



empowerment series

INTRODUCTION TO
**Social Work &
Social Welfare**

CRITICAL THINKING PERSPECTIVES

Karen K. Kirst-Ashman

5e

Council on Social Work Education Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards by Chapter

The Council on Social Work Education’s Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards requires all social work students to develop 9 competencies and recommends teaching and assessing 31 related component behaviors, listed as Educational Policy (EP) Competencies 1–9 below. The multicolor icons (see figure at right) and end of chapter “Competency Notes” connect these important standards to content in the chapters identified below with **bold blue type**.



The 9 Competencies and 31 Component Behaviors (EPAS, 2015)	Chapter(s) Where Referenced
Competency 1—Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior:	All chapters
a. Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context	1, 2, 5, 7, 11, 12, 16
b. Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations	1–4, 6, 8–11, 13, 15, 16
c. Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication	1–7, 10–12, 14
d. Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes	1, 2, 15
e. Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior	1, 2, 4
Competency 2—Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice:	1–6, 8–13, 15, 16
a. Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels	1–3, 5, 6, 8–13, 15, 16
b. Present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences	1–3, 5, 9–11, 13, 15
c. Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies	1–3, 8–11, 13, 15, 16
Competency 3—Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice:	1, 8–10, 12
a. Apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels	1–13, 15, 16
b. Engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice	1–5, 7, 8, 11–13, 16
Competency 4—Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice:	1
a. Use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research	1, 2, 6, 13
b. Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings	1, 2, 4
c. Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery	1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 13, 15
Competency 5—Engage in Policy Practice:	1, 2, 7
a. Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services	1, 4, 6–11
b. Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services	1, 2, 4, 6–11
c. Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice	1, 2, 4–16

The 9 Competencies and 31 Component Behaviors (EPAS, 2015)	Chapter(s) Where Referenced
Competency 6—Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities:	1, 2, 4
a. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies	1, 5, 14
b. Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies	1, 4, 5, 8, 12–14
Competency 7—Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities:	1, 2, 4, 13, 14
a. Collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies	1–6, 8–16
b. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies	1, 3–9, 13–16
c. Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies	1, 3–5, 9–16
d. Select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies	1, 3–5, 9–16
Competency 8—Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities:	1, 2, 4, 13–15
a. Critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies	1–6, 8–16
b. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies	1, 3–5, 7–9, 13, 14, 16
c. Use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes	1, 2, 4, 5, 7–13, 15
d. Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies	1–13, 15, 16
e. Facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals	1, 4, 10, 12, 15, 16
Competency 9—Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities:	1, 2, 4
a. Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes	1, 4
b. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes	1, 4, 5, 13
c. Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes	1, 4, 13, 14, 16
d. Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels	1, 4

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CRITICAL THINKING PERSPECTIVES

FIFTH EDITION

KAREN K. KIRST-ASHMAN

University of Wisconsin—Whitewater



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To Nick, for his continuous encouragement, support, and assistance

About the Author



Karen K. Kirst-Ashman, BSW, MSSW, Ph.D., has been a full professor and was former chairperson in the Social Work Department at the University of Wisconsin—Whitewater, where she taught for 28 years. She is certified as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in the state of Wisconsin. She earned her BSW degree in 1972 and MSSW in 1973 at the University of Wisconsin—Madison, and her Ph.D. in Social Work at the University of Illinois at Urbana—Champaign. She has worked as a practitioner and administrator in child welfare and mental health agencies. She received the University of Wisconsin—Whitewater's Excellence in Teaching Award in 1986 and the University Outstanding Teaching Award in 2007. She has been a member of the board of directors of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) in addition to being an accreditation site visitor. She is also a current member of CSWE, BPD, and NASW. She has served on the editorial board of *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work*, and as a consulting editor for many social work journals including the *Journal of Social Work Education*. She is the author of numerous publications, articles, and reviews concerning social work and women's issues. Other books she has authored or coauthored include *Understanding Human Behavior and the Social Environment* (10th ed.); *Understanding Generalist Practice* (7th ed.); *Human Behavior in the Macro Social Environment: An Empowerment Approach to Understanding Communities, Organization, and Groups* (4th ed.); *The Macro Skills Workbook* (2nd ed.); and *Generalist Practice with Organizations and Communities* (5th ed.).

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Preface

Given limited time and massive volumes of content, what vital information should be conveyed to students in an introductory course about social welfare and social work? What student learning outcomes should instructors strive to attain? This text focuses on the most significant elements of social work. Content complies with the new Council on Social Work Education's Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) (CSWE, 2015). The text's style is intended to be clear, readable, interesting, and engaging. The goal is to enhance students' ability to grasp the essence and spirit of generalist social work and the issues in social welfare that social workers address every day.

Themes integrated throughout the text include these:

- The advancement of human rights and social and economic justice.
- Client empowerment.
- Dimensions of human diversity ("age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status").¹
- The significance of professional values and ethics.
- A generalist approach interrelating social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- Numerous case examples dramatizing various aspects of social work.
- Various global and international perspectives.
- Identification of the relationship between the text's content and EPAS competencies and their component behaviors.

