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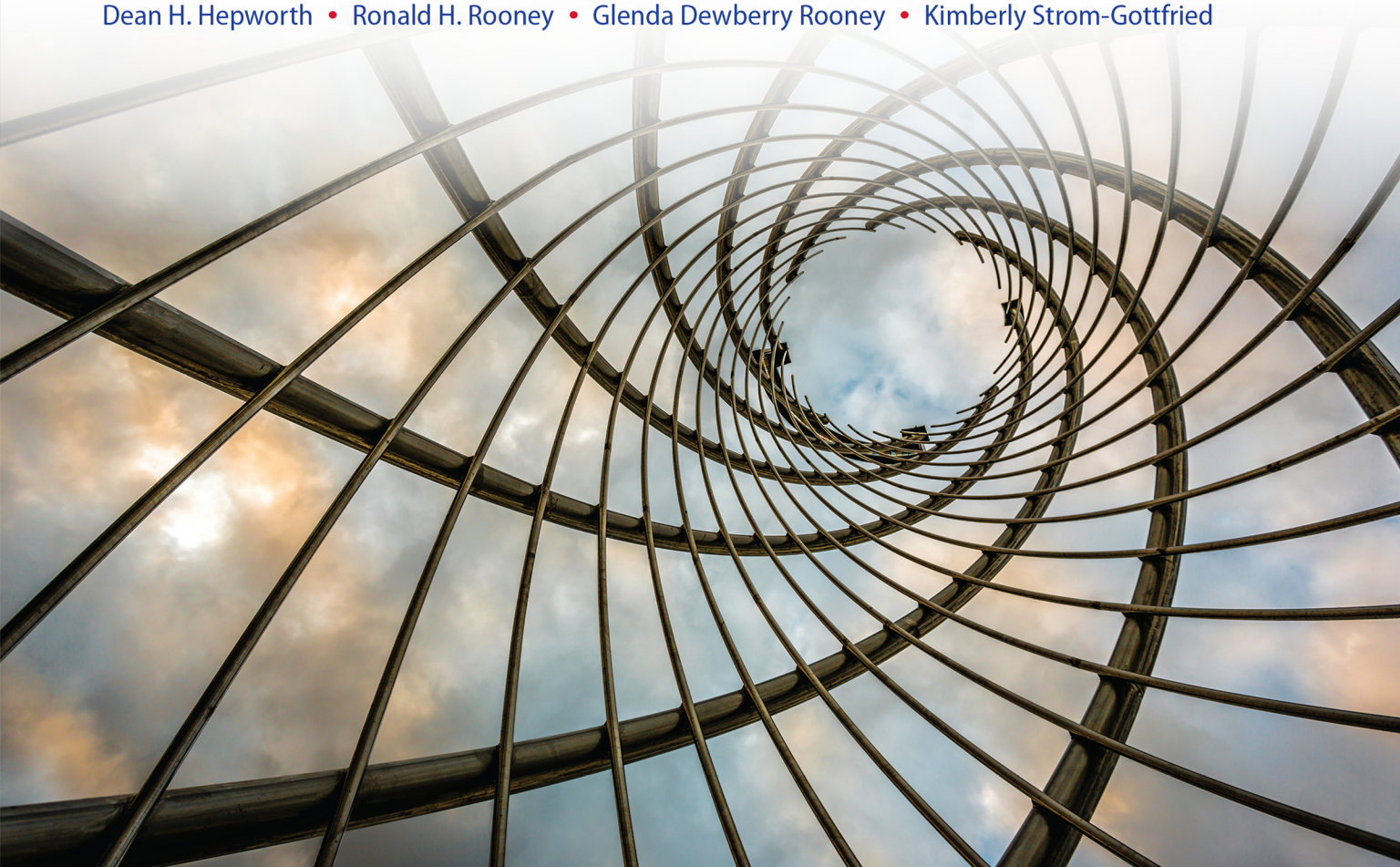
Direct Social Work Practice

THEORY AND SKILLS

Dean H. Hepworth • Ronald H. Rooney • Glenda Dewberry Rooney • Kimberly Strom-Gottfried



TENTH EDITION

Direct Social Work Practice: **Theory and Skills**

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Preface

When we, your authors, teach BSW and MSW students, we are often confronted with the question "What should I do if … ?" The easy (and usually correct) answer is "It depends." How a social worker responds in any given situation *depends* on a variety of factors: the setting in which he or she is working, the client, the nature of the helping relationship that has developed, the advantages and disadvantages of any given action or choice, and so on.

We wrote this book to help answer the "it depends"—to equip you with the knowledge and critical thinking to weigh the factors involved in decisions throughout the helping process, both as a student social worker and as a professional. At first, that process can seem cumbersome. It can be difficult to digest all this new information and recall it as needed during client interactions. This learning process involves becoming acquainted with the concepts in this book, understanding the pros and cons of various choices, becoming familiar with the different variables that affect practice, and using this knowledge and these skills in supervision, in work with colleagues and classmates, and in practice with clients.

