



Introduction to
**SOCIAL
WORK**
THIRD EDITION

An
Advocacy-
Based
Profession

Lisa E. Cox
Carolyn J. Tice
Dennis D. Long



Introduction to Social Work

Third Edition

With gratitude and love to mon meilleur ami, Jacques; my mother, Joyce; and my new great nephew, Beckham Aaron Trout.

—LEC

In loving memory of my parents, Jeanne C. Tice and George Tice, Sr., and in celebration of the birth of my great nephew, Colin Christopher Tice.

—CJT

With love to Hunter, Joanna, Griffin, and Kennedy—as you continue to be the sparkle in Papa's eyes.

—DDL

Introduction to Social Work

An Advocacy-Based Profession

Third Edition

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PREFACE

The completion of this third edition of our book occurred primarily during the COVID-19 pandemic and a time of renewed and heightened awareness of racial discrimination and oppression. Throughout our writing, we recognized the anxiety, fear, and sadness experienced across our nation and the world in numerous ways and on multiple levels. Perhaps more than ever, we valued our family members, friendships, and the support we received from our professional relationships.

The SAGE publishing team deserves special recognition for our book. They were exceedingly patient with us in terms of writing deadlines and the adoption of a new publishing platform. More than ever before, we recognized that successful writing partnerships are built on trust, honesty, and commitment. We are indeed fortunate that those essential elements have culminated in lasting and respectful friendships, as well as to dedication to a profession that is integral to our lives and champions the well-being of people across the globe.

OUR IMPETUS FOR WRITING THIS BOOK

The third edition of *Introduction to Social Work* is a timely new text for adoption in introductory social work courses. Our book reflects the profession's historical roots of advocacy for human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice. Our practice, policy, and community involvement with social service agencies indicates that many social workers have been urging and are taking a much more active approach in client and community-based advocacy. Throughout our book, advocacy is described at a clinical/client level and also at organizational, community, national, and international levels. This perspective was relevant in previous years and even more so now as we move through a pandemic and rekindle efforts to contest institutional and systemic discrimination. We encourage readers to critically consider the connections between the needs of individuals and those of society by linking direct practice to policy development. Engaging in such critical and analytical thinking integrates micro and macro practice into a holistic perspective of practice underpinned by advocacy to ensure human needs and rights.

Introduction to Social Work: An Advocacy-Based Profession continues to use a dynamic advocacy framework to understand the historical development of social work, important figures influencing social work history, multiple practice settings, types of practice performed, and policy development. The advocacy practice and policy model composed of four interlocking components—economic and social justice, supportive environment, human needs and rights, and political access—provides a lens for viewing and analyzing social issues of the day. Additionally, the model focuses on human diversity, cultural competence and humility, and intersections of diversity.

Throughout the book, relevant information is provided regarding professional use of self and contemporary applications to practice settings to adapt to a changing digital workplace and world. These applications view social workers as professional practitioners and client and community advocates, thereby offering a clear alternative to the perspectives of competing books. Features such as Time to Think, Spotlight on Advocacy, and Current Trends boxes provide

examples of social work's dynamic force and contribution to confronting complicated life situations at the individual, group, local, state, national, and international levels. Vignettes appear across all chapters and are modeled after real-life situations faced by professional social workers. Perhaps more important, the book's features prompt readers to pause, reflect, and consider their opinions, perspectives, reactions, and strategies related to events often far from their own reality. Our book encourages readers to stretch and think beyond, to connect the dots, and to critically analyze issues, beliefs, concepts, and environments. These aspects of cognitive discourse set our book apart from other introductory textbooks.

In creating the third edition of our book, we gave special attention to feedback from readers and reviewers of our previous two editions. These noteworthy changes are included in this third edition:

- Areas for advocacy in social work shift over time. With the 2016 election of President Donald J. Trump, Vice President Michael Pence, and a Republican Senate and House of Representatives, contemporary topics involving social work advocacy and political action at the federal level have been added and updated, especially in the area of health care reform. This information will be particularly useful and thought-provoking as the country experiences changes under the leadership of President Joseph R. Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris.
- Increased attention has been given to ethics and the need to consider dilemmas and apply ethical considerations in social work practice.
- A concerted effort has been made to include additional person-first language throughout the text.
- Content involving the intersections of diversity and multicultural practice has been enriched.
- Additional attention has been given to substance use and addiction services.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

Introduction to Social Work is organized into three parts. Part I introduces readers to a definition of social work, reviews the history of the profession, and describes advocacy as a major aspect of social work. In this section of the book, the advocacy practice and policy model is defined through examples and applications. Throughout the book, the elements of the model serve as themes for exploring practice and policy content areas and connecting them to vignettes that highlight critical features of each chapter.

In Part II, the chapters examine how social workers respond to human needs—poverty and inequality; family and child welfare; health care and health challenges; physical, cognitive, and developmental challenges; mental health; substance use and addiction; helping older adults; and criminal justice. The chapters in this section assess the strengths of people and communities in support of possible advocacy strategies. At every juncture, social workers are seen as leaders, experts, cofacilitators, and innovators who understand complexities, value diversity, appreciate the role of culture, and address ethical dilemmas.

We are pleased to write that Part III of *Introduction to Social Work* goes beyond the standard text coverage by including chapters on communities at risk and housing; the changing workplace; veterans, service members, their families, and military social work; environmentalism; and international social work. Each of these chapters introduces material especially selected to stimulate intellectual curiosity about current topics of relevance, such as climate change and posttraumatic stress disorder. Additionally, the role of housing is examined in reference to quality of life and opportunity, the culture of the military is defined so as to better frame the needs of service personnel and their families, and environmental issues are described innovatively to encourage social work professionals to be more involved in all forms of life and service.

Each chapter ends with key concepts, discussion questions, and exercises to support class discussions and possible in-class and out-of-class assignments.

MAKING COURSE CONTENT COME ALIVE

Although we now primarily identify as educators, we have been molded by our social work practice and policy experiences, current service endeavors, and the evolving world around us. No matter our work responsibilities, the classroom remains our playing field where we hope to convey the important role social workers play in society and people's lives. We contend that advocacy is critical to teaching, research, and service. Consequently, *Introduction to Social Work* is designed to generate critical thinking and discussion, encourage interactive learning and reflective thinking, and expand horizons. The text will be in e-book format, and ancillaries are also available. In other words, we took a multisensory approach to teaching and learning that extends the walls of the classroom to the community and well beyond. Indeed, a compelling motivation and reason for revisions to accommodate an e-book format involved making this text more readily available to faculty members and students who teach and learn best using an online, remote course design.