¹These are the categories reflecting diversity as stated by the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards passed by the Council on Social Work Education board of directors in 2015 (CSWE, 2015).

A key word describing this text is *integration*: These themes are infused throughout the book instead of being isolated in independent chapters. For example, values, ethics, aspects of diversity, and client empowerment are defined early on and then addressed throughout the text in various contexts including fields of practice. Boxed features appear regularly to emphasize important concepts and cases, to spark students' interest, and to stimulate critical thinking.

The Fundamental Need for Critical Thinking

Critical thinking perspectives provide an underlying foundation for the text. They are stressed throughout by encouraging identification of values and evaluation of serious issues. Critical thinking involves three facets. First, it focuses on the questioning of beliefs, statements, assumptions, lines of reasoning, actions, and experiences. Second, it involves the assessment of the established facts and issues involved by seeking relevant information. This complies with the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) current emphasis on "research-informed practice" and "practice-informed research" (CSWE, 2015, Educational Policy [EP] 4). Third, it concerns asserting an opinion about the validity of the fact or process being considered.

Critical thinking is essential in social work because social workers address a vast range of issues and problems. New accreditation standards require that social workers demonstrate competency in applying critical thinking (or critical evaluation) to make informed, ethical judgments in practice and behavior (CSWE, 2015, EP 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9). Each chapter stresses the use of critical thinking by integrating a basic "Triple A" formula that students can readily comprehend and apply: (1) *ask* questions, (2) *assess* the established facts and issues involved, and (3) *assert* a concluding opinion. Issues addressed range from client rights to social policy to social

work roles in a wide array of contexts. Case studies for critical thinking are presented at the end of each of the book's four main sections.

Organization

The book is organized into four major parts: (1) the profession, (2) social work practice, (3) social welfare policy, and (4) client populations and contexts. A fifth section, the epilogue, focuses on personal values and consideration of a social work career. The intent is to give students a broad look at what social work is all about. Social welfare policy is stressed as the foundation of social welfare programs and social work practice. New accreditation standards require that students demonstrate competency in “policy practice,” including being able to “analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice” (CSWE, 2015, EP 5c). Students are encouraged to explore issues based on theoretical orientations to social welfare policy development and the resulting program implementation.

Students are provided with thought-provoking information about social welfare and social work within a broad range of circumstances and fields of practice. Settings range from those focusing on child maltreatment, to health care, to work with older adults, to corrections. Social issues are raised in a way that encourages new insights and examination of personal values. This book stresses *what* social workers do, not *how* they do it. Abundant case examples give insights into who clients are and what issues they face in the macro social environment.

Concepts incorporated in the Council on Social Work Education Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), including the concepts of human rights; social, economic, and environmental justice; marginalization; alienation; research-informed practice; and policy practice, in addition to the newly articulated aspects of diversity—disability and ability, marital status, religion/spirituality, and tribal sovereign status—are discussed (CSWE, 2015). Macro aspects of generalist practice, in addition to micro and mezzo aspects, are frequently highlighted.

This book gives students contemplating a social work major a solid orientation to the profession. The text should help students determine whether

social work is really the field for them. For non-majors, the text is designed to provide a sound introduction to social welfare, social work, available services, social welfare policy development and implementation, and social workers' involvement in the helping process. The emphasis is on those issues and fields of practice in which social workers are most likely to be employed. For example, significant attention is given to child and family services, mental health, and health care.

Part 1, “The Profession of Social Work,” includes three chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the new 2015 EPAS, defines social welfare and social work, discusses political values and views about social welfare, reviews content areas in the social work curriculum, introduces the various fields of practice, and reviews the social work career continuum. Critical thinking is defined, and its importance throughout the text is stressed. Chapter 2 focuses on the importance of social work values and ethics, thus providing a framework for remaining chapters. This chapter introduces the concept of ethical dilemmas, summarizes the NASW *Code of Ethics*, gives examples of practice applications, and helps students explore personal values. Chapter 3 defines and discusses various dimensions of human diversity, empowerment, resiliency, and cultural competence, paving the way for integration of this content throughout the book.

Part 2, “Social Work Practice,” includes two chapters that focus on what social workers *do*. Chapter 4 defines generalist social work practice, introduces the wide range of social work roles, and describes the planned-change process. Emphases include the importance of client empowerment, appreciation of cultural differences, and intervention with macro systems. Chapter 5 focuses on the settings in which social workers practice, including rural and urban communities. It describes what micro, mezzo, and macro practice involve in terms of social workers' functions and practice settings. Finally, it explores social work licensure, employment, and salaries.

Part 3, “Social Welfare Policy,” includes three chapters. Chapter 6 explains the historical development of social welfare and social work, thereby providing a context for the next chapter, which focuses on social welfare policy and policy practice. Chapter 7 defines policy, discusses its significance,

and describes how it is developed and structured. The significance of social welfare policy as the basis upon which social programs are developed is stressed. Chapter 8 discusses the infrastructure of policies and programs designed to combat poverty and provide financial assistance to those in need. It also describes social insurance (including the Medicare Prescription Drug Program), public assistance programs, and current health care policy, and explores students' values about various aspects of social welfare.

