach by conceptualizing and emphasizing the dysfunctional transactions between people and their physical and social environments.

8. *Understand the knowledge, skills, and values needed for social work practice*. In the EPAS, the CSWE (2015) identified knowledge, skills, and values that accredited baccalaureate and master's degree programs are mandated to convey to social work students. This material is reprinted in this chapter.

9. *Explore social work interventions*. Literally hundreds of intervention approaches have been developed for social work practice. It is impossible for any social worker to have an effective working knowledge of all of these theories. Educational programs have an obligation to provide social work students with an overview of the commonly used theories and convey information on the merits and shortcomings of these approaches. Social workers have an obligation to continue throughout their careers to learn a variety of intervention approaches. In working with clients, a worker should focus on selecting the most effective intervention approaches for solving clients' problems (reflecting on the person-in-environment approach) rather than redefining clients' problems to fit the worker's favorite intervention approach.

EXERCISES

EXERCISE 1.6: BREAKING THE ICE

Goal: To get acquainted and to reduce anxiety.

Step 1: Starting a new class can be exciting and anxiety-producing for both students and instructors. Brainstorm what you would like to know about other members of the class. Examples might include marital status, hometown, work or volunteer experience in social work, and most unforgettable experience. List these questions.

Step 2: Answer the questions developed in Step 1.

Step 3: Ask your instructor questions that you may have about her or his educational background and professional experiences.

Step 4: (Optional) In pairs, share an experience that has had a profound effect on your life. Listeners should be encouraged to ask questions to seek clarification. After each person has had a chance to speak, the class reforms to report on what students have learned about their partners.

Step 5: (Additional option) Ask each student to share "what is something surprising that we do not know about you?"

EXERCISE 1.7: SEARCHING FOR DESCRIPTORS

Goal: To facilitate student interaction and establish a positive class atmosphere.

Step 1: A list of descriptors is distributed to the class. (A *descriptor* is a word or phrase that identifies an item.) Some possibilities are listed here.

Step 2: Each student finds one student (or two or three students in large classes) who says "yes" to having specific descriptors. (Each student can be listed only once on the sheet by each "searcher.")

Step 3: After several minutes, the instructor indicates time is up. The instructor then reads each descriptor and asks for the names of those who were listed by at least one "searcher."

Step 4: The instructor ends the exercise by finding out who has the largest list and then giving a small prize (such as a nutritious candy bar) to the winner.

SAMPLE DESCRIPTORS

Plays golf
Likes classical music
Is a fan of the Dallas Cowboys
Has had a paid or volunteer job in social work
Was born west of the Mississippi River
Has traveled in Mexico
Has traveled in Europe
Is married
Likes to jog
Has never flown in an airplane
Has meditated
Has water-skied
Has traveled in Canada
Enjoys fishing
Attends church regularly
Has received a speeding ticket
Has visited or lived on a reservation

2

Surviving and Enjoying Social Work

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

One of the most important topics in the field of social work at this time is the topic of self-care. As you progress through this course and your future in social work, self-care needs to remain a priority. It is important for everyone entering the field of social work to start to develop self-care strategies that will better enable them to survive and thrive in the profession. To be of help to others, helping professionals must first take care of themselves. Good emotional and physical health are internal resources that helping professionals need if they are to help others. In this chapter, we focus on how to survive and enjoy a career in social work. This chapter will help prepare students to:

Understand common concerns of students related to majoring in social work
Describe burnout, compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma, and secondary trauma
Describe stress and share stress management techniques
Comprehend strategies for enjoying social work and your life

STUDENTS' COMMON CONCERNS

One of the surprises we found teaching social work students is that although they have a number of common concerns, they believe their concerns are so unique that they are reluctant to share and discuss them with others. In this section, we examine a number of these concerns and offer some suggestions for resolving them.

Do I Really Want a Career in Social Work?

At this point in your education, many of you have chosen social work as your major or degree. Despite this, you still may have some unaddressed concerns. Related concerns

include the following: Do I have capacities to be a competent social worker? What area of social work (e.g., homelessness, corrections, aging, mental health) should I pursue? Will a career in social work pay me enough money to live the way I want to live? (See Exhibit 2.1.) What do I really want to do with my life? What will my parents, friends, and relatives think of me if I become a social worker? Is there a profession or vocation that I would find more enjoyable and gratifying?

Only you can answer most of these questions. As far as the money question goes, faculty members in your social work department will be able to tell you about average starting salaries in your area for graduates of baccalaureate and master's programs in social

EXHIBIT 2.1

HOW MUCH DO SOCIAL WORKERS MAKE?

Social work, as most everyone knows, is not one of the highest paying professions financially. What do social workers really make?