To facilitate teaching, *Introduction to Social Work* is closely aligned with the Council on Social Work Education's new Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards and incorporates reflective practice, encouraging students to engage in critical thought and reflection and to contemplate a professional social work career. As suggested by the butterflies on the cover, life is precious, colorful, fragile, and ever changing. We hope this book will contribute to each reader's transformation as a person and aspiring social work professional.

A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

In this edition, SAGE has capitalized the word *Black* when referring to groups of people in racial, ethnic, or cultural terms. It is already common for descriptors of other racial and ethnic groups, such as *Asian* and *Latinx*, to be capitalized, and SAGE believes that *Black* should be treated the same way. This is to recognize a racial, ethnic, and cultural identity in the United States, one that is more accurate than *African American*, because many Black people in the United States do not have specific ties to an African nation. SAGE has chosen not to capitalize *white* at this time. These changes are part of a companywide initiative to address racial equity in our content.

EPAS COMPETENCIES

CHAPTER 1. THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

Competency	Practice Behavior	Content Examples in Chapter 1	Examples of Ways for Students to Demonstrate Practice and Policy
1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.	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.	Definition of a social worker and Time to Think Box 1.1. Definition of social work goals and values.	Use a role-play based on a case study that prompts students to identify personal values and how others view them. Conduct a mock interview with students portraying social workers during an interview with the media. Complete an evaluation by peer review. Compose an e-mail a social work student might write to send to their state Social Work Board to apply for a professional credential.
2. Engage in diversity and difference in practice.	Present oneself as a learner and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences.	Review of intersections of diversity.	Ask students to complete an essay describing how someone they know represents intersections of diversity. Develop a rubric for scoring the students' beginning appreciation of others as experts of their own experiences as related to intersections of diversity.

CHAPTER 2. THE HISTORY OF SOCIAL WORK

Competency	Practice Behavior	Content Examples in Chapter 2	Examples of Ways for Students to Demonstrate Practice and Policy
1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.	Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations.	Description of the rhythm of social welfare and social work practice and policy in response to social issues and embedded values and ethics. Highlighted in Time to Think Box 2.5.	Develop a student-generated list of social issues of concern, compiled on a flip chart and discussed in small groups.

Competency	Practice Behavior	Content Examples in Chapter 2	Examples of Ways for Students to Demonstrate Practice and Policy
2. Engage in diversity and difference in practice.	<p>Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal issues and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.</p> <p>Present oneself as a learner and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences.</p> <p>Engage in communities of diversity with humility.</p>	<p>Description of the social welfare programs and policies that emerged during periods of U.S. history. Explanation of the prevailing values in the programs.</p>	<p>Use a book critique describing a social welfare program and/or policy that depicts difference in a character and defines whether or not the character was affected by the program and/or policy and how. Grade the critique with a rubric.</p> <p>Ask students to interview and write a summary about a person who lived through one of the time periods defined in Chapter 2, gathering details on what they thought was significant about the period and why. Ask students to present their summary orally, and grade both the oral and written summaries with a rubric.</p>
5. Engage in policy practice.	<p>Assess how social welfare and economic policies affect the delivery of and access to social services.</p>	<p>Timeline of policy development.</p> <p>Discussion of the effects of a political election on the repeal, introduction, and passage of social policy.</p>	<p>Ask students to complete a short paper, written and shared in class, that describes a policy and its impact on social services. Score the students' ability to assess how social welfare and economic policies impact social services.</p> <p>Encourage students to attend and summarize a community-based political forum.</p>

CHAPTER 3. GENERALIST SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Competency	Practice Behavior	Content Examples in Chapter 3	Examples of Ways for Students to Demonstrate Practice and Policy
1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.	<p>Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication.</p> <p>Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes.</p>	<p>The knowledge base of social work and the NASW <i>Code of Ethics</i>, as seen in Figures 3.1 and 3.3.</p> <p>The change process, as seen in Exhibit 3.5.</p>	<p>Develop role-plays of dilemmas related to professional behavior and ethics. Discuss the role-plays in class, with feedback from the instructor.</p> <p>Develop case studies to demonstrate use of the change process. Score students' work on a rubric assessing their knowledge and application of the process elements.</p>

Competency	Practice Behavior	Content Examples in Chapter 3	Examples of Ways for Students to Demonstrate Practice and Policy
2. Engage in diversity and difference in practice.	<p>Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.</p> <p>Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal issues and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.</p>	<p>Description of systems theory and client systems, as found in Figure 3.2. Overview of the client systems with inputs and outputs, as seen in Figure 3.3.</p> <p>Empowerment theory and the strengths perspective, as exemplified in Time to Think 3.3.</p>	<p>Form student groups to share elements of their systems and life experiences, generating lists of differences and similarities, followed by discussion with feedback from the instructor.</p> <p>Ask each student to interview someone who is not a friend or family member and identifies little with the student's personal values. Ask students to describe how they would apply these values to social work practice. Develop a grading rubric to score the students' ability to apply values to practice while managing personal values.</p> <p>Ask students to assess their strengths or those of another, considering how the strengths can be used in practice and policy development.</p>

CHAPTER 4. ADVOCACY IN SOCIAL WORK

Competency	Practice Behavior	Content Examples in Chapter 4	Examples of Ways for Students to Demonstrate Practice and Policy
1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.	Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations.	Examination of social work values involving human dignity, human diversity, justice, and self-determination.	Ask students to develop a presentation describing how they differentiate personal values from professional values when advocating with clients for change. Develop a grading rubric for classmates to score the use of ethical principles in practice.
2. Engage in diversity and difference in practice.	Present oneself as a learner and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences.	Examination of advocating for the elimination of a community food desert, emphasizing the client's perspective in advocacy.	Ask students to identify and critically analyze how the featured social worker (Maddie) consulted with others and learned from clients as experts in informing advocacy efforts.
3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.	Engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.	Definitions of various forms of social and economic justice in the context of promoting social justice and human rights via advocacy.	Ask students to identify how a boycott can be useful when advocating for some form of human rights or socioeconomic justice. Using a rubric, rate the students' use of a boycott to advocate for human rights and socioeconomic justice.