Part 4, “Client Populations and Contexts,” includes eight chapters that focus on specific social work settings. Chapter 9 introduces service provision for children and families. It describes supportive services for children and families, including those involving child maltreatment, intensive family preservation, and child day care. It stresses the importance of addressing macro issues. This chapter also reviews substitute services for children and families, including kinship care, foster family care, residential settings, and adoption.

Chapter 10 discusses social work with older adults. Issues include common problems facing older adults, critical thinking about Social Security, the global context for aging, contexts of social work practice with older adults, and empowerment for diverse populations of older adults.

Chapter 11 explores social work with people who have disabilities. Ethical implications for social work practice are discussed. Empowerment through policy practice and advocacy, legislative advocacy, and community support are stressed.

Chapter 12 explains social work roles in health care, health-care problems in the macro environment, issues involving health-care policy, managed care, and international perspectives on the global crisis of AIDS. Sensitivity to populations at risk and macro issues in practice are emphasized.

Chapter 13 addresses social work and mental health. Employment settings in mental health for social workers are identified, social work functions are explained, and clients' conditions are described. Managed care in mental health is critiqued, and cultural competence in the field is examined.

Chapter 14 explores alcohol and other drug abuse (AODA). It describes AODA terms, methods of ingestion, types of substances, the development and personal dynamics of abuse, the family dynamics

involved, the treatment process, treatment approaches, two treatment models, and available resources for treatment.

Chapter 15 focuses on social work with youths and in the schools. Positive social programming in macro practice, violence in the schools, bullying, and teenage sexual activity and pregnancy are examined. Social work roles with respect to each are discussed.

Chapter 16 explores social work and corrections. Questions requiring critical thinking are posed regarding the complexity of the crime rate, the issue of punishment versus empowerment, and health care for prisoners. Practice settings and gang membership are also discussed.

The epilogue, “Your Values and Your Future: Applying Critical Thinking Skills,” serves as a capstone for the book. Students are urged to come to conclusions about various issues in social welfare policy and programming. Finally, they are encouraged to evaluate their personal characteristics and values and their potential for a career in social work, responding to many questions initiated in Chapter 1.

My sincere hope is that students will find this text interesting and informative and that instructors will find it an easy one from which to teach. The intent is to provide a sound foundation on which to build professional expertise and commitment.

Relationship Between Content and the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), and Professional Competencies

This book addresses accreditation standards established by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).² 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 31 component behaviors that operationalize 9 core competencies that are critical for professional practice (CSWE, 2015). For

²Please note that this content addresses standards posed in the EPAS. In no way does it claim to verify compliance with standards. Only the Council on Social Work Education Commission on Accreditation can make those determinations.

clarity, we have alphabetized in lowercase the component behaviors listed under each competency. **Multicolor icons** located within paragraphs clearly show the linkage between content in the textbook, and competencies and their component behaviors (see the multicolor image inserted in this paragraph). Each icon is labeled with the specific behavior or competency that relates directly to the content conveyed in the paragraph. For example, an icon might be labeled EP [Educational Policy] 3b, which is the behavior, “engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice” (CSWE, 2015, EP 3b). Accredited social work programs are required to prove that students have mastered all component behaviors for competence as specified in the EPAS. (Please refer to <http://www.cswe.org/File.aspx?id=79793> for the EPAS document.)



For all icons “**Competency Notes**” are provided at the end of each chapter. These Competency Notes explain the relationship between chapter content and CSWE’s competencies and their component behaviors. They also list page numbers where icons are located and this content is discussed. A summary chart of the icons’ locations in all chapters and their respective competency or practice behavior is placed in the inside front covers of the book.

New to This Edition

This edition places a new emphasis on learning objectives and incorporates the 2015 EPAS throughout the entire book. In addition to updating subject matter throughout, other new and expanded content in this edition includes the following:

Chapter 1

- Elaboration of competencies and their related behaviors inherent in the 2015 EPAS
- Environmental justice
- Introductory descriptions of quantitative and qualitative research
- Evaluation of practice and accountability

Chapter 2

- Updated content on international social work organizations

Chapter 3

- Incorporation of new content and concepts concerning human diversity recognized in the 2015 EPAS, including tribal sovereign status, (religion)/spirituality, (disability and) ability, and marital status as dimensions of diversity
- Updated information on racial demographics in the United States and other statistics
- New content on racial and cultural differences (including collectivism, the desire to keep problems within the family, and interpersonal harmony in Asian American families; and child-centeredness in African American families)
- The gender spectrum
- Updated statistics on the status of women

Chapter 4

- Spokesperson, coordinator, and manager roles

Chapter 5

- Expanded information concerning social work organizations
- Updated numbers of accredited social work programs
- Updated information on licensure, the Association of Social Work Boards, and NASW credentials
- New and updated data on social work practice settings and salaries including earning variations by geographical location

