

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Practitioners in clinical social work recognize the importance of the therapeutic relationship, person-in-environment and strengths perspectives, professional use of self, and adherence to ethical and value guidelines for professional practice. Clinical social workers differentially utilize theories, research, and clinical skills and integrate them with a commitment to human rights, anti-racist practices, diversity, equity, and inclusion to enhance the well-being of individuals, families, and communities in an ethical manner. Clinical social work practitioners acknowledge the complexities involved in their practice, including the need to navigate ethical issues in an organizational context, and use clinical supervision to ensure that their practices are congruent with social work values and ethics. Extending and enhancing ethical and professional practice from the foundation level requires that clinical social workers reflect on their own family of origin to assess how it impacts their clinical work. Advanced-level practitioners must manage complex systems while understanding how cultural and developmental aspects of self and their clients influence their work. Clinical social workers recognize their own strengths and weaknesses in developing, managing, and maintaining therapeutic relationships. Practitioners of clinical social work must continually adapt to rapidly changing technology in an ethical and professional manner. Practitioners in clinical social work:

- Use clinical supervision and consultation to continuously examine professional roles and boundaries, engage in ongoing self-correction, and ensure that their practice is congruent with social work ethics and values.
- Apply ethical decision-making skills and frameworks to clinical material, while complying with the NASW Code of Ethics and local, state, and federal regulations.
- Demonstrate knowledge of one's family of origin's cultural, psychodynamic, and behavioral patterns and reflect on how that history impacts one's ability to differentially use one's professional self in service for clients.
- Exhibit an anti-oppressive stance incorporating the social work values of social justice, the dignity and worth of the person, confidentiality, support for self-determination, the value of human relationships, and integrity in all discussions of clinical case material.
- Provide services and represent themselves as competent within the boundaries of their education, training, experience, and license.
- Establish and maintain clear and appropriate professional boundaries.

Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Clinical social workers are fully grounded in the ethics of the profession, recognizing the dignity and worth of all individuals and the need to advocate for social, racial, economic, reproductive, and environmental justice. Clinical social workers recognize the need to assess clients' physical environment for the availability of safe shelter, food, water, and air. Clinical social workers are adept at recognizing how human rights violations, racism, and other social-structural forces marginalize people and thus work to advocate for policies that promote social, racial, reproductive, and economic justice, advance human rights, and promote environments in which all individuals can thrive. Practitioners in clinical social work:

- Contextualize all client conceptualizations (assessments) utilizing the lenses of human rights and social, racial, reproductive, and economic justice, including aspects of identity and social location that may marginalize clients and/or contribute to inadequate access to healthcare and the inequitable distribution of social and economic resources.
- Assess the availability of clean and safe shelter, water, food, air, and other health-sustaining environmental resources and help individuals, families, groups, and communities to develop mechanisms to advocate for and maintain these environmental resources.
- Advocate for equitable distribution of all social, economic, and practical resources, including the availability of a competent clinical social worker with commitments to human rights as well as anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and justice-oriented clinical practices.

Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

Clinical social workers understand how racism and oppression impact clients, families, groups, and communities. They also acknowledge the pervasive impact of white supremacy on the human rights, health, and well-being of clients, and use their knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in anti-racist clinical practices. They recognize how the intersectionality of factors (including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status) influence clients' presenting concerns and affect equity and inclusion in all aspects of society. Clinical social workers understand how dimensions of diversity affect client explanations of health/mental health, help-seeking behaviors, and the therapeutic relationship. Practitioners in clinical social work value cultural strengths and tailor their engagement strategies, assessment tools, and interventions to meet the diverse needs of their clients. Clinical social workers monitor their biases, reflect on their own cultural beliefs, and use and apply their knowledge of human rights, ADEI, and complex health/mental health delivery systems to enhance client well-being. Clinical social workers recognize the need to conceptualize cases using an intersectional perspective and to identify their clients' strengths and resiliencies, while learning to critically evaluate their own family history, privilege, and social locations. In presenting case material, clinical social workers integrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive stances and attend to clients' experiences of racism and oppression while also working to avoid undue pressure or use of power over clients. Practitioners in clinical social work:

- Identify how human rights violations, racism, oppression, and white supremacy impact the health and well-being of clients, families, groups, and communities; they rely on their knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in anti-racist clinical practices and other ADEI efforts.

