

What Does a Social Worker Do?

Bachelor of Social Work Program



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Bachelor of Social Work Official Website - <http://www.apu.edu/bas/socialwork/bsw/>



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WELCOME TO SOCIAL WORK!

Professional social workers assist individuals, groups, or communities to restore or enhance their capacity for social functioning, while creating societal conditions favorable to their goals. 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 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.

Areas of Specialty

Addictions Prevention/Treatment	Hospice and Palliative Care
Adoption & Foster Care	Housing Assistance
Advocacy Consulting and Planning	In-Home Services
Alternative School Programs	International Social Work
Child Abuse & Neglect	Law/ Courts/ Enforcement
Child Welfare Services	Mental Health Therapy
Chronic Pain	Military Social Work
Criminal Justice	Outpatient Treatment (Services can be provided in private, faith-based, governmental, nonprofit, or NGO settings)
Crisis Intervention	Parent Education Community
Community Mental Health	Planning & Advocacy
Delinquent / at risk youth	Political Development
Depression	Private Clinical Practice
Development Disabilities Social Work	Prisons
Disaster Relief	Public Health
Domestic Violence	Rural Social Work
Eating Disorders	School Violence
Employee Assistance Programs	Veterans Services
Genetics / Transplant	
Gerontology Services	
HIV/AIDS	
Homeless Family Assistance	

Information on the Profession of Social Work (Provided by the National Association of Social Workers)

Fast Facts:

Professional social workers are found in every facet of community life—in corporations, elected offices, hospitals, mental health clinics, military, private practices, prisons, schools, senior centers, and in numerous public and private agencies that serve individuals and families in need. The following are quick facts about the social work profession:

Professional Social Workers are highly trained and experienced professionals who have completed a minimum number of hours in supervised fieldwork

Over 40% of all disaster mental health volunteers trained by the American Red Cross are **Professional Social Workers**

Social Work Student Facts

	Full Time Students	Part-time Students	Online/ Hybrid Programs	Degrees Awarded
Bachelor	57,103	7,708	492	19,278
Masters	37,771	18,632	228	25,018
Doctoral	2,061	484	73	330

**Statistics from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) during the 2014-2015 academic year*

1 of 5 Mental Health Professionals are Social Worker

Professional Social Workers are the nation's largest group of mental health services providers

Legislators Who Are Social Workers

U.S. Senators		U.S. Representatives	
Sen. Barbara Mikulski (MD)	Rep. Karen Bass (CA-37)	Rep. Allyson Schwartz (PA-13)	
Sen. Debbie Stabenow (MI)	Rep. Susan Davis (CA-53)	Rep. Carol Shea-Porter (NH-1)	
	Rep. Luis Gutierrez (IL-4)	Rep. Kyrsten Sinema (AZ-9)	
	Rep. Barbara Lee (CA-13)	Rep. Niki Tsongas (MA-3)	

- Today, 50 special interest social work organizations contribute to the vitality and credibility of the social work profession.

RESOURCES

Web: For additional information about social workers, search the 2014 Occupational Outlook Handbook on the Bureau of Labor Statistics website: www.bls.gov. Also visit www.socialworkers.org for more information about the profession.

Video: <http://www.socialworkersspeak.org/2015-nasw-media-awards-filmsdocumentaries>

- **Alive Inside** / This documentary looks at a social worker's program that uses music to help people suffering from Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia
- **Buffalo Nation: The Children Are Crying**/ This documentary from social worker Leslye Abbey looks at the history of the Lakota Sioux, the poverty, alcoholism and other issues that exist on their reservation, and what social workers and others are doing to help.
- **Finding Jenn's Voice** / The documentary from social worker Tracy Schott looks at domestic violence and how women who are pregnant may be especially vulnerable to violence and murder at the had of their mate
- **Hilirstait: The Helpers**/ This short documentary from social worker Cory Gordon highlights social workers who are working with Alaska Native populations in sometimes remote reaches of the state

Social Work History

- **1898**- Columbia University offered the first social work class.
- **1931**- Social work pioneer Jane Addams was one of the first women to receive a Nobel Peace Prize. Known best for establishing settlement houses in Chicago for immigrants in the early 1900s, Addams was a dedicated community organizer and peace activist.
- **1933**- Frances Perkins, a social worker, was the first woman to be appointed to the cabinet of a U.S. President. As President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Secretary of Labor, Perkins drafted much of the New Deal legislation in the 1940s.
- **1961**- Social worker and civil rights trailblazer Whitney M. Young, Jr. became the executive director of the National Urban League while serving as dean for the Atlanta School of Social Work. He also served as president of NASW in the late 1960s. A noted expert in American race relations, Time Magazine acknowledged Young as a key inspiration for President Johnson's War on Poverty.
- **1998**- The social work profession celebrated its Centennial in. That year, several important artifacts from across the country were donated to the Smithsonian Institution to commemorate 100 years of professional social work in the United States.