Chapter 6

- Updated content on Charity Organization Societies
- Elaboration of trends during the progressive period
- Updated facts about the future of Social Security
- Updated content on the fringe economy and unsecured credit

Chapter 7

- Using electronic media and supporting political candidates as approaches to policy practice and advocacy
- Updated content on social workers in politics

Chapter 8

- Updated statistics on poverty
- New content on globalization

- Updated content on health care and the poor
- New and updated content on homelessness
- New content on OASDHI, Unemployment Insurance, Workers' Compensation, Medicare, TANF, SSI, Medicaid, CHIP, SNAP, and housing assistance

Chapter 9

- Updated content on international legalized gay marriage
- New information on family life education
- New content on advocacy for resources at the macro level

Chapter 10

- Updated demographic data and information on poverty concerning older adults
- Significantly expanded content on older adult abuse including incidence, types, assessment, and treatment
- New content on gay aging (“gayging”)
- Assisted living facilities

Chapter 11

- Updated citations on the NASW policy on people with disabilities
- Critical thinking about personal feelings and stereotypes concerning disabilities
- Update on the American with Disabilities Act including 2010 amendments

Chapter 12

- New content on public health
- New content about Veterans Affairs (VA) health services and the social work role within the VA
- Updated content on the Affordable Care Act
- Updated statistics and content on HIV/AIDS concerning race and gender, treatment options, and international incidence

Chapter 13

- Updated content regarding the 2013 Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th ed.) (DSM-5) including neurocognitive; depressive; paraphilic; disruptive, impulse-control, and conduct; and obsessive-compulsive and related disorders

- New content on managed care and mental health
- New content on cultural competence in mental health settings

Chapter 14

- Updated statistics on the incidence of substance abuse
- Updated criteria on substance use disorders established by the DSM-5
- New recently appearing recreational drugs
- New content on engagement, assessment, and the importance of a continuing care plan during AODA treatment

Chapter 15

- Updated and new content on gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth
- Updated content on youth violence including incidence in addition to risk and protective factors
- New content concerning bullying including the incidence, new case examples, and sexting
- Updated content on prenatal care for teenage mothers
- New content on teenage fatherhood

Chapter 16

- Identity theft
- Social workers as Victim Specialists in FBI-operated specialized victims assistance programs
- Suggestions for preventing problematic behavior and emphasizing strengths in youths
- New content on gangs

MindTap

MindTap for *Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare* 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.

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 and 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, GoogleDocs, 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 *Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare* includes valuable resources to help students fully understand and master key social work concepts.

- The **Practice Behaviors Workbook** is now included online in MindTap. The experiential exercises provided here give students opportunities to develop the practice behaviors, facilitating their mastery over practical aspects of social work.
- Case Studies taken from **Careers in Social Work** provide students with examples and stories from social workers in the field highlighting real work application of concepts.
- Specially selected articles from **Questia**, an online database of professional journals and textbooks, give students further insight into social work concepts in practice. Students are asked to reflect on these articles so that they further understand and

apply what they have learned to their own lives and the real world.

- Newly selected videos from CNN and BBC bring to light important contemporary issues within society and provide critical thinking questions to assist students in thinking through issues that impact both social workers and those they serve.

Supplements

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.

Cengage Learning Testing powered by Cognero

Cognero is a flexible, online system that allows you to author, edit, and manage test bank content as well as create multiple test versions in an instant. You can deliver tests from your school's learning management system, your classroom, or wherever you want.

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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PART ONE

THE PROFESSION OF SOCIAL WORK

CHAPTER 1 Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare

CHAPTER 2 Social Work Values and Ethics

CHAPTER 3 Empowerment and Human Diversity

What is social work? How does it differ from sociology, psychology, or any other type of counseling? What types of people choose it as a career? This book answers these and many other questions you might have about what social workers do, what rules and policies they must follow, and whom they serve.

This book has four parts:

1. The Profession of Social Work
2. Social Work Practice
3. Social Welfare Policy
4. Client Populations and Contexts

Part 1 contains three chapters that emphasize key aspects of social work and provide a general introduction to the field. Chapter 1 defines social work and social welfare and discusses various theoretical perspectives you can use to think about how to help people. It introduces you to the concept of critical thinking, which will be emphasized throughout the book. It also describes the content areas in the social work curriculum.

Chapter 2 focuses on social work values and ethics. It summarizes social work's ethical principles and practitioners' ethical responsibilities to clients. It also challenges you to examine your own personal values and how they relate to social work values. Finally, it examines a range of ethical dilemmas that social workers potentially face.

Chapter 3 explores human diversity and the ways in which people might be empowered to enhance their well-being and reach their full potential. It stresses social work's quest for social and economic justice, especially for populations at

risk of deprivation and oppression. Populations at risk include groups characterized by diverse aspects of “age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status” (Council on Social Work Education [CSWE], 2015).

I hope you will enjoy this book and gain a much better understanding of social work and social welfare. Let’s begin.