As social workers ourselves, we have the utmost respect for the complexity of the work, the power that professionals hold, and the grave situations in which we are entrusted to help others. In this text, we have tried to provide you with a foundation to practice with excellence and integrity in this vital profession. We write this in a context in which many clients of color are fearful about the values and motives of authorities, whether they be police or social service workers. Skills taught in the text include ways to listen effectively, share power, and pursue social justice. An additional context is practice with clients that is trauma informed, and we consider contemporary services to LGBTQ clients, military families, and emerging immigrant populations, among others. The book also includes the context of the Affordable Care Act.

As in previous editions, the text and supporting materials explicitly integrate the related video content, allowing instructors to use the video materials for in-class or homework activities. Adjustments in design and content clearly link the text to student skill development and core competencies specified by CSWE and EPAS (2015). We describe how to construct SOAP notes to assist quality planning and recording of practice. Students and practitioners have been confused about the use of various terms to describe responses that are sensitive to client content and emotion. Sensitive to the current widespread use of the term "reflection," we now use "reflection of emotion" to describe the previous term and "paraphrasing" and "reflection of content" to add dimension to the previous global term "reflection." Additional content has been added on intimate partner violence and work with military families. Practice guidelines are now designed to be less adult-centric and include more appropriate guidance for interviewing children and adolescents. We continue to seek guidelines for practices that are responsive to diversity.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE TEXT

The book has four parts. Part 1 introduces the reader to the social work profession and direct practice and provides an overview of the helping process, including core competencies, the role of evidence-based practice, the domains and roles of social work, and the elements of ethical practice.

Part 2 presents the beginning phase of the helping process, and each chapter includes examples from the videotapes developed for the text. It addresses strategies and skills for building relationships, providing direction and focus in interviews, avoiding common communication errors, and substituting better options. Subsequent chapters in this section address problem and strengths exploration, theories and techniques for individual, family, and group assessment, and the processes involved in goal setting.

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Part 3 presents the middle, or goal attainment, phase of the helping process. It describes change-oriented strategies, including updated material on task-centered, crisis intervention, cognitive restructuring, and solution-focused approaches to practice, large-systems change, advocacy, case management, family practice, and group work. Readers learn advanced communication and intervention techniques and common social worker and client barriers to change.

Part 4 deals with the final phase of the helping process, incorporating material on evaluating and terminating social work relationships in an array of circumstances.

ALTERNATIVE CHAPTER ORDER

This book has been structured around phases of practice at systems levels ranging from individual to family to group to macro practice. Some instructors prefer to teach all content about a particular mode of practice in one block. In particular, those instructors whose courses emphasize individual contacts may choose to present chapters in a different order than we have organized them (see Table 1). They may teach content in Chapters 5–9, skip ahead to Chapters 12 and 13, and then delve into Chapters 17 and 18. Similarly, family content can be grouped by using Chapters 10 and 15 together, and group content by using Chapters 11 and 16 together. We have presented the chapters in the book in the current order because we think that presentation of intervention by phases fits a systems perspective better than beginning with a choice of intervention mode.

TABLE 1 Organization of Chapters by Mode of Practice

MODE OF PRACTICE	
Across levels	Chapters 1–4, 19
Individual	Chapters 5–9, 12, 13, 17, 18
Family	Chapters 10, 15
Group	Chapters 11, 16
Macro	Chapter 14

The Empowerment Series: Relationship with the Educational Policy Statement and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), and Professional Competencies

This book is part of the Cengage Learning Empowerment Series and addresses accreditation standards established by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Our intent is to facilitate programs' ability to link content provided in this textbook with expectations for student learning and accomplishment. As is true in almost all learning, students must acquire knowledge before they are expected to apply it to practice situations.

CSWE has identified nine core competencies that are critical for professional practice (CSWE, 2015). For clarity, we have alphabetized in lowercase the practice behaviors under each competency. "Helping Hands" Icons located within paragraphs clearly show the linkage between content in the textbook and specific practice behaviors and competencies. Each icon is labeled with the specific competency that relates directly to the content conveyed in the paragraph. For example, an icon might be labeled EP [Educational Policy] 1, which is the competency "Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior" (CSWE, 2015). Accredited social work programs are required to demonstrate that students have mastered all practice behaviors for competence as specified in the EPAS. (Please refer to www.cswe.org for the EPAS document.)

Corresponding to each icon, "Competency Notes" at the end of each chapter explain the relationship between chapter content and CSWE's competencies. A summary chart of the icons' locations in all chapters and their respective competency or practice behavior is placed in the front matter of the book.

A new Practice Behaviors Workbook is available to instructors and students through MindTap. This workbook includes exercises that provide students with opportunities to develop the practice behaviors in class or as part of their homework, facilitating their mastery over practical aspects of social work and minimizing the need for programs to develop additional assessments.

NEW FEATURES AND RESOURCES FOR THE 10TH EDITION

The 10th edition continues to integrate many videos, demonstrating cross-cultural practice, engagement with an adolescent, sessions from the middle of the helping process, and motivational interviewing.

Chapter 1

In this chapter we included an updated presentation of evidence-based practice, reframed the presentation of

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social work challenges to opportunities, revised the values section, and presented the case study more quickly in the chapter. We included a link to a George Will article commenting on an earlier version of the text.