Today, Americans enjoy many privileges because early social workers saw miseries and injustices and took action, inspiring others along the way. Many of the benefits we take for granted came about because social workers—working with families and institutions—spoke out against abuse and neglect.

- The civil rights of all people regardless of gender, race, faith, or sexual orientation are protected.
- Workers enjoy unemployment insurance, disability pay, worker's compensation and Social Security.
- People with mental illness and developmental disabilities are now afforded humane treatment.
- Medicaid and Medicare give poor, disabled and elderly people access to health care.
- Society seeks to prevent child abuse and neglect.
- Treatment for mental illness and substance abuse is gradually losing its stigma.

Other famous social workers include Harry Hopkins (Works Progress Administration), Dorothy Height (National Council of Negro Women), and Jeanette Rankin (the first woman elected to the U.S. Congress).

RESOURCES

Video: Legacies of Social Change: 100 Years of Professional Social Work in the United States available from NASW Press at www.socialworkers.org.

Barker, Robert L. (1998) Milestones in the Development of Social Work and Social Welfare Washington, DC NASW Press.
Edwards, Richard L. (Ed.-in-Chief) (1995) Encyclopedia of Social Work, 19th Edition Washington, DC NASW Press.

The remainder of this booklet is a review of the areas of social work specialization. Additional information is provided about the professional organizations and job websites for the profession of social work.

Children and Families

Social workers bring their unique skills to helping two increasingly vulnerable groups: children and families. In all, about 16% of the country's 500,000 social workers work in child services while 12% work in family services.

A range of factors—poverty, homelessness, alcohol and drug addiction and child abuse and neglect—make today's families more susceptible than ever to splitting apart. In fact, less than half of America's children live in a traditional "nuclear family," according to statistics.

Fortunately, social workers have a wide array of tools to help children and families to better cope with the normal stresses of life and to deal with systemic problems such as child abuse and homelessness. Through assessment, support, counseling, resource coordination and advocacy, social workers:

- Counsel families to find better solutions to their problems
- Place abused children in loving homes
- Find employment and housing for homeless families
- Help pregnant women, adoptive parents and adopted children navigate the adoption system
- Help children and families make best use of the welfare system.

In all of these arenas, social workers use a systems and family-oriented approach to helping families cope. The adoption system is a good example. Social workers counsel pregnant women, conduct home studies of potential adoptive parents, find suitable "matches" of adoptive parents and children and help adoptive parents deal with the struggles unique to adopted children. Increasingly, they also provide post-adoption counseling to help older adoptees deal with issues of self-identity, loss and self-esteem as well as medical problems that may have a genetic component.

Social workers provide a wide gamut of services in the foster-care system as well. These services are critical as the number of children in foster care continues to rise. In this arena, social workers assess at risk families to determine if a child needs placement. They evaluate potential foster homes, monitor the foster home during placement and help legal authorities and the family to determine an appropriate time to return the child to the family of origin.

Social workers also help women and their children who are victims of domestic violence. In a typical case, a social worker at a shelter in Ann Arbor, Michigan, helped a battered woman and her two sons get back on their feet. She counseled the woman one-on-one, arranged for transportation to get the boys to and from school, and helped the woman develop goals and life skills so she could afford housing and child care once she and the boys left the shelter. The social worker also helped the woman find affordable housing and helped her contact a lawyer who specialized in abuse cases. Indeed, the social worker was essential to helping the woman develop a new and healthier life for herself and her boys.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Adoptions
- Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS)
- Residential Care Placements
- At Risk youth (Big Brother/Sister)
- Child Life Specialist
- Counselor
- Group Home Coordinator

INTERNSHIP PLACEMENTS

- Department of Children and Family Services – LA County
- Foothill Solutions Collaborative – Ontario
- Foothill Family Services-West Covina
- Foothill Presbyterian Hospital – Glendora
- Koinonia Family Services (Adoptions)
- Salvation Army – Anaheim
- Olive Crest

RESOURCES

<https://www.socialworkers.org/pressroom/features/issue/children.asp>

Health Care

People with medical illnesses often need assistance with the psycho social issues that are related to their disease or treatment process. They may need help re-establishing their routines once they arrive home from the hospital or they may have trouble paying their bills. Families who lose a loved one may need counseling to process their grief, and those with hereditary conditions may need help sorting through their fears and concerns about the future.