Competency	Practice Behavior	Content Examples in Chapter 4	Examples of Ways for Students to Demonstrate Practice and Policy
5. Engage in policy practice.	Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.	Specific behaviors and action used in advocacy, as demonstrated in the advocacy activities presented in Figure 4.3.	<p>Encourage students to attend a local, state, or federal legislative hearing and apply and critically think about advocacy activities in relation to the policy being presented.</p> <p>Ask students to describe advocacy actions that had a positive or negative effect on a community of voters.</p>
7. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.	Collect and organize data and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies.	The dynamic, interlocking tenets of the advocacy practice and policy model, as shown in Figure 4.4.	<p>Using the case example involving Maddie's efforts to eliminate a food desert, ask students to identify and explain items from the social and economic checklist that appear most relevant for eliciting important information from clients and constituencies for advocacy.</p> <p>Ask students to apply the APPM to a local, state, or national issue in which change is being advocated.</p>

CHAPTER 5. POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

Competency	Practice Behavior	Content Examples in Chapter 5	Examples of Ways for Students to Demonstrate Practice and Policy
3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.	Apply an understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and systems level.	All materials included in the "Dynamic Advocacy and Poverty" section, including current trends.	<p>Ask students to present orally on an article from a national newspaper that presents an economic or environmental justice issue, outlining ways to advocate for human rights associated with the selected issue. Scoring is completed by students and instructor with a 5-point peer review.</p> <p>Suggest that students examine wage scales for various workers in the context of estimated weekly expenses. Ask students to list issues of concern and thoughts for possible change.</p>
5. Engage in policy practice.	Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that affects the delivery of and access to social services.	Definitions and details of various social welfare programs, along with Time to Think boxes.	<p>Using the cycle of advocacy, ask students to write a paper on one social welfare program at the local, state, or federal level and assess the program's strengths and weaknesses. Score the students' use of concepts and analysis with a grading rubric.</p> <p>Ask students to discuss the issue of student loans and approaches to address financial insecurity related to loan obligations and employment decisions.</p>

CHAPTER 6. FAMILY AND CHILD WELFARE

Competency	Practice Behavior	Content Examples in Chapter 6	Examples of Ways for Students to Demonstrate Practice and Policy
2. Engage in diversity and difference in practice.	Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.	How the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to health, mental health, and educational challenges and disparities based on race and social-economic factors.	Ask students to identify and list concrete ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to health, mental health, and educational challenges for children and families based on multiple forms of diversity. Use a grading rubric to score students' use of critical thinking regarding multiple forms of diversity and intersections of diversity.
5. Engage in policy practice.	Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services.	Social policy and practice issues involving the immigration and separation of families.	Ask students to give brief, 5-minute class presentations or share video clips identifying two pieces of social policy or practices and how each piece affects well-being, service delivery, and access to needed goods and services for children and families. Use a grading rubric to score students' use of critical thinking.
7. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.	Collect and organize data and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies.	Information concerning contemporary and diverse types of families to promote critical thinking.	Prompt students in class to share ideas for collecting information and data to facilitate a greater and more in-depth understanding of specific family types. Devise a grading rubric to score each student's contribution to critical thinking about and understanding of family types.

CHAPTER 7. HEALTH CARE AND HEALTH CHALLENGES

Competency	Practice Behavior	Content Examples in Chapter 7	Examples of Ways for Students to Demonstrate Practice and Policy
2. Engage in diversity and difference in practice.	Identify and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.	How the COVID-19 pandemic has affected people and health care providers.	Divide students into small groups to debate the health disparities evident in social media concerning how older adults, teachers, and students were treated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Competency	Practice Behavior	Content Examples in Chapter 7	Examples of Ways for Students to Demonstrate Practice and Policy
3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.	Engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.	<p>Application of ethical thinking in relation to scenarios related to health disparities that reveal how power, privileges, and health care resources are allocated differently in rural and suburban areas versus large cities.</p> <p>Definition of health disparities.</p> <p>Examination of the complexity of U.S. health care and economic and social justice.</p>	<p>Prepare case studies of ethical dilemmas that relate to power, privilege, and health care resources. Ask students to reflect in a short, rubric-scored, written paper how they view and make ethical decisions to address inequities of managed care present in service delivery scenarios for people with illness or challenges. Discuss the cases in class.</p> <p>Encourage students to select and visit a health care setting and think about how advocacy for economic and social justice occurs in a managed-care environment. Ask students to write about why they selected the setting and what they noticed during their visit. Instructor provides guidelines for the agency visit and paper. The paper is discussed with the class and graded by the student based on self-reflection and constructive feedback received.</p>
5. Engage in policy practice.	Assess how social welfare and economic policies influence the delivery of and access to social services.	Application of health care to populations who tend to experience disproportionate rates of health disparities and stigma.	Ask students to design a poster that describes how a health-related policy affects access to health care services and resources. Posters are displayed, peer reviewed, and constructively critiqued by the instructor (using a rubric).
8. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.	Use interprofessional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes.	Responses to Time to Think boxes that apply the dynamic advocacy model in considering health care as a right. Content on consumer-driven health care plans for addressing human needs and rights—especially how such plans vary across presidential administrations.	Ask students to explore a policy issue making headlines on <i>NPR</i> , in a local newspaper, or in <i>Social Work Smart Briefs</i> . Using interprofessional, collaborative group-work learning, ask students to write a position paper advocating for a physical or disability rights issue. Ask them to consider submitting a paper to an appropriate magazine for publication.

CHAPTER 8. PHYSICAL, COGNITIVE, AND DEVELOPMENTAL CHALLENGES

Competency	Practice Behavior	Content Examples in Chapter 8	Examples of Ways for Students to Demonstrate Practice and Policy
1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.	Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the <i>NASW Code of Ethics</i> , relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context.	Types and definition of physical and mental challenges. Advocacy on behalf of people with physical and mental challenges. Discussion about the confusing or sometimes condescending euphemisms often used to replace the term <i>disability</i> (e.g., <i>special needs</i> , <i>challenges</i> , <i>differently abled</i> , <i>handi-capable</i>).	Ask students to visit organization websites serving people with varying physical and mental health challenges and share their findings in class. Ask them to complete a reflection paper (scored by a rubric) about ethical considerations when advocating for clients with physical or mental challenges. Solicit ideas from students about how the strengths perspective can be applied to help engage people with varying abilities.
2. Engage in diversity and difference in practice.	Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies. Present oneself as a learner and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences.	Different types of challenges (developmental, learning, cognitive, physical) and how managed-care policies and mandates influence the provision of equitable and good health care for all.	Ask students to read and critique a fiction or nonfiction book (or view a feature film) that features someone living with a physical, developmental, or cognitive challenge and how the character has managed stigma. The critique should include how as a result of the reading/viewing, students have identified personal values and biases toward this population group. The instructor will use a rubric to provide feedback. Encourage students to visit a mental health agency or an agency that addresses the needs of people with varying physical or mental challenges. List and discuss in class the strengths and resilience demonstrated by people.
3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.	Engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.	Definition of health disparities. Advocacy on behalf of people with physical, developmental, learning, and cognitive challenges. Economic, environmental, and social justice; political access; and human needs and rights.	Encourage students to select and visit a physically challenging setting to identify how beginning-level advocacy for economic, environmental, and social justice might occur in such a setting. Develop a rubric to score the students' ability to identify how to advance economic, environmental, and social justice. Ask students to research who received the COVID-19 vaccine and who did not as a way to examine the need to advance human rights and social justice.