Chapter 2

We included more details to explain the social work practice framework. A brief discussion of the micro, mezzo, and macro systems is included, and we added a comment on technology in social work. We added to the definition of clinical social work practice and direct social work practice and added more detail to the discussions of social work roles.

Chapter 3

Concepts were added pertaining to cultural competence throughout the chapter. For example, interior decorations that are sensitive to diverse populations are discussed in the section on physical conditions of the interview.

Chapter 4

This chapter features extra attention to the maintenance of professional boundaries in online contexts and the importance of professional self-awareness and self-regulation. Ethics in cases of interpersonal violence and other challenging venues have been added.

Chapter 5

The empathy scale was revised to reflect a bottom level for "no empathy demonstrated." The list of affective words was modified to make it more contemporary. Recent theory and research on empathy was included, and guidelines for self-disclosure were revised.

Chapter 6

Use of the term "reflection" was expanded to include both reflection of emotion and reflection of content, replacing the former term "paraphrasing." There is more content aimed at interviewing children and adolescents. Guidelines for interviewing include expanded attention to strengths and resources.

Chapter 7

This chapter now includes a short discussion on the importance of putting away cell phones in the section on nonverbal behaviors. Throughout the chapter we discuss self-awareness and self-correction when errors are noticed. We added double-barreled questions and cognitive bias to the list of counterproductive patterns of communication.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 has been updated to include a more comprehensive section addressing the treatment of children and adolescents as well as a section highlighting important changes from DSM-4 to DSM-5.

Chapter 9

Chapter 9 now includes greater detail regarding the collection of data for developmental assessments as well as additional examples of assessments and documentation. In addition, the issue of elder misuse of drugs is addressed and changes from DSM-4 to DSM-5 are discussed.

Chapter 10

Chapter 10 has been reorganized and adds new content that will help social work students integrate family systems assessments into their practice. It includes expanded attention to self-awareness and practice with diverse families and a detailed articulation of a family systems framework for assessment of family strengths and adaptive capacity. The chapter closes with a description of three assessment strategies, including the use of circular questions, genograms, and standardized assessment scales.

Chapter 11

This edition features expanded examples of group types and a deeper discussion of task groups. A new section has been added to address single-session groups. Other sections have been streamlined, and contemporary issues, such as the use of devices in sessions and online contact outside of group, have been included.

Chapter 12

Chapter 12 discusses the purpose and function of goals and the process involved in goal development with voluntary clients, involuntary clients, and minors. General and specific tasks or objectives are discussed as instrumental strategies for goal attainment. Revisions include the use of video and case examples to demonstrate the process of developing goals. Each example demonstrates the link between goals and a target, and the subsequent development of general and specific tasks.

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Sample contracts are provided, and methods for monitoring and measuring the progress and outcome of goals are discussed.

Chapter 13

Chapter 13 provides students with comprehensive knowledge and skills of evidence-based intervention strategies and procedures. Case and video case examples illustrate the application of each strategy. Trauma-informed care and its principles and importance in work with clients is introduced in this edition. The fit between trauma-informed care and the values and principles of social work practice is discussed. Resources intended to further knowledge and understanding of the prevalence of client trauma are presented at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 14

Chapter 14 provides a condensed foundation for understanding macro practice. Micro to macro assessment questions and problem-solving strategies are emphasized, as is the connection between micro and macro concerns. Case examples illustrate the shift from case to cause in social work practice with diverse clients and target problems. A social justice lens is adopted in this chapter as a framework for understanding social work advocacy efforts. New content in this chapter considers the social worker's role as a policy advocate, in which the macro-level change effort focuses on organization practices and policies that influence the environment experienced by clients.

Chapter 15

Chapter 15 was revised to conceptualize social work with families in the diverse settings in which social workers routinely encounter families, in addition to traditional family therapy settings and programs. Moreover, the chapter presents intervention skills that are at the heart of most contemporary evidence-based approaches to social work with families. Interventions are organized into first- and second-order change strategies, and new content was included to support skill-training interventions, as well as to emphasize the continuity between intervention strategies presented in earlier chapters and their application to social work with families.

Chapter 16

This chapter has been more closely integrated with Chapter 11. It has an expanded and reorganized section on task groups, a new section on single-session groups, and more detailed coverage of technology and groups.

Chapter 17

This chapter links to earlier coverage of empathy and includes a review of new research on empathy. It adds cultural bias as a barrier to interpretation. Many examples have been revised and adapted, including new skill development examples. The decision about when interpretation is appropriate has been clarified.

Chapter 18

Chapter 18 makes use of case examples to identify and resolve relations dynamics between the social worker and clients. A video case example demonstrates motivational interviewing as a strategy to assist clients in the change effort.

Chapter 19

This chapter has new sections on avoiding treatment dropouts, endings in short-term therapy such as crisis and single-session services, and the effects of endings on students. There is also information on practical, hybrid models of evaluation that can be adopted in an array of agency settings.

INSTRUCTOR ANCILLARIES

MindTap

MindTap for *Direct Social Work Practice: Theory and Skills* engages and empowers students to produce their best work—consistently. By seamlessly integrating course material with videos, activities, apps, and much more, MindTap creates a unique learning path that fosters increased comprehension and efficiency.

