Social Work Profession

• The social work profession
  – promotes social change
  – enhances problem solving in human relationships
  – facilitates empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being (IFSW, 2000)

• Social workers
  – respond to demands of living and promote citizens' rights
  – work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
Who Are Social Workers

• Professional "helpers"
  – Demonstrate genuine concern and positive regard for others
  – Possess personal qualities that support work with others
  – Value working in partnerships
Video

• Professional identity - professional demeanor
Generalist Social Work

• Utilizes generic practice processes
• Recognizes potential for change at multiple system levels
• Views behavior in context of social environments
• Integrates direct practice, social policy, and research
Professional Identity
CSWE EPAS 2.1.1

• In every aspect of their lives, social workers represent the social work profession.

• How does the definition of generalist social work practice inform professional identity and behaviors?
Social Work Goals

• Enhancing the people's capacities to resolve problems, cope, and function effectively

• Linking clients with needed resources

• Improve the service delivery network

• Promoting social justice through the development of social policy
Human Needs

• Universal basic needs
• Motivational needs
• Lifespan needs
• Identity development needs
• Cultural strengths
• Physical environment
• Social justice
• World living
Whereas human needs are the reasons for social work intervention, human strengths are the sources for solutions.

Based on the earlier section in this chapter, “Voices from the Field,” what are the potential needs and sources of strengths that give direction to practice with social work clients in these practice examples?
Social Welfare

• Social welfare institution responds to the health, education, and well-being needs of societal members

• Views about social welfare
  – Residual
  – Institutional
Examples of Fields of Social Work Practice

- Family and children’s services
- Health and rehabilitation
- Mental health
- Occupational social work
- Housing

- Information and referral
- Income maintenance
- Aging services
- School social work
- Juvenile and adult corrections
- Community development
Social Work, Social Welfare, and Society

• Social work as:
  – an agent of social control on behalf of society
  – a reformer of society
  – separate from society
  – an intermediary between individuals and society
  (Cowger, 1977)
Video

- Policy practice - advocating for the client
Policy Practice
CSWE EPAS 2.1.8

• Social workers understand that public policies affect the types of social benefits and acknowledge the need for policy practice.

• What are some examples of social policies that affect services to clients in various fields of social work practice?
Empowerment

• Process of increasing power
  – Personal
  – Interpersonal
  – Political

• Dual focus
  – Psychological control
  – Sociopolitical change
Empowerment Social Work

• Focus on strengths
• Work collaboratively
• Critically reflect on structural arrangements
• Link personal and political power
Human Rights and Justice
CSWE EPAS 2.1.5

- Social work is aptly described as society’s conscience.

- How do social workers promote social and economic justice and advocate for human rights?
Chapter 2
An Evolving Profession

Social Work
An Empowering Profession
Seventh Edition
Brenda DuBois & Karla Miley

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Roots of Social Work as a Profession

• National Conference of Charities and Corrections
• Charity Organization Societies
• Settlement House Movement
The roots of the social work profession lie in two distinct late nineteenth century social movements.

What unique contributions of the Charity Organization and the Settlement House movements continue to be evident in contemporary social work practice?
Evolution of the Profession

- Social casework (1910s)
- Psychoanalytic movement (1920s)
- Public welfare movement (1930s)
- Group work and community organization (1940s & 1950s)
- Social reform (1960s)
- Ecological perspective (1970s)
- Generalist practice (1980s)
Practice Context
CSWE EPAS 2.1.9

• Social workers view the personal troubles of individuals within the societal context of larger social issues.

• From an ecosystems perspective, why is it important for social workers to engage in practice activities that include both individual treatment and social reform?
Professional Status

• Flexner’s challenge
• Greenwood’s reevaluation
• Professional organizations
  – NASW for practice
  – CSWE for education
Professional Identity
CSWE EPAS 2.1.1

• To enhance the image of social work in the eyes of the general public, the NASW has recently mounted an education and media campaign “Help Starts Here.”

• What can you do as an individual practitioner to influence the general public’s positive regard of social workers and the social work profession?
Common Base of Social Work Practice

• Professional values
• Theoretical knowledge
• Practice skills
Video

• Professional identity - professional roles and boundaries
The common base of professional values, knowledge, and skills is shared by all social workers and unifies the profession.

What personal values might interfere with your professional obligation to allow social work values to guide practice?
Tenets for Social Work Practice

- Empowerment
- Policy development
- Professional integrity
- Resource linkage
- Collaborative networks
- Institutional responsiveness
- Social justice
- Knowledge development
- Information exchange
- Cultural competence
- Prevention
- World view
• Practice context - keeping up with shifting contexts
Ecosystems Perspective

• Social systems
  – Subsystems
  – Environments

• Ecological perspective
  – Person : environment
  – Goodness of fit
Video

• Human behavior - the ecological model using the Friere method
Human System Transactions

- Input
- Processing
- Output
- Feedback
Implications of Social Systems for Social Work

• Regard environmental context of human functioning
• Consider problems and solutions in multiple systems
• Understand change in one system effects interrelated systems
Engage, Assess, Intervene, Evaluate
CSWE EPAS 2.1.10

• Generalist social work practitioners examine clients’ situations in the context of the entire social milieu.

• How does knowing that both problems and solutions can be found in the social environment inform a generalist approach to assessment and intervention?
Social Functioning

• How people perform roles and function in society

• Types
  – Effective
  – At risk
  – Difficulties in functioning
Environmental Press and Stress

- Stressors create barriers and problems in social functioning
  - Examples: poverty, poor health, inadequate education, architectural barriers

- Environmental enrichments augment social functioning and enhance well-being
  - Examples: adequate housing, job opportunities, access to health care
• Social functioning is an index of social well-being defined by a person’s ability to interact effectively in society.

• What personal, interpersonal, and environmental factors enhance and/or impede social functioning?
Micro level Social Work Intervention

• Work with individuals, families or small groups

• Issues
  – Personal adjustment
  – Interpersonal relationships
  – Environmental stresses
Mezzo level Social Work Intervention

• Work with formal groups and complex organizations

• Issues
  – Group or organizational functioning
  – Patterns of decision making
  – Styles of interaction
Macro level Social Work Intervention

- Work with neighborhoods, communities, and societies

- Activities
  - Community organizing
  - Economic development
  - Legislative action
  - Policy formulation
Working with the Social Work Profession

• Work with the social work profession

• Activities
  – Renew and refine the profession
  – Promote a just society
Video

• Critical thinking - applying critical thinking
Social work clients may be at any level in the social systems continuum - individuals, families, groups, organizations, neighborhoods, and communities.

What specialized knowledge and skills do social workers need for their practice with each of these client systems?
Integrated Generalist Model

• Basis is issues rather than methods
• Simultaneous intervention at multiple system levels
• Employs variety of models and methods
• Addresses diverse client problems and needs
• Applies to wide range of settings
Critical Thinking
CSWE EPAS 2.1.3

• Traditional methods of social work include casework, group work, and community organization.

• Why should the definition or nature of the problem and not the method alone determine which intervention strategies social workers select?