



CASW Scope of Practice Statement

Social work is a practice-based profession and academic discipline founded on theories of social work, social science, and humanities. It is advanced through an evidence informed approach and recognizes the importance of Indigenous ways of knowing in practice, the development of knowledge, and education, clinical services, policy, and research. Social work focuses on the person within their environment and recognizes the importance of family, community, culture, legal, social, spiritual, and economic influences that impact the well-being of individuals, families, groups, and communities. Social work applies a strengths-based perspective and views individual, families, and communities as resourceful, resilient, and having capacity. Principles of respect for the inherent dignity and worth of persons, the pursuit of social justice, and culturally responsive practice that applies an anti-oppressive lens to all areas of practice and is grounded in ethics, values, and humility, are central to social work.

Social work practice responds to needs of individuals, families, groups, and communities and addresses barriers and injustices in organizations and society. Social work focuses on improving health and social well-being using the social determinants of health framework when delivering services, navigating systems, and advocating for equitable access to and improvement of the multiple dimensions that impact health and well-being. Social work engages people and communities to address life challenges and traumatic events, to create change, and build resiliency. Social work also collaborates with other professionals, communities, and organizations to provide services, improve conditions, and create opportunities for growth, recovery, and personal development.

Individual competency is developed through education, training, continuous professional development, supervision, and a self-reflective approach to practice that bolsters learning from experience. Social work practice includes but is not limited to the roles outlined below. The appendix that follows provides specific roles related to the general descriptions.

- The delivery of clinical services provided either face-to-face or with electronic means, within the context of a helping relationship including assessment, diagnosis, case management, counselling, therapy, consultation, crisis intervention, treatment, group services, and programs, social support, and referral services.
- Advocacy activities to address barriers and inequities that exist in organizations and society, and to uphold human rights and social justice including support for Indigenous populations based on the Indigenous community's identified needs
- The delivery of services and interventions that support community development and enrich individual, family, and collective well-being.
- Supervision to a social worker, social work student or other supervisee.
- The development, promotion, management, administration, delivery, and evaluation of services and programs, including those done in collaboration with other professionals.
- The management, leadership and administration of an organization and oversight of services, programs, and interventions provided by social workers or another supervisee.



- The development, promotion, implementation, and evaluation of social policies aimed at improving social conditions and equality for individuals, families, groups, and communities, and social policies that promote social justice.
- Education, training, and professional development regarding the practice of social work.
- Research and evaluation to reflect on social work practice, to develop social policy, and to implement research informed findings into practice, including research that engages those using social work services and research done in collaboration with other professionals.





APPENDIX #1

Roles and Responsibilities within Social Work Scope of Practice

NOTE: Qualifications relating to the above-noted roles and responsibilities are established through legislation in each province/territory and may vary across jurisdictions.

Role and Responsibilities
A1) Delivery of Clinical Services
a. Assessment of the client’s situation, their needs, and their readiness for services, applying sensitivity to individual and/or cultural differences and engaging the client in defining their situation.
b. Service and intervention planning based on the assessment of client needs, eliciting the client’s point of view, identifying interventions and services to meet the needs, and review and evaluation of progress.
c. Seeking to understand the values, beliefs, traditions, and historical context of clients and incorporating this knowledge into social work assessments, planning, and interventions.
d. Case work and case management.
e. Counselling and therapy.
f. Contractual consultation to social workers, other professionals, and organizations.
g. Crisis intervention services.
h. Linking adults, children, families, groups, and communities to community resources.
i. Social support services to individuals, families, and groups.
j. Matching clients with other services based on the assessment of their needs and their preferences, and referrals to other agencies and programs.
k. Collaboration with other professionals for service planning, interventions, and service delivery.
l. Seeking out cultural advice and, when appropriate, pursuing consultation with the assigned Indigenous leaders and Elders when providing services to Indigenous individuals, families, groups, and communities.
A2) Delivery of Clinical Services: clinical social work services that require additional training and competence
a. With comprehensive training and sanctioned by an Indigenous community, the provision of Indigenous approaches to social work services to Indigenous individuals, families, groups, and communities including traditional healing and ceremonies.
b. Psychosocial assessment, diagnosis and treatment of mental, emotional, and behavioural disorders and conditions, for the purpose of providing psychosocial intervention to enhance personal, interpersonal, and social functioning when authorized by provincial or territorial legislation.
c. Social work in health service settings including hospitals, clinics, home care and other organizations providing health services.
d. Social work in child welfare services.
e. Social work services to children and adults who experienced sexual violence, abuse, trauma, and/ or human trafficking.
f. Social work with individuals experiencing substance use.
g. Social work in settings that provide services to diverse communities including refugees, immigrants, and newcomers.
h. Social work with 2SLGBTQ individuals and communities.