Social workers play a key role in all of these health-related areas and more. In fact, a large percentage of the nation's social workers work in medical settings—20% practice in hospitals, for example, and 12% in medical clinics. Social workers also work in hospices, health maintenance organizations, nursing homes and health organizations like the American Cancer Society and the America Lung Association.

Social workers use a wide range of skills in all of these settings, employing both a family and a systems-oriented approach to psychosocial care. They provide counseling, help families develop strengths and resources, and run programs for patients who have diseases such as AIDS and heart disease. As a part of an inter-professional team, the medical social work field fills many areas of need for the patient, their support system and the medical team. Social Workers are often the critical liaison between nurses, physicians, physical and speech therapist and other medical practitioners. In the home setting, social workers provide support, counseling and informal assistance employed by home health agencies or insurance companies.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adult Care Hospitals• Substance Acute Facilities• Skilled Nursing Facilities• Hospice• Home Health | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• County Public Health• Health Insurance Companies• Discharge Planner• Dialysis Centers• Transplant Centers• Community Based Clinics |
|--|---|

INTERNSHIP PLACEMENTS

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Citrus Valley Intercommunity Hospital – Covina• Foothill Presbyterian Hospital – Glendora• Kindred Hospital Riverside Contract – Perris and Glendora• Seasons Hospice and Palliative Care – Pasadena and Glendale• Queen of the Valley Hospital – Covina• Vitas-Hospice – Covina• Whittier Unified School District (Santa Fe High School) – Whittier |
|--|

International Social Work

Many current events—from the attacks of September 11, 2001, to concerns over the world’s water supply—highlight the fact that we are all world citizens. Whether we acknowledge it or not, our problems and destinies are becoming increasingly interconnected.

Social workers have much to offer this global culture. Using the skills and values of caring and empowerment, they are involved in many important international activities here and abroad. Some of these include:

- Counseling and aiding refugees
- Facilitating international adoptions
- Providing disaster relief in times of crisis
- Developing, managing and staffing international service-delivery programs like the Red Cross
- Researching international issues with a focus on improving people’s quality of life and addressing injustices

Social workers play key roles in areas that might be considered more typical of the profession. For example, they help to resettle refugees, as did social worker Phillip “Skip” Kindy, who helped to resettle 100 Tibetans in Madison, Wisconsin; they’re involved as program developers, managers and staff in many national and international organizations that include a “social development” component. Two examples are the United Nations High Commission for Refugees whose aim is to protect and aid refugees in all phases of transit and resettlement; and the United Nations Children’s Fund or UNICEF, which deals with issues ranging from child health to child abuse to emergency relief for children and women. In fact, the United Nations’ social mission is considered one of its greatest successes, and social workers have been instrumental in that success.

Social workers also address international issues through broad-based statements and advocacy efforts helped to shape the focus of last year’s Annual Social Work Day, sponsored by the United Nations. At the meeting, Elizabeth Clark, executive director of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), noted that social workers’ unique contributions help put United Nations treaties, declarations and conventions on human rights into practice.

In the same way, the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) condemned in a statement the terrorist acts of September 11, but also called on Americans and the world community to examine the possible underlying causes of terrorism, including poverty, perceived inequity, and foreign policies that may help fuel terrorism.

As it becomes more obvious that the world’s problems are everyone’s problem, it is likely that more and more social workers will play a part in world affairs. These efforts won’t be wasted: Social workers’ unique skills and flexible approaches to problem-solving can help develop human potential in places where people have been oppressed and create peaceful, mutual solutions to strife-filled situations.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Multiple Secular and Faith Based Organizations
- NGO
- Red Cross
- World Vision

Macro

The original mission of social work had much to do with championing the rights of society's most vulnerable members, from children to homeless people to the physically disabled. That mission remains the same over 100 years later.

Social workers continue to carry the torch for those who need help to succeed in our society. Indeed, while only a small percentage of the nation's half a million social workers count advocacy as their primary job duty, all social workers carry a philosophical charge to protect and empower the vulnerable and disadvantaged. They do so through a variety of means including writing op-ed pieces, lobbying, organizing local protests, and helping to change laws that adversely affect vulnerable and disadvantaged members of society. Today's social workers employ a full range of techniques for advocacy ranging from protests and sit-ins to harnessing the power of the Internet to network with others to affect change.