For students:

- MindTap delivers real-world relevance with activities and assignments that help students build critical thinking and analytic skills that will transfer to other courses and their professional lives.
- MindTap helps students stay organized and efficient with a single destination that reflects what's important to the instructor, along with the tools students need to master the content.
- MindTap empowers and motivates students with information that shows where they stand at all times—both individually and compared to the highest performers in class.

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Additionally, for instructors, MindTap allows you to:

- Control what content students see and when they see it with a learning path that can be used as is or matched to your syllabus exactly.
- Create a unique learning path of relevant readings, multimedia, and activities that move students up the learning taxonomy from basic knowledge and comprehension to analysis, application, and critical thinking.
- Integrate your own content into the MindTap Reader using your own documents or pulling from sources like RSS feeds, YouTube videos, websites, Google Docs, and more.
- Use powerful analytics and reports that provide a snapshot of class progress, time in course, engagement, and completion.

In addition to the benefits of the platform, MindTap for *Direct Social Work Practice: Theory and Skills* includes:

- Helper Studio, an interactive video case in which students respond as if they were the social worker.
- Video examples demonstrating skills and concepts presented in the text.
- Case studies to help students apply chapter content.

Online Instructor's Manual

The Instructor's Manual (IM) contains a variety of resources to aid instructors in preparing and presenting text material in a manner that meets their personal preferences and course needs. It presents chapter-by-chapter suggestions and resources to enhance and facilitate learning.

Online Test Bank

For assessment support, the updated test bank includes true/false, multiple-choice, matching, short answer, and essay questions for each chapter.

Online PowerPoint

These vibrant Microsoft® PowerPoint® lecture slides for each chapter assist you with your lecture by providing concept coverage using images, figures, and tables directly from the textbook.

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We want to express our thanks and admiration for Dean Hepworth, a social work educator and the first author of this text, for his inspiration and example in developing a text that would help students become more effective practitioners.

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PART 1

Introduction

1 The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Work

2 Direct Practice: Domain, Philosophy, and Roles

3 Overview of the Helping Process

4 Operationalizing the Cardinal Social Work Values

Part 1 of this book provides you with a background of concepts, values, historical perspectives, and information about systems. This information will, in turn, prepare you to learn the specific direct practice skills described in Part 2.

Chapter 1 introduces you to the social work profession; explains its context, mission, purposes, and values; and describes how systems perspectives can guide you in conceptualizing your work.

Chapter 2 elaborates on the roles played by social workers, including the distinctions made between clinical and direct social work practice, and presents a philosophy of direct practice.

Chapter 3 offers an overview of the helping process, including exploration, implementation, and termination.

Finally, Chapter 4 introduces the cardinal values and ethical concerns underlying social work.

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CHAPTER 1

The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Work

Chapter Overview

This chapter presents a context for social work practice. After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Understand the context, mission, and purposes and opportunities of social work services.
- Identify the value perspectives that guide social workers.
- Appreciate the role of systems and ecological concepts for understanding the interaction of individuals and families with their environments.
- Describe competencies that you will be expected to achieve in your academic career.
- Reflect on our perspective on diversity that will guide how we present issues.

EPAS Competencies in Chapter 1

This chapter will provide you with the information you need to meet several Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) competencies—a set of nine standards or competencies centered on an educational format that prescribes attention to outcome performance (CSWE, 2014). The goal of aligning social work education to such competencies is that social workers will be self-reflective, value guided, and able to think critically while utilizing knowledge and skills. The following are the competencies we cover in this chapter:

- Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
- Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
- Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
- Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
- Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice
- Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

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THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL WORK

Let's start our discussion of social work by examining the context of the profession. Social work seeks to promote human and community well-being, enhance quality of life, and promote social and economic justice and the elimination of poverty (EPAS, 2015). Toward these objectives, social work practice includes both opportunities and challenges for assisting individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. These opportunities and challenges exist in a context that has been relatively stable over time but has also changed in the recent past. For example, many social workers continue to practice with clients at the lower levels of the social economic ladder, although those clients now have access to the Patient Care and Affordable Care Act (PCACA), commonly known as Obamacare. Meanwhile, long-lasting concerns among African Americans about whether police act more to serve them or harass them now exist in a context in which FBI Director James Comey has acknowledged a legacy of poor treatment of African Americans by police and unconscious bias, recognizing that poverty and educational gaps often bring that community and police together in dangerous circumstances (Comey, 2015). In addition, differences of opinion remain regarding same-sex marriage, while at the same time more and more states made it legal within their borders, and the Supreme Court has now established it as a right in all states. A national resolution of a debate about the proper role of immigration has still not occurred, creating challenges for social workers who provide services to people who are undocumented.

Meanwhile, social work practice continues to be provided in organizational and resource settings that are fraught with limitations. In addition, social workers work in many different settings—governmental agencies, schools, health care centers, family and child welfare agencies, mental health centers, business and industry, correctional settings, and private practices, to name a few. Social workers also work with people of all ages, races, ethnic groups, socioeconomic levels, religions, sexual orientations, and abilities. Social workers themselves variously describe their work as rewarding, frustrating, satisfying, discouraging, stressful, and, most of all, challenging (Pooler, Wolfer, & Freeman, 2014).