1 Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare



Kaitis/Stockphoto.com

Learning Objectives This chapter will help prepare students to:

- LO 1** Define social work and social welfare. **What Is Social Work?** (p. 5)
- LO 2** Discuss various perspectives on social welfare (including residual, institutional, and developmental perspectives, as well as the concept of sustainability). **Perspectives for Viewing the Social Welfare System: Residual, Institutional, and Developmental** (p. 6)
- LO 3** Explain critical thinking (including a framework for examining a wide range of concepts and issues). **Highlight 1.1** (p. 7)
- LO 4** Explain the conservative–liberal continuum with respect to viewing the social welfare system. **The Conservative–Liberal Continuum** (p. 9)
- LO 5** Examine your personal attitudes about some social welfare issues. **How Do You Fare on the Conservative–Liberal Continuum?** (p. 13)
- LO 6** Explain social work’s fields of practice. **Fields of Practice in Social Work** (p. 13)
- LO 7** Explore the process of choosing a career. **The Continuum of Social Work Careers** (p. 15)
- LO 8** Discuss the uniqueness of social work. **Social Work Builds on Many Disciplines** (p. 16)
- LO 9** Identify relevant concepts in systems theories and the ecological perspective. **Highlight 1.3** (p. 22)
- LO 10** Describe social work education’s goals, curriculum, and competencies. **Accredited Social Work Programs** (p. 23)

Case A: *The couple is ecstatic. In their early 30s, they have been struggling with infertility for almost a decade and have been languishing on a waiting list to adopt a baby for almost five years. The moment has finally almost come: They will soon meet their new baby, Juliette. Alani, their social worker in the adoptions unit at a family services agency, is assisting them in completing the paperwork and helping them launch their new family life.*

Case B: *Cassius, a social worker at a community mental health center, is about to start the weekly support group session. His seven clients all are dealing with spouses who have Lou Gehrig's disease, which is characterized by deterioration of neurons in the brain stem and spinal cord. It involves loss of muscle function, paralysis, and finally death. The purpose of the group is to provide mutual emotional support and share information about coping with the disease. Cassius facilitates the group to keep things moving along and, when necessary, gives information about the disease. He notices that Erica, one of his clients, seems to be struggling to hold back a flood of tears. He knows that her husband, Tom, is deteriorating rapidly, so she must have had a rough week. This may be a difficult session.*

Case C: *Lolita is exhilarated. Several hundred people have shown up for and are eagerly participating in this "Take Back the Night" march against sexual assault. Lolita, a social worker at a rape crisis center, was one of the primary organizers of the event. The march's intent is to raise people's consciousness about this serious issue, promote education about sexual assault, and increase funding for crisis centers.*

These vignettes portray brief moments in the actual lives of social workers. Some moments may be tremendously difficult, and others enormously satisfying.

When you think of social work, what comes to mind? Helping people? Being on welfare? Facing bureaucratic red tape? Solving problems? Saving children? What do social workers actually do?

I once visited a quaint little crafts shop in Bar Harbor, Maine. It had little shadow boxes, about five inches square, filled with tacks. On these tacks, someone had painted little symbols to reflect the tools, tasks, and people involved in various professions. For example, one shadow box reflecting dentistry had tacks painted with tiny teeth, big toothy smiles, and toothbrushes (which is probably no surprise). I managed to find a box for social work. What do you think was painted on those tacks?

There were tiny images of the following: a Kleenex[®] box, a pencil, a compact car, a smiling face, a watch, and a heart. What do you think each of these is supposed to mean?

Here are some ideas. The Kleenex box reflects how social workers help people deal with tough, and frequently very sad, issues. Sometimes clients are hurting badly, and sometimes they cry. The pencil signifies record keeping and paperwork, a mainstay of what social workers do. It probably should have been a computer, but the artist most likely couldn't fit one on that little tack. The compact car symbolizes travel because social workers often must visit clients' homes and other agencies. The

smiling face signifies how social workers aim to help people solve their problems, to seek social justice on their behalf, and to make their lives a little bit better. (**Social justice** involves the concept that all citizens should be treated equally and have equal access to resources.) The watch reflects scheduling—there’s always a lot to do and limited time in which to do it. Finally, the heart symbolizes caring about the welfare of others: That’s the core of what the social work profession is all about.



What Is Social Work?

LO 1

The National Association of Social Work (NASW) defines **social work** as follows:

Social work is the professional activity of helping individuals, groups, or communities enhance or restore their capacity for social functioning and creating societal conditions favorable to this goal. Social work practice consists of the professional application of social work values, principles, and techniques to one or more of the following ends:

- *Helping people obtain tangible services (e.g., those involving provision of food, housing, or income).*
- *Providing counseling and psychotherapy with individuals, families, and groups.*
- *Helping communities or groups provide or improve social and health services.*
- *Participating in relevant legislative processes.*

(NASW, 1973, pp. 4–5)

What does this really mean? Imagine the vast range of human problems and issues. Because social workers can be in positions to help people deal with almost anything, it is difficult to define the field adequately in a few words. Highlighted here are some of the important concepts inherent in the definition just cited. Because of its breadth, the foundation of social work practice is referred to as *generalist practice*, described more thoroughly in Chapter 4.