The knowledge, values and ethics base of social work education uniquely equips social workers to take on advocacy roles. For one thing, they see first-hand the difficulties faced by clients who lack the resources for maintaining the basic human needs for themselves and their families. Social workers will work with social service agencies to facilitate economic maintenance, protect a social safety net or ensure the availability of health and mental health services.

Mobilizing resources, public opinion, interacting with agencies whose responsibilities are to serve the needs of vulnerable populations are ways social workers champion the rights of individuals, communities and society at large through active participation in the political process. Whether concerned about an individual's needs or social policy reform, social workers are most frequently the voice for change and social justice.

Often, the needs of individuals and policy overlap. Here is an example: A social worker works for an organization dedicated to serving homeless and low-income families. Several of her homeless clients tell her they are unable to receive emergency food stamps. When she explores why, she finds a bureaucratic glitch: Because homeless families have no address they are not considered residents and are therefore ineligible for the aid.

In the following weeks, the social worker meets with area service providers and state legislators, who agree to clarify the state policy and implement new regulations allowing homeless people to receive food stamps. The social worker continues her advocacy efforts at the national level, providing testimony that eventually helps to pass the Hunger Prevention Act of 1988 (P.L. 100-435).

Social workers advocate in many other ways as well. These include:

- **Media involvement:** Social workers help educate the public by writing letters to the editor and op-ed pieces that clarify misinformation about social programs and point out social injustices that may otherwise escape public attention.
- **Community organizing:** Social workers have long worked to empower citizens by helping them plan activities that address social problems, improve services and enhance social well-being. In 2000, for example, social work students helped organize local grassroots activities as part of a national campaign to end gun violence.

- Demonstrations: Social workers continue to use this organizing tool to empower citizens. An example is a social worker who learned that one of her clients was living in a housing complex that was in terrible disrepair. All reasonable efforts to get the landlord involved had failed. The social worker helped to organize the tenants, who attempted to meet with the landlord to discuss improvements. When he didn't respond, they picketed his house, showing up every day for a week. The social worker arranged for the media to cover the event and eventually, the landlord made the repairs.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Political Organizations (City, State, or Federal Level of Government)
- Advocacy Groups

INTERNSHIP PLACEMENTS

- Public Defenders Office – San Bernardino
- Immigration Resource Center – San Gabriel
- Salvation Army – Orange County and Pasadena

Mental Health

Did you know that social workers provide most of the country's mental health services? According to government sources, 60% of mental health professionals are clinically trained social workers, compared to 10% of psychiatrists, 23% of psychologists and 5% of psychiatric nurses.

Social workers provide mental health services in a variety of settings, including:

- Community mental health programs;
- Disaster relief programs;
- Employee assistance programs;
- Military and veteran services;
- Private practice;
- Hospitals and skilled nursing facilities;
- Schools; and,
- Rehabilitation programs

Social workers see people within their environment—as part of a family, an employee in an organization, or a community member. Because of this, their mental health work is multi-faceted, combining psychological, social and practical elements. They have special skills in assessing, treating, and preventing psychological, behavioral, emotional, social and environmental problems affecting individuals negatively.

Social workers provide an array of varying mental health services. In an employee assistance program a social worker may help employees with personal problems and workplace concerns. Social workers also help their clients adjust to major lifestyle changes due to the death of a loved one, disability, divorce, or loss of a job. They also provide substance abuse treatment and help people experiencing depression, anxiety, a crisis or trauma.

Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, social workers were among the first on the scene providing mental health care to rescue workers, families, and others in the community. Many Americans were grappling with grief, anxiety, fear, and uncertainty; social workers, as part of the Red Cross Disaster Relief program, quickly offered assistance and counseling to families and loved ones as well as to other relief workers overcome with trauma. Other social workers, especially those working with children, offered counseling and advice to parents and families in reaction to the attacks.

Using individual, group or family counseling, clinical social workers are skillful in helping people to gain an understanding of their problems and in alleviating major stresses that impact daily life. Whether it's for a child, adolescent, adult, or older individual, clinical social workers can be counted on to provide the best mental health care in the nation.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • Department of Mental Health | • Private Practice |
| • In Patient Mental Health Hospital | • Psychiatric Evaluation Teams (PET) |
| • Out Patient Mental Health Hospital | • Day Treatment Centers |
| • Eating Disorder Clinics | |

INTERNSHIP PLACEMENTS

- Canyon Ridge Hospital – Chino
- Foothill Family Services
- Pacific Clinics Day Treatment – Monrovia
- Pacific Clinic East – Covina
- Pacific Clinics – Irwindale
- Santa Anita Family Services – Santa Anita

Older Adult Population

With the aging of the "baby boomer" generation and the lengthening of life spans, both the number and proportion of older people are rapidly increasing. Many of the health related problems that contributed to decreased life span have been combated. Yet, this same achievement presents new challenges in meeting the social, environmental, psychological, economic and health care needs of older adults.