CHAPTER 9. MENTAL HEALTH

Competency	Practice Behavior	Content Examples in Chapter 9	Examples of Ways for Students to Demonstrate Practice and Policy
2. Engage in diversity and difference in practice.	Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.	Identifying students' past experiences and value orientation in relation to U.S. legislation and court cases related to mental health.	<p>Ask students to write a paper exploring their attitudes toward mental health and mental health legislation. Students should disclose their suitability for working with people who have mental disorders or co-occurring disorders, such as addictions, specifying how they would manage personal values to allow professional values to guide practice. Use a grading rubric to score students' ability to recognize and manage personal values.</p> <p>Suggest that students visit the mental health services available on campus. Discuss the positive aspects of such services and areas that would benefit from improvement. Also discuss to what degree social work services are available to students.</p>
3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.	Engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.	How people differentially experience the mental health system based on their intersections of diversity (e.g., ability, age, class, ethnicity, faith perspective, gender, race, marital status, and race).	Ask students to write a paper describing how people are treated differently in the mental health care system and how culture and values privilege people with power and resources. Use a grading rubric to score students' abilities to recognize and identify oppression, marginalization, stigma, and alienation in the mental health system as related to intersections of varying diversity.
5. Engage in policy practice.	Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services.	Description of specific policies in the chapter.	<p>Select a policy described in the chapter and read the policy in its entirety. Ask students to define the services that emerged from the policy and then consider the costs and benefits of program implementation.</p> <p>Ask students to review policies developed amid the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., telehealth) to meet the needs of people who felt so depressed that suicide rates soared.</p>

CHAPTER 10. SUBSTANCE USE AND ADDICTION

Competency	Practice Behavior	Content Examples in Chapter 10	Examples of Ways for Students to Demonstrate Practice and Policy
2. Engage in diversity and difference in practice.	Present oneself as a learner and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences.	Time to Think boxes that encourage students to identify their past experiences, beliefs, and value orientations in relation to substance use and addiction.	Ask students to write a paper exploring their thoughts and attitudes toward varying substances, based on their experiences with family members and friends. Students should disclose the validity of what they have learned from others about substances and their use. Develop a grading rubric to score the students' ability to learn from others and appropriately see others as experts.
5. Engage in policy practice.	Assess how social welfare and economic policies affect the delivery of and access to social services.	Treatment concepts that present moral, personal, and social dilemmas.	Ask students to select two evidence-based journal articles on substance use and addiction. Review in class how the articles define services and how the services relate to treatment-related policies. Ask students to consider how COVID-19 affected the delivery of and access to social services. What changes were made to address need?

CHAPTER 11. HELPING OLDER ADULTS

Competency	Practice Behavior	Content Examples in Chapter 11	Examples of Ways for Students to Demonstrate Practice and Policy
1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.	Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes.	Definitions of successful aging, longevity, life span, and life expectancy.	Encourage students to visit long-term care residential websites for older adults and identify quality-of-care outcomes, then share findings in class. Students should complete a reflection paper on the use of technology to gather information about program and care outcomes for older adults in long-term care facilities. Develop a rubric to assess student ability and comprehension.

CHAPTER 12. CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Competency	Practice Behavior	Content Examples in Chapter 12	Examples of Ways for Students to Demonstrate Practice and Policy
4. Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice.	Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings.	Description of how in recent years, many forms of crime rates have decreased, while incarceration rates have increased.	Ask students to complete an exercise structured to identify important findings from the crime statistics and provide an explanation as to whether this information constitutes quantitative or qualitative findings and the value of such findings for informed practice. Develop a rubric to score students' ability to critically analyze research findings for use by social workers.

Competency	Practice Behavior	Content Examples in Chapter 12	Examples of Ways for Students to Demonstrate Practice and Policy
8. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.	Use interprofessional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes.	Content describing the tension and differing perspectives of criminal behavior between social workers and criminal justice professionals.	Ask students to complete a take-home essay in which they describe and explain how social workers and criminal justice professionals can reconcile differences in attitudes about criminal behavior. Use a grading rubric to score the students' ability to conceptualize and describe how to promote interprofessional collaboration.
9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.	Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes.	Content examining incarceration and recidivism rates, particularly for persons of color.	Organize a classroom debate where students take a deep dive into racial differences regarding incarceration and/or recidivism rates. Do findings support a retributive or a rehabilitative approach in criminal justice? Score participants based on their critical analysis of the outcomes of these approaches.

CHAPTER 13. COMMUNITIES AT RISK AND HOUSING

Competency	Practice Behavior	Content Examples in Chapter 13	Examples of Ways for Students to Demonstrate Practice and Policy
2. Engage in diversity and difference in practice.	Present oneself as a learner and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences.	Vignette of Tonya, the social worker who forms a resident council to advocate with residents for needed services and policy change at an apartment community.	Ask students to complete a short essay explaining how Tonya's actions engage clients, particularly single-parent women of color, as experts concerning their experiences. Use a grading rubric to score students' ability to recognize clients as experts.
3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.	Engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.	Description of the use of secret shoppers for advancing equal opportunities for housing.	Ask students to create a short video clip demonstrating how a secret shopper would advance fair housing. Develop a rubric to score student understanding and use of such a practice.
6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.	Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.	Vignette of the featured social worker (Tonya), who promotes safe and affordable housing in a community at risk. Recognition of various housing types and how Tonya uses her knowledge and skills to engage single-parent women of color in organizational and community development.	Challenge students to place themselves in Tonya's role as a social worker to identify and reflect on her knowledge and skill strengths with clients and for community engagement.

CHAPTER 14. THE CHANGING WORKPLACE

Competency	Practice Behavior	Content Examples in Chapter 14	Examples of Ways for Students to Demonstrate Practice and Policy
3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.	<p>Apply understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and systems level.</p> <p>Engage in practices and advocate for advances to enhance social, economic, and environmental justice.</p>	<p>Definition of the workplace and issues related to discrimination in the workplace.</p> <p>Policies and practices to enhance social and economic justice in the workplace.</p>	<p>In class, ask students to break into teams and debate this question: Should the minimum wage be increased to \$15.00—and why or why not? Students and the instructor should use a grading rubric to score the use of key concepts and advocacy principles in the debate.</p> <p>Ask students to compile a list of economic, social, and environmental factors that might influence their choice of professional career. Develop a grading rubric to score students' concept of justice in the workplace.</p>
5. Engage in policy practice.	Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services.	Current work-related issues and changes that have occurred in the workplace.	Ask students to find and discuss a current-events article that pertains to a work-related issue. Explore in class the concerns and possible policy-related solutions.