Five themes permeate social work practice in virtually any setting (e.g., child welfare agencies, nursing homes, schools, or corrections facilities). First, social work concerns helping individuals, groups, or communities. Social workers provide counseling when necessary to help clients address problems. In addition to counseling an individual or family, much social work involves collaborating with organizations and communities to improve social and health

services. Second, social work entails a solid foundation of values and principles that guide what practitioners should and should not do. Third, a firm basis of techniques and skills provides directions for *how* social workers should provide treatment and accomplish goals. Fourth, social workers help people get the services they need by linking them to available resources. If the right resources are not available, social workers may advocate for service development on their clients’ behalf. Fifth, social workers participate in legislative processes to promote positive social change. Such participation might include urging lawmakers to pass laws that improve social services and conditions. Social workers can also serve as expert witnesses to educate legislators about social issues and client needs, write or phone legislators to share socially responsible opinions, and run for elected office themselves.

NASW reports how Representative Bob Etheridge (D-N.C.) paid homage to social workers during Social Work Month (March 2001). He shared with the speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives the following remarks:

Social workers affect our lives in so many ways... Their work touches all of us as individuals and as whole communities. They are educated, highly trained, and committed professionals. They work in family service and community mental health agencies, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and many other private and public agencies.¹ They listen, they care. And, most importantly, they help those in need.

(Vallianatos, 2001b, p. 1)

¹*Public agencies* are those run by a designated unit of government and are usually regulated by laws that directly affect policy. The county department of social services is a public agency. *Private agencies*, of course, are privately owned and run by people not employed by government. Chapter 5 describes social service agencies in greater detail.

What Is Social Welfare?

What does the term *social welfare* mean? And exactly whose welfare are we talking about? Answers to these questions require critical thinking because, as a citizen and voter, your opinions are vital. You have the opportunity to help determine and shape how you and others are treated, how your own and their welfare is respected and nurtured.

A central theme of this book is encouraging you to think critically about problems, issues, and policies affecting people's lives and welfare. Highlight 1.1 defines critical thinking and provides a basic framework for analysis.

Social welfare is “a nation's system of programs, benefits, and services that help people meet those social, economic, educational, and health needs that are fundamental to the maintenance of society” (Barker, 2014, p. 402). Social welfare, then, is a broad concept related to the general well-being of all people in a society. Inherent in the definition are two basic dimensions: (1) what people get from society (in terms of programs, benefits, and services) and (2) how well their needs (including social, economic, educational, and health) are being met. Yet another way of portraying social welfare is the conception of an honorable, supportive society that offers its citizens the chance for adequate employment and the pursuit of happiness, affords an acceptably safe environment, advocates for justice and equality, and provides a context for financial security and growth (Reid, 1995).

How are social welfare and social work related? Simply put, **social work** serves to improve people's social and economic welfare. It does so in the many fields or settings discussed in this book, including health, mental health, and financial assistance, among many others. Populations served include older adults, children and families, people with disabilities, and people involved with the legal system.

Note that social work is not the only field concerned with people's social welfare. Others include those providing health, educational, recreational, and public safety services. Physicians, nurses, other health-care personnel, teachers, park recreational counselors, police, firefighters, and many others work to enhance people's well-being and quality of life.

Social welfare can be quite controversial on two counts. One involves individuals' responsibility to

take care of themselves independently of government, which reflects the old saying “You get what you deserve.” The other concerns society's responsibility to take care of all its members, especially those belonging to oppressed groups. There is constant political debate about what social services should and should not provide, and about who should receive them and who should not.

Perspectives for Viewing the Social Welfare System: Residual, Institutional, and Developmental

LO 2

The following section explores various perspectives that structure how you might think about social welfare. Each addresses the following questions: What should be the most important focus and goals of social welfare? Who should assume responsibility for people's social welfare? We can look at social welfare and the ways its programs



EP 7b*

*Note the multicolor icons next to designated content throughout the book. Accredited social work programs must demonstrate that they're teaching students to be proficient in nine core competencies that are operationalized by 31 component behaviors designated by the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) *Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards* (EPAS). Students require knowledge in order to develop skills and become competent. Our intent here is to specify what chapter content and knowledge coincides with the development of specific competencies and their component behaviors. (This ultimately is intended to assist in a social work program's accreditation process.)

Throughout each chapter, icons such as those located on this page call attention to the location of EPAS-related content. Each icon identifies what competency or its component behavior is relevant by specifying the designated Educational Policy (EP) reference number beneath it. Competency Notes are provided at the end of each chapter that describe how EPAS competencies and their component behaviors are related to content in the chapter.

EPAS competencies and their component behaviors are cited in the inside covers of this book. A summary chart indicating where icons are located throughout the book along with their component competencies and related behaviors is placed after the Table of Contents in the front of the book. Highlight 1.5 cites the competencies and their component behaviors directly.

The EPAS document lists component behaviors under each of the nine core competencies as bulleted items. To clarify the Competency Notes at the end of each chapter, the bulleted component behaviors have been alphabetized under each competency.