These shifting demographics have created a greater demand for professionals with specialized knowledge and expertise in aging. Social work is unique among the health and mental health professions in that it considers the physical, mental, and social aspects of individuals—an approach that is critical to providing services to older adults and their families.

Gerontological social workers, who make up about 5% of the nation's half a million social workers, can help older adults and their families maintain well-being, overcome problems and achieve maximum potential during later life. Social workers serve as "advocates" for older people, providing a vital link between older individuals and the services they need. Indeed, a key function of gerontological social workers is to promote independence, autonomy and dignity.

Social workers provide services in a variety of settings, including hospitals, nursing homes, hospices, adult day health centers, independent and assisted living communities, public agencies and increasingly, in people's homes.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Senior Citizen Centers
- Department on Aging
- Community Based Out Reach Programs
- Skilled Nursing Facilities
- Public Policy Centers on Aging
- Adult Protective Centers

INTERNSHIP PLACEMENTS

- Kindred Transitional
- Santa Ana Family Services (Senior Program) – Santa Anita
- Whittier Hills Health Care Center- Whittier
- YWCA San Gabriel Valley Senior Services – Covina

School Social Work

School social workers pick up where teachers leave off. They are perhaps the professionals best equipped to address the social and psychological issues that can block academic progress. Through counseling, crisis intervention and prevention programs, they help young people overcome the difficulties in their lives, and as a result, give them a better chance at succeeding in school.

About 5% of the nation's approximately half a million social workers work in the schools, primarily in public school settings. Besides helping youth with traditional academic problems, social workers aid others whose specific social, psychological, emotional or physical difficulties put them at risk for falling through the cracks. These include homeless youth, gay and lesbian youth and young people with physical or mental health disabilities.

Because social workers are trained to think of innovative solutions to complex problems, their interventions often make a strong difference for young people at risk for academic failure.

INTERNSHIP PLACEMENTS

- Azusa Unified School District Family Resource Center – Azusa
- Family Social Solutions Collaborative – Ontario
- Orange County School District
- Pacoima Charter School – Pacoima
- Whittier Unified School District (Santa Fe High School) – Whittier

Social Work in the Criminal Justice System

Many people inquire about what role social workers have in the criminal justice system. They are particularly interested in whether or not they could work in the criminal justice system once they graduated with their social work degree. The answer is yes.

At the undergraduate level, people with degrees in social work, psychology, sociology, and related degrees, are often competing for the same jobs. Some refer to these jobs as “entry level.”

Individuals who work in the criminal justice field and who have a degree in social work may consider themselves forensic social workers. There are degree programs across the country that focus on forensic social work but they’re relatively sparse, compared to other traditional social work programs. You can read more about those programs at the [National Organization For Forensic Social Work \(NOFSW\)](#) website.

One of the many benefits of having a social work degree is its versatility. Below is a list of possible jobs that one could hold in the criminal justice system with a social work degree. Many require a master’s degree in social work but not all of them.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

- Mental Health or Drug Court Coordinator/Program Manager
- Guardian Ad Litem (court-appointed individual who represents the best interests of the child in a divorce or parental responsibility case)
- Parole or Probation Officer
- Assisting a team of lawyers investigating a case of possible innocence (i.e. [Innocence Project](#))
- Victim Advocate
- Sex Offender Therapist
- Policy Analyst
- Providing expert testimony in a legal trial
- Assistant to a public defender
- Forensic investigator at the local Medical Examiners’ office
- Custody Evaluator
- Mental Health Evaluator
- Mitigation Specialist
- Case Manager for offenders leaving prison and transiting back into society
- Conflict Mediator

SOCIAL WORK IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

- Police or Sheriff Agencies
- Prisons (State/ Federal)
- Probation Office (County)
- Courts (State/ Federal)
- Youth Camps

INTERNSHIP PLACEMENTS

- Public Defenders Office – San Bernardino

Social Work with Veterans and Military Families

Military service members, veterans and their families have special needs that may necessitate working with a social worker. For example, military personnel may be dealing with psychological and emotional disorders, including depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress, especially if they have been fighting on the front lines of war. Families of veterans may be struggling with domestic violence, child abuse, substance abuse or suicide. Military social workers must be prepared for the complexity that comes with treating both active-duty and civilian clients who are part of military culture.