CHAPTER 15. VETERANS, SERVICE MEMBERS, THEIR FAMILIES, AND MILITARY SOCIAL WORK

Competency	Practice Behavior	Content Examples in Chapter 15	Examples of Ways for Students to Demonstrate Practice and Policy
1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.	Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations.	Definition of a military social worker.	<p>Encourage students to visit a VA hospital, clinic setting serving service members, college/university veterans organization, or DoD websites and share their findings in class.</p> <p>Ask them to complete a reflection paper on how they would maintain professional values and professionalism as an advocate for service member/veteran services. Develop a rubric to assess student abilities and comprehension.</p>

Competency	Practice Behavior	Content Examples in Chapter 15	Examples of Ways for Students to Demonstrate Practice and Policy
1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.	Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the <i>NASW Code of Ethics</i> , relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context.	Application of ethical thinking in relation to scenarios related to ethical dilemmas in counseling recruits, veterans, service members, or military family members that reveal how rank and culture influence how services and resources are allocated differently across ranks and military subcultures, including branches of military service and between enlisted and officer members in the military.	<p>Prepare case studies of ethical dilemmas related to power, privilege, and military social work resources.</p> <p>Ask students to reflect, in a short paper, on how principles in the <i>NASW Code of Ethics</i> apply to the case examples. Develop a rubric to assess students' abilities and comprehension.</p>

CHAPTER 16. ENVIRONMENTALISM

Competency	Practice Behavior	Content Examples in Chapter 16	Examples of Ways for Students to Demonstrate Practice and Policy
2. Engage in diversity and difference in practice.	Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal issues and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.	"Environmental Issues" and "Diversity and Environmentalism" sections, including Figure 16.2.	Ask students to find a news article or social media site examining a disaster and its influence on people in their communities. In student groups, articles are shared and discussed and then presented to the class. Using a rubric, peers review presentations in terms of reflection on values, issues, and diversity/ differences.
3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.	Apply understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and systems level.	"Ecological Social Welfare and Practice" section, including Figure 16.1.	<p>Ask students to design a poster that outlines advocacy strategies for a particular social, economic, or environmental justice issue. Using a rubric, peers and the instructor score the posters in terms of knowledge and understanding of advocacy actions.</p> <p>Ask students to map where environmental issues have occurred in the United States and list the reasons why. Discuss the role of social work practice and policy in providing services in response to these issues.</p>
5. Engage in policy practice.	Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.	Climate control and natural disasters.	<p>Ask students to select an issue related to climate control or a particular natural disaster. Ask that they list preventative measures that would help prevent the selected situation and how they would propose to advocate for preventative action.</p> <p>Ask students to list and debate the advantages and disadvantages of international environmental policies such as the Paris Climate Agreement.</p>

CHAPTER 17. INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL WORK

Competency	Practice Behavior	Content Examples in Chapter 17	Examples of Ways for Students to Demonstrate Practice and Policy
2. Engage in diversity and difference in practice.	Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.	Description of diversity in the context of international practice.	Assign a paper where students provide examples of how knowledge of and sensitivity to multiple immigration statuses are important in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Use a rubric to assess students' abilities.
3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.	Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.	Global issues (e.g., health and well-being) related to social work practice.	<p>Ask students to identify ways in which social workers could advocate during the COVID-19 pandemic to advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice. Ask students how technology might effectively be used. Score student responses on the basis of critical thinking to advance global human rights and justice.</p> <p>Ask students to research organizations that advocate on behalf of immigrant rights. Who would possibly oppose or support these organizations, and why?</p>
5. Engage in policy practice.	Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.	The advocacy model and global human rights and social and economic justice efforts and organizations.	<p>Include an essay item on an examination where you ask students to describe and explain two ways in which social workers can advocate for global human rights and social and economic justice. Use a grading rubric to score the students' ability to understand global human rights and social and economic justice.</p> <p>Ask students to research what policies are pending in Congress that support global issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, considering the possible support for and opposition to the selected policy.</p>

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For all of us, as professors, our students play a primary role in our lives. We learn from and with them, and our thinking and abilities are influenced and shaped by their mere presence. Professionally, there is little more rewarding than having former students return to campus, call, or send a message to provide an update and share their life experiences. Students in introductory classes are especially interesting and formidable. Our deep gratitude goes to our many students and alumni, who have provided us with inspiration and encouragement throughout our days in higher education.

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FOREWORD

As a social work educator, I continually seek resources for students that are current and relevant in content. Material must engage students on their own developmental journey toward greater competence in social work knowledge, values, and skills at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Dr. Cox, Dr. Tice, and Dr. Long collectively joined their sharp intellects, keen sensitivity to the learning needs of students, and pedagogical acuity to create a text that embraces the heart of social work: advocacy. My department eagerly adopted the first edition of the text, and our students continue to appreciate the fresh approach to social justice issues.

BSW students sometimes find themselves feeling powerless under the weight of social challenges. Our airwaves blast far too many newscasts of yet another racially motivated crime, misuse of law enforcement power, and systemic injustice. Health care barriers and disparities widen for those who most need access, and a gaping hole expands between the least and greatest incomes among us. We are social work educators in challenging times. The third edition expands the advocacy approach to develop competent student voices able to speak truth to power on concerns affecting micro, mezzo, and macro client systems. As a social work educator, it is reassuring to know that Dr. Cox, Dr. Tice, and Dr. Long have remained vigilant and responsive by weaving greater awareness of these social challenges with strategies for students to confront them. As social work educators, we can embrace a text that reminds students that advocacy for diverse individuals and communities, along with working for inclusion and justice, remains at the forefront of social work practice.

Social work educators working with students in introductory courses desire a text that presents content, yes, but more importantly reflects the values of the profession itself and our commitment to social justice. Dr. Cox, Dr. Tice, and Dr. Long continue to evolve their work with our knowledge and understanding of social work theories and practice. Their commitment to ethical practice appears as this edition delves more deeply into the nuances of advocacy, with special attention to racial, ethnic, and LGBTQ disparities. With even greater sensitivity to marginalization in our challenging social environment, the authors encourage students to deconstruct structural systems of privilege and oppression in creating culturally sensitive responses to the needs of clients in various service delivery contexts. Through a lens of intersectionality and interprofessionalism, the text particularly encourages students to examine health care, mental health, addiction, and substance use systems in greater detail. These theoretical approaches form a basis of understanding in our work as we help students develop their skills. Dr. Cox, Dr. Tice, and Dr. Long have worked hard to create a text that presents the complexity of intersectional approaches in a clean, concise manner that students can easily grasp. As social work educators, it is reassuring to know there is a commitment to help students to integrate theory and advocacy into practice contexts, while challenging students to consider what advocacy can look like for them personally in practice contexts.