i. Social work in legal settings, the criminal justice system, witness support services, alternative dispute resolution services, and mediation services.
j. Social work with women and children experiencing violence and/or individuals who act in violent ways.
k. Court ordered assessments of client needs, client capacity, client functioning, client mental health, parenting capacity, and custody and access family court plans.
l. Adoption services, including adoption assessment, permanency planning, and support services to adoptees, birth parents and the adoptive family.
m. Independent or private clinical practice including treatment, assessment services, consultation, and psychotherapy.
B) Advocacy
a. Advocacy activities and engagement in practices to further human rights and social justice for individuals, groups, and communities.
b. Advocacy activities to improve systems and to address structural or systemic inequalities.
c. Strategies that include members of a community in conversations and actions.
C) Community Development
a. Analysis of community needs.
b. Organizing a community to address various social issues.
c. Strategies that raise public awareness.
d. Services and interventions that support community development and community organization.
D) Supervision
a. Supervision to a social worker, social work student or other supervisee providing clinical services and/or programs and/or operational functions. Supervision includes clinical, case management and program delivery and the administrative, supportive, and educational functions.
b. Supervision to a social worker in private practice.
E) Management and Leadership
a. Management and administration of programs, services, information systems, and organizations.
b. Coordination of programs.
c. Design, development, and initiation of programs.
d. Management of the review of programs and services to evaluate effectiveness and program improvement initiatives as guided by the review.
e. Services to support the development of Board of Directors.
f. Strategic Planning for organizations.
F) Development, implementation, and evaluation of social policies
a. Identifying the need for social policy, engaging others in highlighting the need for social policy, and facilitating public participation.
b. Development and implementation of social welfare policy, and analysis of social policy.
c. Advocacy for policy and legislation changes that will effectively address social condition and social justice.
G) Education and professional development
a. Education to students enrolled in social work programs.
b. Training and professional development to practicing social workers.
c. Training to other professionals, individuals, families and groups regarding programs and services available.
d. Training and education regarding community needs and problems.
H) Research and Evaluation



a. Participation in research and evaluation and dissemination of research informed knowledge.
b. Design of research and evaluation including methods design and data analysis
c. Conducting organizational needs assessment and environmental scan.
d. Assessment of the needs of clients for the purpose of informing design of programs and services.
e. Design and delivery of program review and program evaluation.
f. Participation in continuous quality improvement duties.
g. Planning, management or coordination of quality assurance programs and processes including formulate quality control policies and initiatives to improve programs, organization effectiveness and efficiency.

References: The above chart was developed and adapted from the following social work professional resources

- Canadian Association of Social Workers; Social Work Scope of Practice. (2008) retrieved at: https://www.casw-acts.ca/sites/default/files/attachements/scope_of_practice_august_08_e_final_17.pdf
- Canadian Council of Social Work Regulators; Entry Level Competency Profile for the Social Work Profession in Canada. 2012 available at: www.ccswr-ccorts.ca/publications-resources/
- Carlton University, School of Social Work. Essential Requirements for MSW Program- students available at: <https://carleton.ca/socialwork/wp-content/uploads/Essential-Requirements-for-the-MSW-Final-2018.pdf>
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- Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Social Workers (NLASW). Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice. (2016). Retrieved at https://nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Cultural_Competyency_Standards_1.pdf
- Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers; Position Paper on Scope of Practice. 2008 retrieved at: <https://www.ocswssw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Position-Paper-on-Scopes-of-Practice-2018-revised-20180626.pdf>
- Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice September 2018 retrieved at <https://www.ocswssw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Code-of-Ethics-and-Standards-of-Practice-September-7-2018.pdf>.



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