**Social Work Core Competencies, Practice Behaviors, and Practical Applications**

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| **Competency** | **Practice Behaviors** | **Practical Interpretation** | **Examples of Tasks/Activities** | **Examples of Evaluation Method** |
| **Competency 1:** Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior | 1a. 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. | By using the NASW Code of Ethics, students can make appropriate ethical decisions in a specific practice setting in regards to the organization’s regulation procedure, conducting practice-based research, modeling an ethical decision-making process, and any additional codes of ethics. | * Discuss application of the Code of Ethics to practicum experiences during instructional conferences. * Participate in staff meetings to discuss ethical issues in client service. | * Discussion with practicum instructor * Observations * Review of written records * Feedback from mentors |
| 1b. Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations. | Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations | * Manage facial expressions * Keep a log of interactions with clients and your reactions. | * Discussion with practicum instructor * Observations * Review of written records * Feedback from mentors |
| 1c. Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication. | Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication. | * Write client contact notes thoroughly, concisely, error-free and timely. * Follow agency dress code. | * Discussion with practicum instructor * Observations * Review of written records * Feedback from mentors |
| 1d. Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes | Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes | * Use technology only during non-practicum time or as authorized by practicum instructor. | * Discussion with practicum instructor * Observations * Review of written records * Feedback from mentors |
| 1e. Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior. | Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior. | * Come to instructional conferences with an agenda for discussion and questions**.** | * Discussion with practicum instructor * Observations * Review of written records * Feedback from mentors |
| **Competency 2:** Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice | 2a. Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. | Explore the effect of client background on their personal experiences at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. | * Discuss how clients’ diversity and life experiences affect identified problems and use of services. | * Discussion with practicum instructor * Observations * Review of written records * Feedback from mentors |
| 2b. Present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences. | Understand client experiences from their own perspective and assist client in setting their own goals. | * Interview client systems to identify goals and create mutually-agreeable service plans. | * Discussion with practicum instructor * Observations * Review of written records * Feedback from mentors |
| 2c. Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies. | Monitor one’ bias and values that may conflict with clients and limit visible display of strong reactions to clients. | * Discuss and process personal values and reactions to client situations during instructional conferences. * Keep a daily log of experiences with clients in the field and reactions to them. | * Discussion with practicum instructor * Observations * Review of written records * Feedback from mentors |
| **Competency 3:** Advance Human Rights and Social and Economic and Environmental Justice | 3a. Apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels | Advocate for services that will improve client wellbeing. | * Advocate for clients, agency staff within and outside of agency. | * Discussion with practicum instructor * Observations * Review of written records * Feedback from mentors |
| 3b. Engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice. | Engage in practices to improve client wellbeing. | * Locate resources for clients and refer. * Identify and discuss social justice issues faced by agency clientele. | * Discussion with practicum instructor * Observations * Review of written records * Feedback from mentors |
| **Competency 4:** Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice | 4a. Use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research. | Based on practice experience and theory, students can develop a research question/project. | * By reflecting practice experience, identify an issue. * Understand the issue by utilizing a theory. * Read/discuss academic research related to client issue/needs. * Develop a research question/plan to reduce or solve the identified issue. | * Discussion with practicum instructor regarding the practice experience & appropriate theory to understand the issue * Review of a research question/plan regarding the issue |
| 4b. Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings. | By applying critical thinking process, students can analyze quantitative and qualitative data/findings | * Based on the research plan, collect quantitative or qualitative or mixed data. * Analyze the data/findings appropriately. | * Discussion with practicum instructor regarding the collected data and analysis |
| 4c. Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery. | Students can use research findings to improve their practice and/or service delivery. | * Discuss the Think and Link #2 Assignment. * Discuss the findings to improve service delivery. | * Discussion with practicum instructor regarding the finding implication in service delivery * Discussion of the Think and Link #2 Assignment |
| **Competency 5:** Engage in Policy Practice | 5a. Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services. | Identify policies at different levels of government that impact clients and organizations. | * Read and discuss agency policy manual * Regularly read local/state/national news items from reliable sources * Research legislative history of an existing or proposed program | * Discussion with practicum instructor * Observations * Review of written records * Feedback from mentors |
| 5b. Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services. | Assess the effect of government policies on clients and organizations providing services. | * Discuss basis of internal and external policies that affect client services | * Discussion with practicum instructor * Observations * Review of written records * Feedback from mentors |
| 5c. Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice. | Advocate for changes in organization or government policies that will improve client wellbeing. | * Identify potential policy changes and discuss (implement) ideas for implementation * Organize or disseminate information on an important policy issue * Participate in voter registration * Attend meetings of an organization that takes an opposing position on a policy to try to understand that perspective | * Discussion with practicum instructor * Observations * Review of written records * Feedback from mentors |