In the third edition, the authors utilize new language to speak in one voice and shift to a person-first perspective that steps back from a clinical perspective. This is particularly helpful in BSW-level courses. It is helpful to have a text that engages students in advocacy on where to look and how to create action for change. This student-friendly approach extends throughout the text. It encourages students to consider what they personally can do as professional social workers to make changes in systems that will dismantle systemic oppression and raise up long-marginalized individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

As social workers, we know that laws and policies are important; as a society, we continue to advocate for laws and policies that protect the most vulnerable and seek equity for those most marginalized and oppressed. Dr. Cox, Dr. Tice, and Dr. Long further the steps of advocacy by engaging students in self-awareness and reflection to answer this question: What can I do in my practice context to advocate at every juncture for the needs of my client system? A good social worker will speak up against injustice. A great social worker will advocate for change with clients, informed by social work knowledge, values, skills, and cultural awareness. I am excited by the level of competence, ethical rigor, and years of practice experience Dr. Cox, Dr. Tice, and Dr. Long have brought to this text to engage students in advocacy. With confidence in a firm foundation of social work knowledge, values, and skills, I am looking forward to continued use of the text in our program to initiate students into our profession of social work.

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UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL WORK

PART

I

- Chapter 1.** The Social Work Profession
- Chapter 2.** The History of Social Work
- Chapter 3.** Generalist Social Work Practice
- Chapter 4.** Advocacy in Social Work



Social workers often use the skill of active listening.

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THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you should be able to

1. Summarize the goals of the social work profession.
2. Explain the importance of diversity and advocacy in social work.
3. Describe the theories and values that inform social work practice.
4. Evaluate the education options for social workers.
5. Compare practice options for social workers.

MARY CHOOSES SOCIAL WORK

As a first-year student, Mary has completed hours for her service-learning course at a family success center. She has enjoyed working with the diverse array of people who came to the center, and clients there have told her that she has been a good listener, doer, and advocate for them. Mary's advisor has suggested that she might make use of her newly discovered skills by becoming a social worker, a versatile "helping" career that traverses multiple fields of practice.

Mary has conducted some research and has learned that with a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW), she could work as a generalist practitioner or apply to an advanced-standing Master of Social Work (MSW) program and quickly become either an advanced generalist or a specialist. Mary also has explored the online website for the Board of Social Work regulations in her state. Once she receives her BSW degree, she knows she can send the board her transcripts and become credentialed. With great excitement, Mary has also learned that if she declares social work as her undergraduate major, she would qualify to be an advanced-standing applicant in a graduate-level MSW program. MSW-prepared social workers can work in a wide range of specialty fields of practice, such as hospice, veterans services, and behavioral health. They can work in policy, advocacy, or research in community-based settings; various types of institutions; state, federal, or local agencies; international disaster relief organizations; or political action campaigns.

Mary feels confident that she would enjoy social work, a profession where she could advocate for people and causes, help develop policies, and provide services and resources to people who really need them. As a student, you may be wondering which career might best suit your personal values and the life you envision for yourself. Social work is a versatile and worthy profession to consider. Integrity, decency, honesty, and justice are values held in high regard by social work professionals. If you decide to become a social worker, you will also join a field that provides considerable career mobility and opportunity.

Social work is a helping profession, similar to counseling, psychology, and other human services. Social work is different, though, and will likely interest you if you care especially about economic, social, and environmental justice and wish to advocate for individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities that face socioeconomic disadvantages. To help groups and communities, social workers require an understanding of politics and power and the ability to assess human needs and the environment.

This chapter introduces the goals, competencies, and responsibilities of the 21st-century social worker. It describes social work's core values, roles, fields of practice, career paths, and employment opportunities to help you decide whether the profession of social work is right for you.

THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION: PURPOSE AND GOALS

Social work is categorized as a **profession** because it requires specialized, formal training and education that leads to credentialing (e.g., state licensure). Some of the other professions include law, medicine, accounting, teaching, and counseling. However, social work's unique purpose is to assist with and advocate for change in the lives of individuals and in communities to reduce or eradicate the effects of personal distress and social and economic inequality (Soydan, 2008).

Professional **social workers** generally graduate from a department, program, or school of social work with either a bachelor's or a master's degree (or perhaps a doctorate) in social work. Although some social work positions do not require a credential, a professional social worker is generally considered to be someone who has received a social work degree and has become certified or licensed by the state in which they practice.

Many social workers have achieved historical prominence, such as social work pioneer Jane Addams (who won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1931), civil rights activist Dr. Dorothy I. Height, and Frances Perkins (the first woman to serve as a cabinet member, as secretary of labor in 1933). Social work pioneer Del Anderson transformed veterans services, Bernice Harper led hospice social work, Joan O. Weiss helped establish the field of genetic counseling, and Dale Masi developed the employee-assistance field (Clark, 2012).

Social work professor and researcher Dr. Brené Brown has become quite successful as a “public” social worker, offering the profession's perspective through books, television interviews, and online talks about shame, vulnerability, and courage. Others with social work degrees who have brought the profession's perspective to diverse careers include actor Samuel L. Jackson, writer Alice Walker, and personal finance guru Suze Orman. Their liberal arts-based social work education was a liberating experience that has served as the foundation for their life's work.

Throughout history, what people have seemed to need most are resources for living, as well as a sense that their life matters to others. Beyond feeling secure and accepted for who they are, people also hope to live a meaningful, healthy, and successful life. These are the central concerns of social workers. Their professional role is to work with people to secure the basic **human needs, rights, and values**: food, water, shelter, and such intangible resources as emotional, economic, and social support.

The purpose of professional social work was articulated formally by the **National Association of Social Workers (NASW)**, the voice for the profession:

Social work is the professional activity of helping individuals, groups, or communities enhance or restore their capacity for social functioning and creating societal conditions favorable to this goal. 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 (e.g., income, housing, food)
- Providing counseling and interventions with individuals, families, and groups
- Helping communities or groups provide or improve social and health services
- Participating in relevant legislative processes (NASW, 1973, pp. 4–5)

The NASW considers social work an applied science and art that assists and advocates for people who are struggling to function better in their world and that effects societal changes to enhance everyone's well-being.

NASW describes four major goals for social work practitioners. The CSWE, the body that accredits schools of social work, adds another goal that relates to social work education. These goals are presented in Table 1.1.