They help a homeless teenager find a focus in school and in his life. They help an infertile couple who yearn to be parents find children to adopt. They empower and provide case management services to a recently arrived Hmong refugee family living in poverty to learn English, receive job-training services, connect with necessary medical and dental care, and find housing. They also assist parents in seeking employment resources that will allow the family to escape from poverty. They find a quality day-treatment program for a young adult diagnosed on the autism spectrum and connect him with other social workers who provide job coaching at a fast-food restaurant until he learns how to do the tasks that are assigned.

They coordinate sexual assault services for a rape victim and thereby help her put her life back together. They lead diversion programs for first-time offenders for shoplifting (and similar offenses) that provide restitution to the victims and deter these offenders from committing future crimes.

They provide hospice services to a terminally ill male cancer patient, thereby relieving the pain associated with the disease and helping him make the most of his remaining days; they also provide services to his family members to help them through this difficult time—and then provide bereavement services to the family members after the patient dies.

They help organizations to recognize institutional patterns of racism and then make changes to reach out to better serve people of color. They serve as a catalyst in a deteriorating community to form a grassroots organization to improve the neighborhood. They support communities in rebuilding after a crisis occurs.

What do social workers make? They are paid to help other people—that's something most people would be inclined to do anyway. They make more than most people will ever make. They make a difference.

work. Starting salaries vary considerably in different regions and different positions. Pay increases are largely determined by you—your skills, your efforts to obtain advanced degrees, and your efforts to seek administrative and supervisory positions that generally pay more than direct services positions. Skills at grant writing, consultation, public speaking, and developing new programs also are often financially rewarded.

How do you determine whether social work is the right career for you and, if so, which area of social work to pursue? Only you can decide. Here are some suggestions that may help you.

1. *Relax*. Don't be in a hurry to make a final career decision. Some social work students think they have to make such decisions within a few weeks. Thinking about the pros and cons makes them so anxious they can't make any decision. In one sense, you've got the rest of your life to make career decisions. Today people routinely start new careers in their 40s, 50s, 60s, and even 70s.
2. *Try a trial-and-error approach*. If you find one area of social work unsatisfying, try another. Skills learned in one area won't be wasted. You may find one area fulfilling for a while, but then find you need new challenges. You can take refresher or continuing education courses or attend workshops to polish your skills and learn new techniques and revised procedures. We have students in our undergraduate courses in their 40s, 50s, and 60s who are just now pursuing a career in social work. Do not think that this is your *final* career decision. Times change, agencies change, our interests and values change, and—yes, our careers change, too.

Do not idly sit back and wait for some unknown force to decide your career path for you. You are in the driver's seat. It is up to you to decide on the *first* destination of your journey and then to drive yourself there.

EXERCISE 2.1: MY CONCERNS ABOUT MAJORING IN SOCIAL WORK

Goal: This exercise is designed to have you identify your concerns about majoring in social work and to problem-solve these concerns.

Step 1: Specify your concerns about majoring in social work.

Step 2: Are your concerns consistent or inconsistent with the "common concerns" of other students?

____ Consistent ____ Inconsistent ____ Uncertain

Explain your view.

Step 3: If you have concerns that are not mentioned in this chapter, specify your plans for problem-solving those concerns.

Will I Conduct a Satisfactory Interview with My First Client?

Concerns that relate to this question include the following: How will I know what to say? How will I keep the conversation going? If I say the wrong thing, will it negatively affect

the client? How will I introduce myself? Will clients discover that I am only a student and therefore feel they are not in capable hands? What if I become tongue-tied and am unable to say anything? Am I ready to assume the awesome responsibility of helping others? I have some unresolved personal problems—how can I possibly help others?

Before seeing their first client, some students become so concerned that they cannot sleep the night before; others develop tension headaches. A few students have told us they couldn't eat. It happens. If you have severe reactions, you are not alone. Just remember, it is highly unlikely that you will be unsuccessful during your first interview. Even the most anxious students report that, once the interview began, they relaxed and the interview went fairly well.

Here are suggestions for reducing your concerns.

1. Role-play simulated counseling situations, ideally playing the roles of both social worker and client. Volunteer to participate in role-plays in all of your social work classes. Recording and then reviewing the recording is particularly helpful. Such role-playing will give you practice in assessing, interviewing, and intervening.
2. To prepare for the interview, identify your objectives, and think about the kinds of questions that you will need to ask to accomplish them. The goal of this book is to help prepare you to begin and end interviews, to learn how to build relationships with clients, and to assist you in learning how to begin to explore identified problems with clients.
3. Clients are much less fragile than beginning social workers believe they are. If you fail to cover something, you can probably ask about it at some future interview. If you fail to phrase a question properly, you will not destroy the client's life. No one has that kind of power. You may need to rephrase the question or apologize to the client for any mistakes made (if appropriate).
4. If you are in your internship or agency of employment, review the interview with your agency supervisor (or your faculty supervisor) to identify which aspects you did well and which ones you need to improve. Do not expect perfection—in your first interview or in *any* interview. You *will* make mistakes; everyone does. Remember, the main purpose of field placement is *training*—helping you test and further develop your social work skills and techniques. Therefore, the agency staff expect you to make mistakes. The students who generally do best in placement are those who readily seek to apply the theoretical material they have learned about social work practice because this facilitates the development of their social work skills. It is a serious mistake to "just watch" in field placement for fear of making mistakes. Get out there and try new things. Show agencies that you have the initiative to practice all your new skills.
5. If you have specific questions before the first interview, ask your agency supervisor. Perhaps you are wondering whether you should inform the client that you are a student. Different agencies handle this question differently. Your agency supervisor wants to hear your questions and concerns. Only by hearing your questions can your agency supervisor determine "where you are" and how to be most helpful to you. Agency supervisors were once in training themselves. They are fully aware of