- Recognize how the intersectionality of factors (including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status) influence clients' presenting problems and affect equity and inclusion in all aspects of society, including clients' health and mental health care choices.
- Demonstrate awareness of one's intersectionality and cultural background and reflect on how these factors may impact one's practice and the therapeutic relationship.
- Use clinical supervision to address personal and cultural biases and increase self-awareness.
- Use research findings, clinical theories, practice models, and literature on human rights, anti-racist practices, diversity, equity, and inclusion to develop a holistic understanding of client systems and circumstances.
- Apply the various models of clinical practice in ways that are culturally relevant to diverse and oppressed groups.

Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Clinical social workers rely on the scholarly literature to guide their practice and are aware of the most current evidence-informed practices, including those that are anti-racist and focused on human rights and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Practitioners of clinical social work are able to identify the strengths and limitations of these practices and examine their applicability to diverse populations. Clinical social workers can use their knowledge and skills to critically evaluate existing research and their interventions with clients. Clinical social workers elicit feedback from clients and value their perspectives; they use this knowledge to improve treatment outcomes and modify case theory. Practitioners of clinical social work select interventions informed by existing research, previous experience, client feedback, and practice wisdom. Practitioners in clinical social work:

- Stay abreast of the most current advances in clinical theory, systemic approaches, anti-racist practices, literature on human rights, diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as evidence-informed practice in social work and allied professions.
- Engage in reasoned discernment to select, implement, and evaluate appropriate assessment, intervention, and evaluation tools for use with various target populations.
- Use one's practice experience and knowledge of the research literature and case theory to critically analyze the strengths and limitations of various direct practice interventions, attending to the way these intersect with their clients' needs.
- Effectively communicate and disseminate practice evaluation results to an intended audience.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Clinical social workers recognize how policies, laws, and white supremacy can constrain or enhance human rights, individuals' life opportunities, and affect equity and inclusion. Clinical social workers understand that policies and laws can create movement toward equal distribution of social and economic resources. Practitioners of clinical social work also recognize how policies and laws can work against equity. Thus, clinical assessments include attention to the constraining or privileging aspects of local, state, federal, and international policies and laws. These assessments consider how these policies and laws perpetuate racism and other forms of oppression. Clinical social workers recognize how their work with individuals, families, and communities must inform policymakers and legislators. Practitioners of clinical social work monitor policies and laws for their unintended consequences, their equitability, and their impact on client well-being. Clinical social workers understand their role in implementing social policy and recognize their professional responsibility in advocating for policy reform and eradicating white supremacy, racism, and other forms of oppression. Practitioners in clinical social work:

- Identify policies/laws that violate human rights and perpetuate white supremacy, analyze their influence on clients' past, present, and future experiences, and advocate for change in policies/laws that harm clients' health and well-being.
- Attend to the intended and unintended consequences of policies/laws and communicate with stakeholders, legislators, and policy-makers about the impact of such policies/laws as they evolve within agencies, communities, and in clients' lives.
- Engage in political action to inform legislators and policymakers of the ways in which unjust policies/laws affect marginalized and other populations whom they serve.

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Clinical social work practitioners recognize the importance of the engagement process and understand the importance of differential use of self in initial encounters. Practitioners in clinical social work rely on ecological, anti-racist, human rights, and anti-oppressive perspectives to inform the therapeutic relationship; are aware of how interpersonal dynamics and cultural factors shape the therapeutic relationship; and use relational techniques to develop a therapeutic relationship. Clinical social workers recognize how engagement with couples, families, and groups may differ from individual approaches, and they develop differential engagement skills accordingly. Clinical social workers value collaboration and thus recognize the importance of clients' input in the development of their treatment goals. Clinical social workers use the engagement process to help clients convey their thoughts and concerns within the therapeutic relationship as well as to other providers/stakeholders. Practitioners in clinical social work:

- Demonstrate an ecological understanding of the transactional relationship between emotional/behavioral difficulties and social problems (poverty, crime, social injustice, racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, migration status, and ableism, among others) and incorporate this understanding of, and reflect upon, the ways these aspects shape client engagement.
- Understand how members of oppressed groups—people of color, people with varying sexual orientation and gender identities, people with different abilities, people with severe and persistent mental illness, among others—may require methods of engagement rooted in anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and human rights perspectives .
- Identify ways to enhance collaboration with clients and promote their empowerment, including seeking their input and feedback regarding the treatment process and fostering their capacity to provide feedback to other members of the treatment team.