| **Competency 6:** Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | 6a. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies | Apply theories such as strengths perspective, ecological perspective, and systems theory to engage clients. | * Prepare for initial meeting with clients with attention to client environment * Articulate developmental stages relevant to client system | * Discussion with practicum instructor * Observations * Review of written records * Feedback from mentors |
| 6b. Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies. | Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies. | * Establish rapport with client system * Demonstrate use of empathy during client interaction * Review initial client interactions during processing meeting/instructional conference | * Discussion with practicum instructor * Observations * Review of written records * Feedback from mentors |
| **Competency 7:** Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organization, and Communities | 7a. Collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies | Collect client evaluation and outcomes data and understand how it can be used to guide intervention decisions | * Complete client intake assessments or collection of outcomes data * Conduct a community needs assessment * Conduct an organizational needs assessment * Review agency’s strategic plan | * Discussion with practicum instructor * Observations * Review of written records * Feedback from mentors |
| 7b. 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 | Assess client needs through a bio-psycho-social framework and use information when making decisions about client | * Assess client background through social history, genogram, or ecomap * Complete bio-psycho-social client assessment * Use information from multiple sources as basis for assessment | * Discussion with practicum instructor * Observations * Review of written records * Feedback from mentors |
| 7c. Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies | With client input, use information from client assessment to identity intervention goals and objectives | * Identify and select appropriate intervention strategies * Incorporate client goals in service plan * Articulate client strengths and challenges | * Discussion with practicum instructor * Observations * Review of written records * Feedback from mentors |
| 7d. Select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies. | Students can select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and families. | * Identify and select appropriate intervention strategies – how do you want to maintain the quality of your intervention? (e.g., getting feedback from clients/families, monitoring the progress, etc.) | * Discussion with practicum instructor on selected intervention strategies * Observations of feedback/monitoring process * Review of notes |
| **Competency 8:** Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | 8a. Critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies. | Students can critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and families. | * Choose and implement an evidence-based intervention (e.g., conducting evidence-based bereavement support group sessions, peer-mentoring groups, etc.) | * Discussion with practicum instructor on selecting an appropriate intervention * Observations on intervention activities * Review of written intervention activity notes |
| 8b. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies. | Students can apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment (PIE), and other theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and families. | * Brainstorm and research about appropriate theory to apply into the selected intervention (e.g., using the PIE model to understand clients in the new intervention group settings, etc.) | * Discussion with practicum instructor in the process of brainstorming and selecting a theory/model * Review of written notes on theory selection and application in the chosen intervention |
| 8c. Use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes. | Use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes | * Refer to and follow up on resources to meet client needs * Attend interdisciplinary conferences and case presentations on client as an observer or participant. | * Discussion with practicum instructor * Observations * Review of written records * Feedback from mentors |
| 8d. Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies. | Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies | * Accompany client to court hearings * Advocate for client to obtain public housing or another needed resource * Meet with client weekly to assess progress | * Discussion with practicum instructor * Observations * Review of written records * Feedback from mentors |
| 8e. Facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals. | Effectively terminate services with clients to advance client's goals | * Observe termination session of supervisor and discuss observations | * Discussion with practicum instructor * Observations * Review of written records * Feedback from mentors |
| **Competency 9:** Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | 9a. Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes. | Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes in practice with clients and/or groups. | * Evaluation/assessment plan in practice with individuals (e.g., conducting intake interviews; reviewing records; developing intervention plans; evaluation of practice with individuals, etc.) * Evaluation/assessment plan in practice with groups (e.g., developing group practice plan; observing/co-facilitating a group; conducting a group analysis, etc.) | * Discussion with practicum instructor regarding practice evaluation plans * Observations of interviewing and/or group facilitation * Review of written records of evaluation plan |
| 9b. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes | Apply knowledge of:  - human behavior  - the social environment  - theoretical frameworks (e.g., ecological perspective, strength-based theory, systems theory, etc.) for the evaluation of outcomes in practice with clients and/or groups. | * Developing practice outcome evaluation questions based on previous literature and theory (e.g., participant pre- & post-test on a specific outcome) | * Discussion with practicum instructor to choose an appropriate theory or theories * Review of research previous literature/theory use |
| 9c. Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes | Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention (including a program) processes and outcomes | * Develop questions for both process and outcome evaluations * Conduct both process and outcome evaluations on an intervention by collecting most appropriate measures * Analyze the evaluation data and write a brief report in findings. | * Discussion with practicum instructor in developing evaluation plan (questions, measures, and analysis) * Observations in the evaluation process * Review of the finding report |
| 9d. Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. | Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the individual, group, and organization levels. | * Write an implication section in the brief evaluation report. * Present the finding implication in a staff meeting to discuss improving practice effectiveness. | * Discussion with practicum instructor regarding the evaluation implication * Observations of presentation * Review of the implication section in the report * Feedback from other staff |