Clearly, the context of social work presents both challenges and opportunities. This book will assist you in developing practice skills, values, and knowledge so that you can be helpful to individuals, families, and groups in any social work setting. This chapter begins with a case example that highlights several aspects of social work practice and provides the context for concepts we will introduce in the chapter.

EP 2, 3, 6, 7, and 8

Many social workers practice in settings, such as schools, where they perform dual roles, protecting both the community at large and vulnerable individuals, in addition to playing other supportive roles (Trotter, 2006). No matter where they are employed, social workers are influenced by the social work value of self-determination for their clients. For this reason, in addition to exploring school attendance issues with Mrs. Ramirez and her children, Tobias addressed Mrs. Ramirez's other concerns.

Of course, social workers are not the only helping professionals who provide direct services to clients in need. They have a special interest, however, in helping empower members of oppressed groups (Parsons, 2002). Indeed, as a profession, social workers are committed to the pursuit of social justice for poor, disadvantaged, disenfranchised, and oppressed people (Carniol, 1992; Finn & Jacobson, 2003; Marsh, 2005; Pelton, 2001; Van Wormer, 2002). In this case, in addition to seeing his client, Mrs. Ramirez, as a parent struggling with school attendance issues, Tobias also saw her as a client experiencing challenges possibly related to issues in the United States surrounding undocumented immigrants (Cleaveland, 2010; Padilla et al., 2008). Interestingly, a law passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in 2005, but not in the Senate, would have made it a crime for service providers such as Tobias to assist undocumented immigrants. However, according to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Immigration Toolkit (NASW, 2006, p. 4), "the plight of refugees and immigrants must be considered on the basis of human values and needs rather than on the basis of an ideological struggle related to foreign policy." The contrast between these two positions suggests that social workers grapple with issues of social justice in their everyday practice. As a social worker, Tobias obviously could not personally resolve the uncertain situation of undocumented immigrants. However, he could work with Mrs. Ramirez and local health institutions to explore possible solutions to her problems.

Note that in this case example, Mrs. Ramirez did not seek assistance herself. Rather, she was referred by school staff because of her children's poor school attendance. She would therefore be referred to as a **legally mandated client** who receives services under the threat of a court order. Those clients who *themselves apply* for

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CASE EXAMPLE

Marta Ramirez was referred to child welfare services because her two elementary-school-age children had more than seven days of unexcused absences from school during the term, the standard for educational neglect in her state. When Tobias, a child welfare social worker, met with Mrs. Ramirez, he found that the children had missed similar amounts of time when they had lived in another state. There had not been earlier investigations, however, as legal standards for educational neglect were different in the previous state. Mrs. Ramirez noted that her children had been frequently ill with "flu and asthma." She also said that the children did not feel comfortable at the school, and they felt that the teachers were mean to them because they were Hispanic. In addition, Mrs. Ramirez had sustained a work-related back injury that limited her ability to get out of bed some mornings. As an undocumented immigrant, Mrs. Ramirez was ineligible for the surgery she needed. Finally, she acknowledged experiencing depression and anxiety.

Tobias shared with Mrs. Ramirez the reason for the referral under statute and asked for her perspective on school attendance. He explained that child welfare workers are called on to assist families in having their children educated. He also asked about how things were going for Mrs. Ramirez and her family in their community. In doing so, Tobias explained his dual roles of (1) responding to the law violation by statute and (2) helping families address issues of concern to them.

Mrs. Ramirez acknowledged that her children's school attendance had been sporadic. She attributed this to their illnesses, their feeling unwelcome in the school, and her own health difficulties that inhibited her in getting the children ready for school.

Tobias asked Mrs. Ramirez if she would like to receive assistance in problem solving, both about how to get her children to school and how to help them have a better educational experience there. In addition, although health issues were not served directly by his child welfare agency, Tobias offered to explore linkages with the medical field to address Mrs. Ramirez's health and depression concerns.

services are referred to as **voluntary clients**. Many potential clients, including those like Mrs. Ramirez, become more voluntary if their own concerns are explicitly addressed as part of the social work assessment. Many potential clients fall between the two extremes of legally mandated and voluntary clients, as they are neither legally coerced nor seeking a service themselves (Trotter, 2006). These potential clients, who often experience nonlegal pressures from family members, teachers, and referral sources, are known as **nonvoluntary clients** (R. H. Rooney, 2009).

EP 7

With each type of client (legally mandated, voluntary, and nonvoluntary), social work assessments include three facets:

1. Exploration of multiple concerns expressed by potential clients
2. Circumstances that might involve legally mandated intervention or concerns about health or safely
3. Other potential problems that emerge from the assessment

Such assessments also seek to reveal strengths and potential resources. For example, Mrs. Ramirez's potential strengths and resources include her determination that her children have a better life than their parents, as well as other community and spiritual support systems, both locally and in her home country of Mexico. Those potential resources must be assessed in the context of challenges, both internal and external, such as the lack of a health care safety net for undocumented immigrants and Mrs. Ramirez's own medical and psychological concerns.