The general public often confuses social workers with other human service providers, among them school counselors, mental health counselors, psychiatrists, psychotherapists, public health workers and administrators, nurses, chaplains, and police or others involved in criminal justice and corrections. While the roles and settings for some of these occupations overlap, each has distinctive features, perspectives, methods, and areas of expertise. (See Table 1.2 for more detail on the similarities and differences between social work and some of these other

TABLE 1.1 ■ Professional Social Workers' Goals

	Professional Goal	Social Workers' Roles
Goal 1 (Practice)	To enhance people's coping, problem-solving, and developmental capacities	<i>Facilitators</i> , who "meet people where they are" and assess clients' environments Coaches, counselors, educators, trainers, and culturally competent solution-focused guides
Goal 2 (Practice)	To link people with systems that provide opportunities, resources, and services	<i>Brokers</i> , who help build relationships between clients and service systems <i>Social media collaborators</i> , who help clients connect with their environment
Goal 3 (Practice)	To promote the effectiveness and humane operation of systems that provide people with resources and services	<i>Advocates</i> for cases and causes, who consider socioeconomic, political, and other contexts and who focus on the available resources for serving people <i>Administrative supervisors</i> , who oversee staff and ensure that services are delivered efficiently and effectively <i>Consultants</i> , who guide community organizations and agencies by identifying strategies to expand and enhance services <i>Coordinators and liaisons</i> , who enhance communication and coordination among social and human service resources to improve service delivery and who link an agency or program to other agencies and organizations <i>Program developers and evaluators</i> , who design and evaluate programs or technologies to meet social needs
Goal 4 (Practice)	To develop and improve social policy	<i>Activists or advocates</i> , who concentrate on the statutes, laws, and broader social policies that underlie the funding and provision of resources Policy practice analysts, developers, and planners
Goal 5 (Education)	To promote human and community well-being	<i>Activists</i> , who use education, research, and service delivery to alleviate oppression, poverty, and other social and economic injustices

Source: Adapted from Zastrow (2017, 2014, pp. 50–51) from primary sites. Goals 1–4 from NASW (1982, p. 17); Goal 5 from CSWE (2016).

occupations.) But social workers incorporate the knowledge and skills of these other occupations as needed to serve clients and communities. They are not limited to a single perspective or set of methodologies. Thus, at the undergraduate level, social workers are called **generalist practitioners**.

TABLE 1.2 ■ Comparison of Social Work and Similar Occupations

Discipline and Similar Occupations	Similarities to Social Work	Differences From Social Work
<p><i>Psychology:</i> Study of behavior and mental processes; application of that knowledge to the evaluation and treatment of mental disorders</p> <p>Psychotherapists</p> <p>Psychologists (PsyD or PhD doctoral preparation)</p> <p>Psychiatrists (MD; physicians with an advanced specialty)</p>	<p>Is a practice profession</p> <p>Requires accreditation and postdegree supervision</p> <p>Requires graduate-level training for counseling clients (as psychotherapists)</p> <p>Allows practitioners to conduct psychotherapy</p> <p>Occurs in some of the same settings, with many of the same clients</p>	<p>Requires PhD or PsyD degree for practice</p> <p>Requires 2 years of supervised work experience before independent practice</p> <p>Focuses on client's psychological issues</p> <p>Administers psychological tests</p> <p>Allows practitioners to prescribe medications in some states</p> <p>Requires MD training/degree for psychiatrists</p>
<p><i>Counseling:</i> Practice of meeting with, listening to, and guiding individuals and groups with mental health, social adjustment, and relationship problems</p> <p>Therapists</p> <p>Marriage counselors</p> <p>Family therapists</p>	<p>Is a practice profession</p> <p>Requires a graduate degree</p> <p>Requires licenses and certifications</p> <p>Engages in psychotherapy</p> <p>Does not allow practitioners to prescribe medications</p> <p>Occurs in some of the same settings, with many of the same clients</p>	<p>Focuses mostly on the individual as a problem requiring assessment and intervention</p> <p>Does not typically include training in community practice (advocacy, organizing)</p> <p>Requires a graduate degree for practice</p>
<p><i>Sociology:</i> Study of characteristics and interactions of populations</p> <p>Sociologists (PhD)</p>	<p>Studies patterns of human behavior, especially origins of that behavior and societal development</p> <p>Shares interests in human diversity and oppression</p>	<p>Is a social science, not a practice profession</p> <p>Examines people's patterns (e.g., social behavior and organizations) and family groups, community, and societal contexts</p>
<p><i>Nursing:</i> Practice of caring for the physical and mental health of individuals, families, and communities to optimize quality of life</p> <p>Nurses (BSN, MSN, FNP, DNP)</p>	<p>Is a practice profession</p> <p>Has a caring/helping focus</p> <p>Is practiced in hospitals, clinics, and so forth</p>	<p>Offers RN and LPN designations denoting responsibilities and authority</p> <p>Focuses on health and well-being</p>

(Continued)

TABLE 1.2 ■ Comparison of Social Work and Similar Occupations (Continued)

Discipline and Similar Occupations	Similarities to Social Work	Differences From Social Work
<i>Criminal justice:</i> Practice of facilitating law enforcement, operating the court system, and investigating and preventing criminal behavior Law enforcement and correction officers	Has a practice orientation Occurs in some of the same settings, with many of the same clients Shares concerns about individuals and families	Often requires a BS in criminal justice or human services Focuses on the law and social order Supports authority structures Has a limited focus on the individual's environment
<i>Public health:</i> Practice of researching epidemiological and environmental health trends and protecting the health of populations Public health clinicians, researchers, and officers	Has a practice orientation Focuses on groups and communities Is practiced in health clinics and community-based settings	Requires a BS in public health Requires training in epidemiology, biostatistics, and health policy and administration Focuses on health and the physical environment

SOCIAL WORK AND HUMAN DIVERSITY

When assisting and advocating for people in need, social workers inevitably meet and interact with diverse people from multiple backgrounds. Many social workers would argue that one of the most interesting and rewarding aspects of their career is the ability to expand their knowledge and appreciation for human diversity. They have a chance to learn about the strengths, needs, uniqueness, values, causes, and traditions associated with various forms of human difference. Consider how much you like hearing people's life stories. When you hear people's life stories, you get clues as to what they need, value, and dream about. As a social worker, there are thousands of people and larger client systems that could benefit from your assistance. Social workers engage individuals, families, couples, groups, organizations, and communities. They work with veterans, medical and psychiatric clients, older adults, survivors of interpersonal violence, immigrant families, children in foster care, members of the LGBTQ community, and people experiencing homelessness. In addition, social workers empower and advocate for people with developmental challenges, behavioral health troubles, or trauma and people experiencing financial insecurity. On a large systems level, social workers form community advisory boards, attend neighborhood and town meetings, and help develop policies promoting social justice and social-economic opportunities. People of all races, ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, and religious backgrounds seek help from social workers, so it is likely that each day in the life of a social worker will be an adventure.