the pressures and anxieties of being in field placement and are committed to helping you. Many have told me that the questions students ask frequently bring a fresh, new perspective to their practice, which leads them to make improvements in their counseling and interviewing approaches.

Will I Ever Be Able to Interview As Well As My Supervisor?

When student interns observe the interviewing and counseling skills of their agency or faculty supervisor, many become disheartened because they realize their skills are not as highly developed. They tend to "awfulize" and erroneously conclude they never will do well at interviewing and counseling. *Of course* your skills are not as good as your supervisor's skills; you haven't had the practice experience in the field! You *will* get better. Be patient, observe carefully, and do not think negatively!

How Do I Separate the Roles of Social Worker and Friend?

Students generally have a small caseload in field placement, which allows them to spend considerable time with clients. It is not uncommon for clients to want to become friends with their worker because sharing personal concerns can foster an attachment. Questions that students in field placement frequently ask have included, "Is this client beginning to see me as someone he wants to get socially involved with, and how do I handle this?" "This client has invited me to her home: should I go?" "This client has suggested we have a cup of coffee (or dinner) together: should I go?"

The National Association of Social Work (NASW) Code of Ethics states that social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships with clients (NASW, 2017). Most agencies have their own policies regarding social relationships with clients. Some relationships cannot be avoided: maybe the client attends your church or your daughters go to the same school together.

How, then, should counselors decide whether to accept social invitations or remain in social situations with clients? How can social workers turn down these requests? The guideline is simple. You need to discuss the specific situation with your supervisor and refer to agency policy. Additionally, you can always refer to the NASW Code of Ethics. It is useful for beginning workers to understand the essential difference between friendship with a client and a professional relationship. Friendship is for *both* of you to *give* and *receive*; a professional relationship involves the helping person *giving* and the client *receiving*. Experienced counselors become more perceptive in determining the intents behind invitations from clients and more skillful in conveying the boundaries of the professional relationship.

How Do I Avoid Becoming Too Emotionally Involved?

At one time or another, every social worker becomes overly emotionally involved in a case. Some students report having dreams about their clients, wanting to give their clients money, or wanting to add clients on social media.

Social workers who are too emotionally involved may have a reduced capacity to help clients discuss their problems and explore alternative solutions objectively with clients. Several types of irrational thinking lead to overinvolvement.

Beginning social workers are much more likely than experienced counselors to become overly involved. With experience, social workers increasingly learn that clients own their problems, that clients are the primary problem-solvers, and that to be of optimal assistance, social workers need to remain objective rather than exaggerating the consequences of resolution approaches that don't work out. (The main reason counselors are less successful in counseling close friends and relatives is because they are too involved to be objective.)

What should you do when you feel emotionally involved in a case (e.g., taking it home with you by thinking about it for several hours)? Here are three possible strategies:

1. *Discuss the case with others, particularly your supervisor*. Supervisors or colleagues are often able to offer suggestions on alternatives and may be able to suggest ways to become more objective and less emotionally involved.
2. *Complete a self-analysis of your unwanted emotions about a case*. What negative thoughts were you having? Were those thoughts rational or irrational? This will help you identify your irrational thinking so that you can counter it with rational self-challenges (see Appendix).
3. *Seriously consider transferring the case to another worker if your involvement is simply too intense*. It is irrational to expect to be able to handle all cases optimally. You will handle some cases better than your fellow workers, and they will handle other cases better than you.

Develop an Identity

What kind of person are you? What do you want out of life? What kind of person do you want to be? These questions are among the most important ones you will ever face. Without answers, you are not prepared to make major life decisions. Unfortunately, many people muddle through life never contemplating these questions. Those who do not have a clue about these questions may find themselves depressed, indecisive, anxious, and unfulfilled.

Identity Development

Identity is our sense of who we are—knowledge and a feeling of the ways in which we are separate, distinct persons. Identity development is a life-long process, and our identity changes throughout our lifetime. During the early years, our sense of who we are is largely determined by the reactions of others. A long time ago, Cooley (1902) suggested that this labeling process results in the *looking glass self*: that is, people experience their self-concept through their perceptions of how others relate to them. For example, if a child is repeatedly not called upon by teachers to answer questions, the child might think it is because she is not smart enough to know the answers to questions. One result of this is that she