THE MISSION OF SOCIAL WORK

The perspectives taken by social workers in their professional roles will influence how their clients' concerns are conceptualized and addressed. According to the NASW, "the primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people

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who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty" (NASW, 2008a). The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) defines the purpose of social work as including the promotion of social change and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being (IFSW, 2000, p. 1). Comparisons of the mission of social work in the United States to the international definition note the shared focus on marginalized peoples and empowerment but add an emphasis on global and cultural sensitivity (Bidgood, Holosko, & Taylor, 2003).

In this book, we will delineate the core elements that lie at the heart of social work wherever it is practiced. These core elements can be classified into two dimensions: purposes of the profession and core competencies, where core competencies include characteristic knowledge, values, and practice behaviors (CSWE, 2015, p. 1). Let's now turn to the purposes of social work and the nine core competencies.

THE PURPOSES OF SOCIAL WORK

Social work practitioners help clients move toward specific objectives. The means of accomplishing those objectives, however, vary based on the unique circumstances of each client. Even so, all social workers share common goals that constitute the purpose and objectives of the profession. These goals unify the profession and help members avoid developing narrow perspectives that are limited to particular practice settings. To best serve their clients, social workers must be willing to assume responsibilities and engage in actions that expand upon the functions of specific social agencies and their designated individual roles as staff members. For example, Tobias, the child welfare social worker who met with Mrs. Ramirez, assessed her issues and concerns and went beyond the child protection mission of the child welfare setting.

EP 3

According to the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), a key competency of the social work profession is to advance human rights and social and economic justice. **Social justice** refers to the creation of social institutions that support the welfare of individuals and groups (Center for Economic and Social Justice, n.d.). **Economic justice** refers to those aspects of social justice that relate to economic well-being, such as a livable wage, pay equity, nondiscrimination in employment, and social security.

In 2007, the columnist George Will and a group of conservative scholars charged that the NASW social work Code of Ethics, as well as the authors of a previous edition of this book, prescribed political orthodoxy in violation of freedom of speech and in opposition to critical thinking (NASW, 2007; Will, 2007). While support for social and economic justice as national priorities ebbs and flows in the U.S. political landscape, the social work profession supports these goals at all times as part of its core mission. It is not relevant to the profession whether the political majority in such times label themselves as liberal, conservative, green, independent, or otherwise. Social workers ally with those political groups that benefit the oppressed groups who form their core constituencies. Social workers therefore seek to promote social and economic justice for both Americans and immigrants with or without documentation. As such, in our case example, the prevention of conditions that limit human rights and quality of life guides Tobias to take seriously the allegation that Mrs. Ramirez and her family have not been made to feel welcome at the school. Indeed, with national priorities of raising testing scores for reading and writing, attention to the needs of those who speak English as a second language may be in conflict with the goal of increasing test scores.

The purposes outlined also suggest that Tobias might assist Mrs. Ramirez and her family in a variety of other ways to meet their needs. Those ways include the creation of policies to find solutions to the health needs of immigrants without documents. Social workers perform preventive, restorative, and remedial functions in pursuit of this purpose:

- **Prevention** involves the timely provision of services to vulnerable persons, promoting social functioning before problems develop. It includes programs and activities such as family planning, well-baby clinics, parent education, premarital and preretirement counseling, and marital enrichment programs (Pomeroy & Steiker, 2012).
- **Restoration** seeks to restore functioning that has been impaired by physical or mental difficulties. Included in this group of clients are persons with varying degrees of paralysis caused by severe spinal injury, individuals afflicted with chronic mental illness, persons with developmental disabilities, persons with deficient educational backgrounds, and individuals with many other types of disability.
- **Remediation** entails the elimination or amelioration of existing social problems. Many potential

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clients in this category are similar to Mrs. Ramirez in that they are referred by others, such as the school system, family members, neighbors, or doctors, who have perceived a need.

In addition, the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) affirm the commitment of social programs to the core values of the profession: service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, competence, human rights, and scientific inquiry (CSWE, 2015; NASW, 2008a).

SOCIAL WORK VALUES

EP 1

All professions have value preferences that give purpose and direction to their practitioners. Indeed, the purpose and objectives of social work and other professions come from their respective value systems. Professional values, however, are not separate from societal values. Rather, professions espouse selected societal values. Society, in turn, sanctions the activities of professions through supportive legislation, funding, delegation of responsibility for certain societal functions, and mechanisms for ensuring that those functions are adequately discharged. Because a profession is linked to certain societal values, it tends to serve as society's conscience with respect to those particular values.

Values represent strongly held beliefs about how the world should be, about how people should normally behave, and about what the preferred conditions of life are. Broad societal values in the United States are reflected in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the laws of the land, which declare and ensure certain rights of the people. In addition, societal values are reflected in governmental entities and programs designed to safeguard the rights of people and to promote the common good. Interpretations of values and rights, however, are not always uniform. Consider, for example, the heated national debates over the right of women to have abortions; the controversy over the rights of gays and lesbians to enjoy the benefits of marriage; and conflicts between advocates of gun control and those espousing individual rights. These debates continue despite the fact that same-sex marriage has now been legalized, for example. Similarly, national concern over gun control and safety contends with concerns over constitutional protections.

The values of the social work profession also reflect strongly held beliefs about the rights of people to free choice and opportunity. They recognize the preferred conditions of life that enhance people's welfare, ways that members of the profession should view and treat people, preferred goals for people, and ways in which those goals should be reached. We next consider five values and purposes that guide social work education. These five values are italicized, and the content that follows each is our commentary.