Military social work is a specialized field of practice that provides necessary support and interventions to military personnel, retirees, their spouses and their dependents. Military social workers receive specialized training that allows them to serve the needs of military clients. They must understand the individual's role within military and veteran cultures and take the complex responsibilities of military personnel into account when making assessments. It's also important to know the Uniform Code of Military Justice and the history of military social work, as well as what is currently happening in the social work field.

Clinical social workers who work in a military setting must be prepared to address the mental, physical and emotional needs of military personnel. Clinical social workers must also be prepared to treat the needs of veterans from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and conflicts in the Persian Gulf and Somalia. Members of the Department of Homeland Security and the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service are also served by military social workers.

Source: <http://socialworklicensemap.com/become-a-social-worker/social-worker-careers/military-social-work/>

Substance Abuse/ Chemical Addiction

Social workers regularly encounter individuals, families, and communities affected by substance use disorders (SUDs). Many social workers specialize in the alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs field, whereas others provide services to individuals and their families in specialty and non-specialty settings in which SUDs are often integral to the clients' presenting problems. These settings can include health and mental health centers, hospitals, child welfare and aging services, courts and correctional facilities, employee assistance programs, and private practices.

There is a growing emphasis in the professional fields working with clients with SUDs on using short-term, limited interventions. However, many clients who are dependent on substances require longer term interventions that recognize that substance use can be a chronic disorder—one that includes relapse and may not resolve for months or even years.

Substance use disorders are often exhibited with co-occurring disorders—the use of more than one substance and/or one or more psychiatric disorders simultaneously. A co-occurring disorder may also be a medical condition. Clients with SUDs may also display poly-substance patterns, in which they experience physical or psychological effects from more than one substance. In the field of addiction treatment, there is recognition that addictive behaviors may be linked and that treatment for substance use disorders and other addictive behaviors (for example, gambling, overeating) may overlap.

Social work practice is in a unique position to influence the delivery of services by addressing the acute and chronic needs of clients with SUDs, including co-occurring disorders and poly-substance patterns. By developing and applying evidence-informed approaches that incorporate established findings, social workers can markedly improve treatment services for clients and their families. This approach to service delivery requires that social workers be knowledgeable about the processes and dynamics of substance use, including abuse, dependency, and recovery. Social workers also need to have the knowledge and ability to work with clients to develop effective treatment plans using existing and emerging resources, including evidence-informed practices (NASW, 2013).

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- In-patient Facilities
- Out patients Clinics
- AA (Alcoholics Anonymous)
- County Run Programs
- Substance Specific

Social Justice Issues and Focus

Social work is a practical profession aimed at helping people address their problems and matching them with the resources they need to lead healthy and productive lives.

Beneath this practicality lies a strong value system that can be summarized in two words: social justice. Social justice is the view that everyone deserves equal economic, political and social rights and opportunities. Social workers aim to open the doors of access and opportunity for everyone, particularly those in greatest need.

A brief glance at the many roles of social workers shows how this value system underscores everything they do. With homeless clients, for example, social workers make sure their clients have access to food stamps and health care. The same is true for elderly clients: Social workers may work to protect them from financial abuse or to ensure that they are receiving the health and financial benefits that are rightfully theirs.

Social workers also apply social-justice principles to structural problems in the social service agencies in which they work. Armed with the long-term goal of empowering their clients, they use knowledge of existing legal principles and organizational structure to suggest changes to protect their clients, who are often powerless and underserved. For example, social workers may learn organizational ethics to ensure that clients are treated respectfully by staff or they may examine the organization's policies on personal client information to make sure it is held in confidence.

Often, social workers bring social justice concepts into the wider social and political arena. Following the September 11, 2001, attacks in New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington an international group of social workers issued statements condemning terrorism but calling for examination of possible underlying causes. In particular, the statements suggested that terrorism may be fueled in part by global practices that led to poverty and rage among millions of Middle Eastern citizens.

Diversity & Cultural Competence

Indeed, from the beginning of their profession, social workers have been involved in “connecting the dots” between peace and social justice. According to social work philosophy ... Peace is not possible where there are gross inequalities of money and power, whether between workers and managers, nations and nations or men and women.