SOCIAL WORK IN ACTION

DR. BRENÉ BROWN PROMOTES RESEARCH ABOUT VULNERABILITY

Dr. Brené Brown has a BSW, MSW, and doctorate in social work and serves as a professor and researcher at the University of Houston's Graduate College of Social Work. Before

Dr. Brown became a megaspeaker on the global circuit, she was a typical academic, Texan, and storyteller. Her 2010 TEDx talk “The Power of Vulnerability” catapulted her to fame. With more than 48 million views, it is one of the top five most viewed TED talks. Afterward, she became an Oprah Winfrey–approved author, coined the terms *whole-heartedness* and *whole-hearted leadership*, published two *New York Times* best sellers, and developed two companies. One of these companies, *The Daring Way*, is a training program that helps professionals implement Dr. Brown’s findings on courage, shame, vulnerability, and worthiness in their own work. Dr. Brown delivers national presentations on the concepts of courage, vulnerability, worthiness, shame, and empathy. In her videos “Power of Vulnerability” and “Listening to Shame,” Dr. Brown specifically discusses social work and emphasizes that social workers are called to “lean into the discomfort” and establish meaningful connections with people.

Dr. Brown’s critics, like civil rights activist DeRay McKesson, have urged her to read and consider concepts on the philosophy of race, such as philosopher George Yancey’s work, which postulates that white people think that it is normal, standard, regular, and the best to be white (Emerson & Yancey, 2011). Other critics suggest that Dr. Brown’s ideas put too much onus on the individual and that problems such as being poor cannot be easily fixed just by being courageous or vulnerable (Baker, 2018).

Despite these criticisms, Dr. Brown remains popular, and she concludes from her qualitative research that vulnerability is not weakness; vulnerability requires emotional risk, exposure, and uncertainty and fuels our lives. Essentially, vulnerability is our most accurate measure of courage: “Innovation, creativity, and change come from the birthplace of vulnerability.”

In her clip about shame, she concludes that although shame is not guilt, it is highly correlated with such behaviors as addiction, depression, suicide, and eating disorders. On her website, Dr. Brown (n.d.) is quoted as saying, “Owning our story and loving ourselves through that process is the bravest thing that we will ever do.”

Dr. Brown exemplifies how a social work education can propel you into a many-faceted future. She is teaching social work students and the wider world about social work theory and methods. Dr. Brown’s stories about courage, shame, worthiness, forgiveness, and vulnerability resonate with many. Now they are also adding richness to a social worker’s tool kit.

1. How do Dr. Brown’s ideas and stories help professional social workers eradicate personal distress and social inequality?
2. Consider what experiences make you feel vulnerable. How does vulnerability feel to you? What role might empathy play for social workers who counsel people who feel vulnerable?

Clients and collaborators are often quite different from social workers in some significant ways. A person’s life experiences and circumstances can influence how other people and situations are perceived. What social workers believe is true depends on their lived experience, personal values, and belief systems. Like everyone else, they are influenced by family, spiritual beliefs, culture, norms, race and ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation, as well as life stage, socioeconomic status, and abilities.

In social work classes, students learn about the concepts of culture, norms, life stage, and socioeconomic status. For example, **culture** is often thought of as the customs, habits, skills, arts, values, ideology, science, and religious and political behaviors of a group of people in a particular time period. In classes about diversity issues, culture gets explored in depth, as does the notion of norms. **Norms** are often defined as the rules of behavior—both formal and informal—and the expectations held collectively by a culture, group, organization, or society. In Latinx culture, a norm for a young girl turning age 15 is the *fiesta de quince años*, or *quinceañera*, a celebration of a girl’s 15th birthday, thereby marking her passage from girlhood to womanhood, amid an adolescent life stage. While social work offers no particular set of stages of its own, people generally think about six particular life stages: (1) infancy (ages 0–2), (2) early childhood (ages

3–8), (3) adolescence (ages 9–18), (4) early adulthood (ages 19–45), (5) middle adulthood (ages 46–65), and (6) later adulthood (older than age 65). In social work classes about human behavior in the social environment, major stages of the human life cycle are examined. The cycle starts with pregnancy, infancy, toddler and childhood years, puberty, older adolescence to adulthood, middle adulthood, and older adulthood (Barker, 2014).

Psychology courses are often required for declared social work majors. In psychology classes, famous theorists like Erik Erikson, Sigmund Freud, Lawrence Kohlberg, and Jean Piaget and their concepts are discovered. For example, Erikson's stage theory illustrates how every period of life, or **life stage**, is characterized by some underlying challenges and orientations that modify one's behavior and priorities. Each stage has characteristics that make it unique, and each higher stage incorporates many of the gains made in earlier ones. The degree to which a person reconciles the conflicts inherent in each stage largely determines the likelihood of coping successfully in subsequent life stages. Erikson's stage theory is also called psychosocial development theory; Freud conceptualized psychosexual development theory; Kohlberg created moral development theory; and Piaget established a theory of cognitive development (Carpendale, 2000).

When social work students are enrolled in an economics course, they gain knowledge about the variable of **socioeconomic status (SES)**. SES, or *socioeconomic class*, refers to a categorization of groups of people according to a specified demographic variable, such as level of income or education, location of residence, and value orientation. Sociologists often categorize classes as upper, middle, "lower," and working class. Other observers make further distinctions, such as "upper-middle class" and underclass.

Social workers go to considerable lengths to broaden their perspectives. They increase their self-understanding by reading and taking classes (in the arts and humanities, as well as on subjects such as psychology, sociology, sexuality, biology, neuroscience, and gerontology), learning foreign languages, engaging in personal therapy, participating in self-reflection, and receiving professional supervision and feedback (Green et al., 2005). Through seeking this type of self-knowledge, trained social workers are likely to become sensitized to the differences among people. They become better at appreciating other viewpoints and at developing and evaluating more creative policies and intervention strategies (Karger & Stoesz, 2018).

If you are contemplating social work as a career, you must look within and evaluate your readiness to **advocate** for the typical social work client, who may be vulnerable and possibly affected by social injustice. You will also be required to respond to human needs with flexibility and creativity, because resource availability and funding usually fall short of the need, although they vary across communities, regions, and states.

TIME TO THINK 1.1

How well do you know yourself and empathize with others who do not have your privileges?
How aware are you of how others perceive you and how you come across to others?

Diversity and Social Justice

As rewarding as the experience of human diversity can be, it can be troubling as well. Those who are different from the types of people with whom we are most familiar are often stereotyped as being inferior in some way. That prejudiced attitude may lead to actual discrimination in the