1. *Social workers' professional relationships are built on regard for individual worth and dignity and are advanced by mutual participation, acceptance, confidentiality, honesty, and responsible handling of conflict.* This value is reflected in several parts of the NASW Code of Ethics. The code states: "Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need" (NASW, 2008a). That is, service to others is elevated above self-interest; social workers should therefore use their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address social problems. The code also states that social workers should "respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person." Every person is unique and has inherent worth; therefore, social workers' interactions with people as they pursue and utilize resources should enhance their dignity and individuality, enlarge their competence, and increase their problem-solving and coping abilities.

   People who receive social work services are often overwhelmed by their circumstances and have exhausted their coping resources. Many feel stressed by a multitude of problems. In addition to helping clients reduce their stress level, social workers aid clients in many other ways: They help them view their difficulties from a fresh perspective, consider various remedial alternatives, foster awareness of strengths, mobilize both active and latent coping resources, enhance self-awareness, and teach problem-solving strategies and interpersonal skills.

   Social workers perform these functions while recognizing "the central importance of human relationships" (NASW, 2008a). Social workers therefore engage clients as partners in purposeful efforts to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the clients' well-being. This value is reflected in yet another Code of Ethics principle: "Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner." This principle suggests that social workers practice consistently with the profession's mission, values, and ethical

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standards, and that they promote ethical practices in the organizations with which they are affiliated (NASW, 2008a).

2. *Social workers respect the individual's right to make independent decisions and to participate actively in the helping process.* People have a right to freedom as long as they do not infringe on the rights of others. Therefore, transactions with people who are seeking and utilizing resources should enhance their independence and self-determination. Too often in the past, social workers and other helping professionals focused on "deficit, disease, and dysfunction" (Cowger, 1992). The attention currently devoted by social workers to client empowerment and strengths means that social workers assist clients in increasing their personal potential and political power such that clients can improve their life situation (Krogsrud, Miley, O'Melia, & Dubois, 2013; Parsons, 2002; Saleebey, 2006). Consistent with this value, this book incorporates an empowerment and strength-oriented perspective for working with clients. Chapter 13 focuses on skills designed to enhance empowerment and capacity for independent action.
3. *Social workers are committed to assisting clients to obtain needed resources.* The social worker's commitment to client self-determination and empowerment is hollow if clients lack access to the resources necessary to overcome their problems and achieve their goals (Hartman, 1993). Because people such as Mrs. Ramirez from our case example often know little about available resources, social workers must act as brokers by referring people to resource systems such as public legal services, health care agencies, child welfare divisions, mental health centers, centers for elderly persons, and family counseling agencies. Some individual clients or families may require goods and services from many different providers and may lack the language facility, physical or mental capacity, experience, or skills needed to avail themselves of these goods and services. Social workers then may assume the role of case managers; that is, they may not only provide direct services but also assume responsibility for connecting the client to diverse resources and ensuring that the client receives needed services in a timely fashion.

   Clients sometimes need resource systems that are not available. In these cases, social workers must act as program developers by creating and organizing new resource systems. Examples of such efforts include working with citizens and public officials to arrange transportation to health care agencies for the elderly, persons with disabilities, and indigent people; developing neighborhood organizations to campaign for better educational and recreational programs; organizing tenants to assert their rights to landlords and housing authorities for improved housing and sanitation; and organizing support groups, skill development groups, and self-help groups to assist people in coping with difficult problems of living.

   Social workers also frequently perform the role of facilitator or enabler to enhance access to resources. For example, they may enhance communication among family members; coordinate efforts of teachers, school counselors, and social workers in assisting troubled students; help groups provide maximal support to their members; open channels of communication between coworkers; include patients or inmates in the governance of institutions; facilitate teamwork among members of different disciplines in hospitals and mental health centers; and provide for consumer input into agency policy-making boards.
4. *Social workers strive to make social institutions more humane and responsive to human needs.* Although many social workers primarily provide direct service, they also have a responsibility to work toward improving clients' quality of life by promoting policies and legislation that enhance their clients' physical and social environments. For example, the problems of individuals, families, groups, and neighborhoods can often be prevented (or at least ameliorated) by implementing laws and policies that prohibit contamination of the physical environment and enrich both physical and social environments. Therefore, social workers should not limit themselves to remedial activities but rather should seek out causes of problems and sponsor or support efforts aimed at improving their clients' environments.
5. *Social workers engage diversity and difference in practices.* Social workers perform their services with populations that are characterized by great diversity, including the intersection of dimensions such as "age, class, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex and sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental ability, and national origin"

EP 2

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(CSWE, 2015). NASW's Code of Ethics requires social workers to have a knowledge base about and recognize strengths of their clients' cultures and deliver services that are sensitive to those cultures (NASW, 2008a). Social workers must therefore be informed about and respectful of differences. Social workers must also continually update their knowledge about the strengths and resources associated with individuals from diverse groups to increase the sensitivity and effectiveness of the services they provide to those clients. An increasing number of social workers are themselves members of these diverse populations. They face the challenge of working effectively with both clients and agency staff from the majority culture as well as persons from their own groups.