Two recent events have made the need for “cultural competence”— understanding the specific cultural, language, social and economic nuances of particular people and families—more important than ever. One is the civil rights movement that began in the 1950s, in which African Americans, women, gays and lesbians, people with disabilities and other minority groups alerted the country to their distinct identities and long histories of oppression. The other is the growing number of new immigrants to this country, who bring with them unique cultural, language, religious, and political backgrounds. Histories of internal displacement within their own countries, torture, political oppression, and extreme poverty abound among immigrant communities. Melding these backgrounds with the history, experiences, and expectations of U.S. born ethnic and diverse populations creates both challenges and opportunities for social workers.

It is fair to say that both helping professionals and society at large have a long way to go to gain cultural competence. Fortunately, social workers represent a group of service providers with a longstanding history of understanding both people's differences and the impact of social injustices on their well-being. Today, many social workers are adding cultural competence to these already existing strengths and values, making them particularly well-equipped to deliver

culturally competent care. Many schools of social work now include curricula on cultural competence, and the National Association of Social Workers recently developed standards that require social workers to strive to deliver culturally competent services to their increasingly diverse clientele.

It is no exaggeration to say that a culturally competent provider can mean the difference between a person “making it” or “falling through the cracks.” Here is an extreme example. Latina social worker Josie has a brother with schizophrenia who speaks only Spanish. When her brother failed to receive culturally competent care over a 20-year period, he was hospitalized 162 times. When he finally did receive culturally competent care, he was hospitalized only once in 15 years.

Language differences affect both majority and minority populations. For example, a refugee from war-torn Bosnia doesn’t understand English, and he lacks both material and financial resources. If he doesn’t get help, he faces many potential dangers that result from poverty and an inability to access the system. A social worker trained in culturally competent care connects him with a range of social services—the traditional assistance provided by social workers. In addition, she introduces him to a group of other Bosnians who have undergone similar experiences thus, providing an added support that she’s aware of because of her extra training.

Another example of how a culturally competent social worker can have an impact on people’s lives is in the area of international adoptions. Social workers trained in cultural competence can help adoptive parents understand their adopted child’s cultural heritage and create activities to keep the child’s culture alive. Adding this dimension to the child’s assimilation can foster the youngster’s sense of identity and make the adoption experience a smoother and happier one for both parents and child.

For Asian Americans, families are their primary source of support; thusly, they tend to keep problems inside the family rather than sharing them with others. A social worker who is culturally competent will therefore provide brief, task-oriented therapy that respects their privacy and helps them achieve concrete goals, instead of providing traditional Western-style therapy that is more individualistic and analytical. Similarly, African Americans often come from backgrounds that include extended-family bonds and a strong, community-oriented spiritual life. Trained social workers will make sure these cultural realities become an integral part of therapy by often times including other family members in therapy.

Culturally competent services are needed beyond race and ethnicity. Culturally competent social workers are also better able to address issues of gender and help persons with disabilities, older adults, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people. A working knowledge of these groups’ cultures and values helps social workers tailor care so it is effective and appropriate for their clients’ needs.

It can be persuasively argued that effective care is impossible without a working knowledge and understanding of a person’s or group’s culture and background. As we move into an ever more pluralistic and multicultural society, social workers are among those best-equipped to deliver that care and to empower people from all backgrounds to lead connected, healthy lives.

Poverty

Poverty continues to plague a country rich in material, cultural and educational resources. About 11.3% of Americans lived in poverty in 2000, while recent newspaper and magazine articles highlight the growing disparity between the rich and poor.

Social work has an extensive history of addressing poverty at the individual, community and national levels. In fact, one of the six ethical principles guiding social workers—working for social justice—cites poverty as a primary problem.

A close examination of poverty reveals that it is about much more than money alone. Poverty results from a number of factors that include political, social, and economic dynamics. For instance, as the country shifts from a manufacturing to a service economy, wages have been dramatically lowered for the average "nonprofessional" worker. In addition, the feminization of poverty has been exacerbated by persistent disparities in salaries for men and women, as well as the disproportionate economic burden that single mothers face in raising children alone.

Social workers' training in systems theory gives them a firm grounding in understanding the nature of poverty and its roots. Clearly, there is no single solution that can "cure" poverty—poverty must be combated on a number of levels. People living in poverty often need increased access to affordable childcare, low-income housing options, mental health treatment, and educational and employment opportunities.

Take the example of a social worker's intervention with a young woman living in a poor urban community. When she first appeared for social services, the young woman was pregnant, depressed and unable to pay her rent. However, she was determined to improve her life circumstances and those for her unborn child. She couldn't save money because she had another child to support. Although he was emotionally supportive, her partner was unable to financially contribute to her support.