HIGHLIGHT 1.1

WHAT IS CRITICAL THINKING?

LO 3

Critical thinking is (1) the careful scrutiny of what is stated as true or what appears to be true and the resulting expression of an opinion or conclusion based on that scrutiny, and (2) the creative formulation of an opinion or conclusion when presented with a question, problem, or issue. Critical thinking concentrates on “the process of reasoning” (Gambrill & Gibbs, 2009, p. 4). It stresses *how* individuals think about the truth inherent in a statement or *how* they analyze an issue to formulate their own conclusions. As Gambrill and Gibbs (2009) so aptly state, “Critical thinkers question what others take for granted” (p. 9).

Two dimensions in the definition of critical thinking are significant. First, critical thinking focuses on the questioning of beliefs, statements, assumptions, lines of reasoning, actions, and experiences. Suppose you read a “fact” in a book or hear about it from a friend or an instructor. Critical thinking focuses on *not* taking this “fact” at face value. Rather, it entails the following “Triple-A” approach to examining and evaluating its validity:



EP 4b, 5c,
7a, 8a

1. *Ask* questions.
2. *Assess* the established facts and issues involved.
3. *Assert* a concluding opinion.

For example, a friend and fellow student might tell you, “It’s impossible to get financial aid at our school.” To what extent is this statement really true? To find out, you first *ask* questions about what the statement is really saying. What does “impossible” mean? Some people must be eligible for financial aid. What are the criteria for receiving aid? What experiences has your friend had to come to such a conclusion?

Second, you *assess* the established facts and issues involved by seeking relevant information. What does the financial aid policy state? To what extent does eligibility depend on students’ and their parents’ earnings? To what extent is a grade-point average or full-time student status involved? How many students are actually receiving aid at any given time? What percentage of the student population does this number reflect?

Third, you *assert* a concluding opinion. To what extent do you agree with your friend’s statement? If you find out that only two people on your campus are receiving aid, then you might agree that such aid is almost impossible to get. However, if you find out that

about a third of the student population is receiving aid, then you might heartily conclude that your friend’s statement is false.

Critical thinking can be applied to virtually any belief, statement, assumption, line of reasoning, action, or experience claimed as true. Consider the following statements of proposed “facts”:

- Rich people are selfish.
- Taxes are unfair.
- A crocodile cannot stick its tongue out.
- Most lipstick contains fish scales.
- It is physically impossible for a person to lick his or her elbow.
- More than 75% of people who read this will try to lick their elbows.

These statements may seem silly (although some may also be true), but the point is that critical thinking can be applied to an infinite array of thoughts and ideas. For each statement, (1) what questions would you *ask*, (2) how would you *assess* the established facts and issues involved, and (3) what concluding opinion would you finally *assert*?

The second facet of the definition of critical thinking is the creative formulation of an opinion or conclusion when presented with a question, problem, or issue. Instead of being told a proposed “fact” to be scrutinized for its validity, you are asked your *opinion* about an issue, assumption, or action. Examples include the following:

- Should prisoners who commit violent crimes be ineligible for parole? (In other words, should they be required to serve their full sentences?)
- Should all interstate highways have toll booths to finance them and their repairs, so that only the people who use them pay for them (instead of general tax revenues paying for highway construction and repair)?
- What is the best way to eliminate poverty in this nation?

Consider answering the last question, which could be posed as a term paper or exam topic in one of your courses. First, what questions about it would you ask? What are the reasons for poverty in a rich industrialized country? What social welfare programs are currently available to address poverty? What innovative ideas

(continued)

HIGHLIGHT 1.1 (continued)

for programs might be tried? Where might funding for such programs be found? How much money would it take to eliminate poverty, and who would pay for this?

Second, what facts and issues would you seek to address and assess? You probably would first try to define poverty—what income level or lack of income makes a person or family “poor”? You then might research statistics, costs, and studies concerning the effectiveness of various programs intending to reduce poverty. You might also investigate innovative ideas. Perhaps there are proposals for programs that look promising. You might explore what various programs cost and how they are funded. Note that these suggestions only scratch the surface of how you might examine the issue.

Third, what opinion or conclusion would you assert? To what extent do you think it is possible to eliminate poverty? What kinds of resources and programs do you think it would take? What do you feel citizens and their government should do about poverty?

Critical thinking enhances self-awareness and the ability to detect various modes of distorted thinking that can trick people into assuming truth; critical thinking can help you do the following (Gambrill & Gibbs, 2009):

1. *Identify propaganda* (“ideas, facts, or allegations spread deliberately to further one’s cause or to damage an opposing cause” [Mish, 2008, p. 996]). Propaganda may be true or untrue. It often sensationalizes a point of view by blowing it out of proportion. For example, a law firm with the slogan “Our Way Is the Only and Best Way” emphasizes its own prowess while demeaning the effectiveness of other firms. Critical thinking would prompt

you to assess upon what basis this law firm is making its claim of superiority.