EP 1

Turning the five values just described into reality should be the mutual responsibility of individual citizens and of society. Society should foster conditions and provide opportunities for citizens to participate in policy-making processes. Citizens, in turn, should fulfill their responsibilities to society by actively participating in those processes.

Considered individually, these five values are not unique to social work. Their unique combination, however, differentiates social work from other professions. Considered in their entirety, these values make it clear that social work's identity derives from its connection with the institution of social welfare. According to Gilbert (1977), **social welfare** represents a special helping mechanism devised to aid those who suffer from the variety of ills found in industrial society: "Whenever other major institutions, be they familial, religious, economic, or educational in nature, fall short in their helping and resource providing functions, social welfare spans the gap" (p. 402).

For example, the ideal social work practitioner is a warm, caring, open, and responsible person who safeguards the confidentiality of information disclosed by clients. Because you, the reader, have chosen to enter the field of social work, most of your personal values probably coincide with the cardinal values espoused by the majority of social work practitioners.

However, your personal values may conflict with professional values. For example, some social workers have personal and/or religious beliefs that homosexuality is an unhealthy choice, not a natural, perhaps genetic, circumstance. In EPAS Competency 2, the competent social worker is expected to understand how diversity and difference shape human experience and form human identity. Among those factors are gender identity and sexual orientation. Hence the personal value that some social workers might hold regarding sexual orientation must be superseded by the professional commitment to understanding diversity and difference.

Conflicts between the personal and/or professional values of the social worker and the personal values of a client or group sometimes arise. Not infrequently, students (and even seasoned social workers) experience conflicts over value-laden, problematic situations such as incest, infidelity, rape, child neglect or abuse, spousal abuse, and criminal behavior. Because social workers encounter these and other problems typically viewed by the public as appalling, and because personal values inevitably shape the social worker's attitudes, perceptions, feelings, and responses to clients, it is vital that social workers remain flexible and nonjudgmental in their work. It is therefore vital that you be aware of your own values, recognize how they fit with the profession's values, and assess how they may affect clients whose values differ from your own or whose behavior offends you. It is particularly important that you become aware of your own values because social workers often have opportunities and power that many clients do not possess and may therefore inadvertently impose their own values on their clients.

EPAS COMPETENCIES

In this chapter, we will introduce the nine competencies of EPAS and state them in terms of what social work graduates should be able to do when they have completed their course of study. Please don't feel apprehensive about whether you are capable of performing these competencies now. It will be your task and that of your educational program to prepare you to reach these competencies by the time you graduate. While each of these competencies will be covered in greater detail in later chapters, the following sections summarize the main points of each competency.

EPAS Competency 1

EP 1

This competency requires that social workers understand the value base and ethical standards of the profession, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may affect

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social work practice at various levels. In addition, this competency requires that social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy. Social workers must also recognize their own personal values, the distinction between personal and professional values, and how their personal experiences and reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. For example, if Tobias from our case example had any personal values that might impede his work with Mrs. Ramirez and her children, he would take care that his professional values supersede those personal values.

Note that this competency requires that ethical and professional behavior be understood in the context of the profession's history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of social workers. It is understood that learning continues after graduation through lifelong learning, in which social workers are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. According to this competency, social workers also must understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Hence, social workers must use technology such as voice messages, emails, and texts mindfully and responsibly in ways that protect client confidentiality.

Social workers engage in a variety of practice behaviors to fulfill this competency. For example, they make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics and relevant laws and regulations and by utilizing the models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context. Social workers also employ reflection and self-regulation to manage their personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations. They demonstrate professional demeanor in their behavior, appearance, and oral, written, and electronic communication. Social workers use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes. Finally, they use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

EPAS Competency 2

EP 2

Social workers are guided in this competency to understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. They understand the dimensions of diversity as the intersection of multiple factors, including, but not limited to, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, physical and mental ability, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. For example, Tobias, the social worker in our case example, would try to understand Mrs. Ramirez from many perspectives, including her immigration status, gender, ethnicity, and other perspectives relevant to her situation. This competency guides social workers to understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power. Social workers are aware of privilege and act mindful of it.

This competency also contains the recommendation that social workers use reflection to manage their personal values. For example, early in his working with Mrs. Ramirez, Tobias wrote in his case notes that he suspected that her children were not attending school in part because she and other undocumented immigrants did not value education as much as their fellow students and families in their new community in the United States. In fact, there is evidence to suggest that Mexican immigrants value education highly (Valencia & Black, 2002). Tobias's statement might be seen as a belief, a hypothesis, or a possible bias that could have profound implications for his work with Mrs. Ramirez. If he acted on his belief that her children were not attending primarily because she and other Mexican immigrants were not motivated about education, he might not explore other community- or school-based barriers to their attendance, such as their perception that the children were not welcome. Holding members of oppressed groups personally responsible for all aspects of their condition is an unfortunate value predicated on the Horatio Alger myth that all successful people lift themselves up by their own bootstraps. This competency therefore requires sensitivity to structures that may act to oppress.

This competency also guides social workers to consider the importance of their commitment to diversity as we consider the Eurocentric assumptions that undergird many practice models (Sue & Sue, 2012). We take the position that some factors are universal.

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