During their work together, the social worker was able to develop a plan of action with her client. By following up on leads, the young woman was connected with several sources of tangible help in her community. Over the next few months, she was able to identify subsidized housing, obtain prenatal care, receive treatment for her depression and to enroll in a part-time job training program. Her partner was also able to find employment through a community job bank. By the time her baby was born, the young woman's outlook on life was brighter.

On a broader scale, social workers are tackling the complex issue of poverty through community organizing in poor neighborhoods. Community organizing utilizes the community's assets and combines them with additional resources to build up the local systems that support health, education and financial viability. It emphasizes a poor community's strengths as opposed to its weaknesses. Social workers empower community residents to be active in leading these efforts by lending their professional skills to facilitate and support local initiatives.

Besides addressing poverty on the individual and community levels, social workers strive to fight poverty on a national scale. They have joined forces urging Congress to increase the minimum wage and have advocated for the importance of ending poverty rather than simply reducing the number of welfare recipients.

In all of these efforts, social workers use their training to look beyond the symptoms and get to the root causes of poverty. Always, their primary goal is to empower people to become vital, healthy members of society.

NASW

- NASW is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world, with 150,000 members.
- NASW works to enhance the professional growth and development of its members, to create and maintain standards for the profession, and to advance sound social policies. NASW also contributes to the well-being of individuals, families and communities through its work and advocacy.
- NASW was founded in 1955 through a merger of seven social work organizations:
 - American Association of Social Workers
 - American Association of Medical Social Workers
 - American Association of Psychiatric Social Workers
 - National Association of School Social Workers
 - American Association of Group Workers
 - Association for the Study of Community Organization
 - Social Work Research Group

Organization

- NASW has 56 chapters in every state in the U.S., plus Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands, and an International Chapter. Washington DC and New York City also host NASW chapters.
- An elected Delegate Assembly sets organizational policy for NASW, and an elected Board of Directors establishes strategic priorities for the association. Each NASW chapter also has a staff, a board of directors, volunteer committees, and task forces that help to advance the mission of the association.
- The NASW National Office employs approximately 135 people, and is divided into five divisions: Executive Office, Customer Services, Publications, Professional Development and Advocacy, and Management and Administration. The national organization manages an \$18 million budget.
- NASW has four subsidiaries. (1) The NASW Foundation supports scientific, philanthropic, and educational activities that advance the social work profession. (2) The Insurance Trust provides competitive insurance services to members. (3) The Legal Defense Fund provides technical advice and financial assistance to members involved in legal proceedings as a result of upholding the NASW Code of Ethics. (4) Political Action for Candidate Election (PACE) raises funds to contribute to the political campaigns of candidates who support the goals and objectives of social work.

RESOURCES:

Web: Visit www.socialworkers.org for more information about NASW members and association activities.

Job Websites

Criminal Justice System and Social Work

- <http://www.indeed.com/q-Criminal-Justice-Social-Worker-jobs.html>

Family and Children

- <http://dcfs.co.la.ca.us/careers/index.html>

Health Care

- <http://www.simplyhired.com>

International Social Work

- <http://socialwork.uw.edu/careers/international-social-work>

Macro Social Work

- <http://michgirlcafe.blogspot.com/p/sample-job-titles-work-settings.html>
- <http://www.simplyhired.com/k-macro-social-worker-jobs.html>

Mental Health

- <http://www.careerbuilder.com/jobs/keyword/mental-health>
- http://dmh.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/dmh/employment_opportunities

Military Social Work

- <http://www.simplyhired.com/k-social-worker-us-military-jobs.html>

Older Adult Population (Geriatric Social Work)

- <http://www.indeed.com/q-Geriatric-Social-Worker-jobs.html>

School Social Work

- <http://www.indeed.com/q-school-social-worker-jobs.html>

Substance Abuse and Social Work

- <http://www.careerbuilder.com/jobs/keyword/substance-abuse-social-worker/>

General Social Worker Job Postings Websites:

- <http://www.socialworkjobbank.com/site/>
- <http://alljobsinsocialwork.com/>
- <http://www.socialworkjobsearch.com/socialworkjobsearch.cgi>
- <http://www.socialwork.com/>
- <http://www.socialworksearch.com/>
- <http://www.socialworkerjobs.com/>

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Bachelor of Social Work Official Website - <http://www.apu.edu/bas/socialwork/bsw/>