2. *Distinguish intentionally deceptive claims.* For instance, an advertiser might boast, “This miracle drug has been scientifically proven to make you lose a pound a day—without exercising or changing your eating habits!” when, in actuality, little or no meticulous research has been done. Critical thinking would lead you to question how the drug has been scientifically proven to be effective.
3. *Focus on and choose words carefully.* Critical thinking helps you focus your attention on the meaning of each word used to convey an idea or concept. For example, consider the statement “Schools produce a bunch of real losers these days.” What does each word really mean or imply? Which schools produce “losers”? What is a “loser”? What does “a bunch” mean? To what are “these days” compared?
4. *Be wary of emotional ploys and appeals.* They play on your emotions and urge you to concur with their intent by using as little logical thinking as possible. For instance, a sales representative on a televised marketing program might urge you to “buy this genuine fake leather jacket now and we’ll send a pair of matching gloves—and a pair of matching boots. This is the only time you’ll get this additional value. Aren’t they lovely? But you have to act now—we have only two jackets left!” The intent here is to pressure you to make a decision quickly based on desire rather than on logical thinking about what the jacket costs and how you will make the payments.

are developed from three different perspectives—residual and institutional (Blau, 2014; Chapin, 2014; Gilbert & Terrell, 2013; Segal, 2013), in addition to developmental (Dolgoft & Feldstein, 2013; Midgley & Livermore, 1997).

The Residual Perspective

The **residual perspective** conceives of social welfare as focusing on problems and gaps. Social welfare benefits and services should be supplied only when people fail to provide adequately for themselves and

problems arise. The implication is that it’s people’s own fault if they require outside help. Society, then, must aid them until they can once again assume responsibility for meeting their own needs. Gilbert and Terrell (2013) reflect:

The traditional (i.e., residual) view is that social welfare itself is not a significant societal institution, but rather a supplemental activity necessary only when the “normal” helping channels fail to perform appropriately. Viewed as a temporary response to the failure of individuals and major

institutions, social welfare is seen as a set of activities that, while necessary at times, is undesirable and expendable. (p. 12)

Blaming women and children for being “on welfare,” for example, reflects a residual view. The focus is on their supposed failures and faults; they are viewed in a demeaning and critical manner.

The Institutional Perspective

The **institutional perspective** of social welfare, in contrast, views people’s needs as a normal part of life. Society has a responsibility to support its members and provide needed benefits and services. It’s not people’s fault that they require such services, but rather it is an expected part of the human condition. People have a right to receive benefits and services on an ongoing basis. In many ways, this is a more humane and supportive approach to helping people. Public education available to all is an example of an institutional form of social welfare. Similarly, fire and police protection are available to all.

Prior to the Great Depression in the 1930s, the residual approach to social welfare dominated. Since then, however, both approaches have been apparent, depending on the program at issue. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), described in a later chapter, is an example of a residually oriented program. Families in need receive temporary, limited financial assistance until they can get back on their feet.

The Developmental Perspective

Another view on social welfare is the **developmental perspective**. This approach “seeks to identify social interventions that have a positive impact on economic development” (Midgley & Livermore, 1997, p. 574). It presumes that people living today in our complex world may require help and resources in order to function effectively and support themselves (Dolgoff & Feldstein, 2013). The developmental perspective originated after World War II in Third World countries seeking to design social welfare programs that would also enhance their economic development. This perspective gained impetus in the United States in the 1970s because “it justifies social programs in terms of economic efficiency criteria” (Lowe, 1995; Midgley & Livermore, 1997, p. 575).

There are three major ways that economic development can occur in a developmental context (Midgley & Livermore, 1997). First, “investments in [services to people such as] education, nutrition, and health care” can be evaluated so that people get the most for their money (p. 577). For example, investments in education may result in a more skilled labor force that, in turn, generates a stronger economy. Second, investment in physical facilities involving “the creation of economic and social infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, irrigation and drinking water systems, clinics, [and] schools ... provide[s] the economic and social bases on which development efforts depend” (pp. 577–578). Workers must have a transportation system to get to work and a building in which to work to get anything done. Therefore, resources expended on developing such things are economically productive. Third, developing “programs that help needy people engage in productive employment and self-employment” is more economically viable than giving people public assistance payments over years and even decades (p. 578). It is an efficient economic investment to educate and train people in need so that they can get jobs and eventually support themselves.

The developmental perspective is relatively new and requires a more extensive grasp of social welfare issues and policies than can be described in an introductory book such as this. It involves both in-depth analysis of current social programs and the ability to creatively propose new ones. Therefore, it will not be a primary focus in this book.

What are your views about social welfare? Focus on Critical Thinking 1.1 poses some questions.

Highlight 1.2 explores a concept related to the developmental perspective on social welfare—the notion of sustainability on a global basis.

The Conservative–Liberal Continuum

LO 4

Political ideology is the “relatively coherent system of ideas (beliefs, traditions, principles, and myths) about human nature, institutional arrangements, and social processes” that indicate how a government should be run and what principles that government should support (Abramovitz, 2007, p. 126). A person’s political ideology will frame the way that