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Clinical social workers understand the importance of the assessment process and recognize that it is ongoing and directly informs their interventions. Clinical social workers value holistic assessment and therefore use the bio-psycho-social-spiritual assessment process as well as analysis of clients' strengths and resiliencies, their coping skills, and their adaptation to traumatic and stressful life events in a full assessment. Practitioners of clinical social work understand how their personal experiences may impact the assessment process. Clinical social workers recognize the power of intergenerational family patterns on individuals and explain these to clients while avoiding deterministic approaches to identifying such patterns. Clinical social workers also recognize that traumatic and stressful events can be precipitated by human rights violations, racism, and other forms of oppression. When applicable, clinical social workers rely on the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* to enhance their assessment, to conduct differential diagnosis, and to communicate with other healthcare providers about clients' presenting problems and symptomatology. Clinical social workers elicit client feedback about their experience of the assessment process, reflect upon varied meanings of the assessment, and share these assessment outcomes with clients. Practitioners in clinical social work:

- Demonstrate an ecological understanding of the transactional relationship between emotional/behavioral difficulties and social problems—poverty, community violence, racism, sexism, religious or ideological bias, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and other social injustices—and incorporate this understanding into their assessments.
- Select, modify, adapt, and evaluate clinical assessment tools and approaches depending on the needs and social locations of clients and current empirical evidence.
- Assess how issues of racism and other forms of oppression, social injustice, and inequities in access to resources play a role in client difficulties and how they affect the assessment process, including assisting the client in voicing concerns to the entire treatment team.
- Consider sharing the ways trauma and other stressors (including those related to racism, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of oppression) affect health and behavior in order to assist colleagues in promoting empathy for clients in regard to the assessed factors, especially in host settings (e.g., health, criminal justice, and educational environments).
- Reflect on their own issues of power and privilege and how they impact the therapeutic relationship.

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Clinical social workers select effective modalities for intervention based on the existing research as well as the client's cultural background and experiences with racism and other forms of oppression. Clinical social work practitioners integrate their knowledge of various individual, family, and group psychotherapeutic modalities, as well as crisis intervention techniques, to intervene effectively; demonstrate flexibility by tailoring interventions to suit the needs of multiple client populations; and understand the effects of the social environment on client well-being. Clinical social workers therefore recognize the need to also intervene on mezzo and macro levels. Practitioners in clinical social work critically select, apply, and evaluate best practices and evidence-informed interventions; they value collaboration with the client and other professionals to coordinate treatment plans. Clinical social workers maintain knowledge of the communities they serve in order to ensure that clients are connected with relevant services and resources in an effective manner, while eliciting client feedback about how the interventions are impacting the client. Practitioners in clinical social work:

- Select psychotherapeutic interventions based on a critical knowledge of theory, research, practice experience, and on understanding of how human rights violations, racism, and other types of oppression impact client choice of, and access to, interventions.
- Exhibit flexibility by shifting perspectives and interventions to suit the needs of clients, while recognizing that the multi-faceted assessment drives the selection of appropriate interventions.
- Demonstrate an ecological understanding of the transactional relationship between emotional/behavioral difficulties and social problems—poverty, crime, social inequality, institutional racism, sexism, religious and/or ideological bias, homophobia, and transphobia—and incorporate this understanding into their interventions.
- Intervene effectively with individuals, families, and groups, while eliciting client feedback and knowing when to modify approaches.

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Clinical social workers value empirically derived evaluation of practice and assure that it is an ongoing component of advanced practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Clinical social workers recognize the critical need to use client feedback to evaluate clinical processes and outcomes with diverse populations. Clinical social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, the systematic effects of white supremacy, racism, and other forms of oppression and marginalization on the well-being of clients, and critically apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Clinical social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness, use appropriate methods for evaluating practice, and rely upon the scholarly literature to guide their evaluation processes. Clinical social workers also recognize that evaluating practice means examining barriers to effective treatment including, but not limited to, countertransference, systems- and community-knowledge, and client satisfaction. Practitioners in clinical social work:

- Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of intervention outcomes.
- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, human rights approaches, quantitative and qualitative methods, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks when evaluating clients and program outcomes.
- Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions, clinical processes, outcomes, and client satisfaction within a single case design.
- Evaluate programs to assess their effectiveness in meeting client and community needs.
- Apply social work ethics in evaluating their own practice.
- Demonstrate a humanistic and culturally-responsive approach when designing research projects or evaluation studies.