

2015 SAU Program Competencies (Knowledge, Values, Skills, Cognitive and Affective Processes); Behaviors

August 2016 FINAL	2015 Description and Foundation Generalist Behaviors – Observable Components	Empowerment Specialization Behaviors – Observable Components
Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior	<p>Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession's history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.</p> <p>Social workers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 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 2. use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations 3. demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication 4. use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes 5. use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior. 	<p><i>Implementing an empowerment approach to ethical social work practice requires a social worker's extensive self-awareness. This awareness is based on self-reflection; information from clients, colleagues, and supervisors; scientific knowledge; and ethical analysis of all practice decisions and behaviors. Essential areas of ethical analysis for empowering social workers emphasize the worker's socio-cultural location and its impact on practice, as well as the extent to which the worker-client relationship facilitates empowerment. A praxis process incorporating sources of self-awareness and ethical analysis cycles through phases of reflection, action, and further reflection and steers empowerment-oriented workers toward accountability to clients, community, and the social work profession.</i></p> <p>Empowerment social workers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. evaluate professional actions utilizing a praxis process of reflection-action-reflection informed by clients, colleagues, supervisors, and scientific knowledge. 7. resolve ethical dilemmas inherent in the empowerment method.

<p>Competency 2: Engage in Diversity and Difference in Practice</p>	<p>Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to 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. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power.</p> <p>Social workers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels 2. present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences 3. apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies. 	<p><i>Empowerment social workers understand collaboration with clients and communities representing diverse identities is an essential aspect for implementing an empowerment method. To build collaborative partnerships that respect, invite, and ensure voice to clients from all disempowered clients, colleagues, and other stakeholders, empowerment-oriented practitioners require relationship abilities and communication expertise. The relationship skills of social workers are grounded in the knowledge, skills, values, and cognitive and affective processes derived from the cultural competency model and the importance of contextualizing this competency for each individual through cultural humility. Empowerment-based practice builds on these cultural models and implements a strengths perspective that respects each client's privilege and expertise. A strengths perspective moves empowering social workers to emphasize the strengths of diverse clients and views each client as having potential to meet their individual challenges.</i></p> <p>Empowerment social workers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. collaborate effectively with diverse client, colleague, and community populations 5. demonstrate an understanding of cultural competence and cultural humility in acknowledging the strengths and inherent power of client populations from diverse backgrounds
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<p>Competency 3: Advance human rights and social, economic and environmental justice.</p>	<p>Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.</p> <p>Social workers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels 2. engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice. 	<p><i>Empowerment social work professionals are committed to advancing human rights and social justice. An empowerment-oriented practitioner understands the impact of environmental power dynamics on the identity, development, well-being and opportunities of individuals and groups. Empowering practitioners analyze the ways in which people's experience of power is shaped by social and cultural systems, social policy, agency protocols, and global dynamics. In keeping with the goal of empowerment, practitioners act on this knowledge to contribute to a more just and equal society.</i></p> <p><i>In addition to their understanding of the sociocultural forces that impact justice and human well-being, empowerment professionals recognize the significance of the natural environment and its impact, globally and locally, upon both human and non-human species. Practitioners understand an ecological perspective that reveals the interdependence of all life on earth.</i></p> <p>Empowerment social workers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. effectively challenge in self and others the disempowering attitudes and behaviors that contribute to social injustices, oppression, and discrimination. 4. work individually and collectively to advocate policies at multiple levels which support social justice, protect human rights, and promote the well-being of non-human species, habitats and ecosystems 	4

<p>Competency 4: Engage in practice informed research and research - informed practice.</p>	<p>Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice.</p> <p>Social workers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research 2. apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings 3. use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery. 	<p><i>A distinguishing quality of empowerment practice is the use of “evidence” from a client’s perspective in balance with knowledge and evidence generated through social work research. “What constitutes valid evidence?” is a critical question in the use of evidence to guide social work practice, prompting workers to critically evaluate new knowledge and its sources for credibility and applicability in each unique practice situation. Empowering workers continuously evaluate their practices through the lens of new knowledge and by accessing voices from clients, colleagues, and other stakeholders.</i></p> <p>Empowerment social workers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. tailor evidence-supported strategies to fit unique client situations 5. design, implement, and analyze program evaluations that access stakeholders’ views
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Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice	<p>Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. They are also knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation.</p> <p>Social workers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services; 2. assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services; 3. apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice 	<p><i>All effective social work practitioners actively engage in policy practice. They recognize the role of policy in service delivery and the effects of social policy on a client's experience. To implement an empowering process, workers acknowledge the pervasive influence of domestic and global social policy in every practice endeavor and use this understanding in their consciousness-raising efforts with clients. Empowering practitioners work individually and collectively to influence service delivery, policy formulation, and legislative change.</i></p> <p><i>Empowerment social workers:</i></p> <p><i>4. challenge unjust social and economic policies in all practice activities</i></p> <p><i>5. engage in collective action to influence political and economic forces that contribute to individual and community problems</i></p>

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	<p>Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness.</p> <p>Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate.</p> <p>Social workers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies 2. use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies. 	<p><i>An empowerment method builds upon the generalist foundation in understanding and acting on the dynamic interplay between clients and multiple systems including social, cultural, and political contexts as well as physical environments. Collaboration in engagement elevates subjugated knowledge, activates energy to achieve goals, and exemplifies the value stance of an empowering social work professional in actualizing the principles of self-determination, individualization, the personal as political, and acceptance.</i></p> <p><i>Empowerment social work practitioners engage with clients in forming purposeful partnerships, balancing client strengths with challenges, and in recognizing client expertise, experience, and resources.</i></p> <p><i>To facilitate engagement, empowerment social workers require an astute understanding of human diversity and consistently practice with an understanding of cultural humility.</i></p> <p>Empowerment social workers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. use self-awareness and feedback to construct empowering relationships <u>in collaboration with clients</u>. 4. facilitate client system engagement at the micro mezzo and macro levels.
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Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	<p>Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and value the importance of inter-professional collaboration in this process. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment and decision-making.</p> <p>Social workers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies; 2. 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; 3. develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; 4. select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies. 	<p><i>An empowerment method builds upon the generalist foundation in understanding and acting on the dynamic interplay between clients and multiple systems including social, cultural, and political contexts as well as physical environments. Collaboration in assessment elevates subjugated knowledge, activates energy to achieve goals, and exemplifies the value stance of an empowering social work professional in actualizing the principles of self-determination, individualization, the personal as political, and acceptance.</i></p> <p><i>Empowerment social workers comprehensively assess client situations utilizing a social justice ethic in order to recognize social and political roots of individual experience and assess opportunities for change with clients and in their environments.</i></p> <p><i>Empowerment social workers:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. <i>practice cultural responsiveness by using assessment tools in ways sensitive to client diversity</i> 6. <i>assess factors of risk and resilience that hinder or promote client system competence</i>

<p>Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities</p>	<p>Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers value the importance of interprofessional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, interprofessional, and inter-organizational collaboration.</p> <p>Social workers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies; 2. apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies; 3. use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes; 4. negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; 5. facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals 	<p><i>An empowerment method builds upon the generalist foundation in understanding and acting on the dynamic interplay between clients and multiple systems including social, cultural, and political contexts as well as physical environments. Collaboration in intervention elevates subjugated knowledge, activates energy to achieve goals, and exemplifies the value stance of an empowering social work professional in actualizing the principles of self-determination, individualization, the personal as political, and acceptance.</i></p> <p><i>The empowerment method directs practitioners as an ethical mandate to intervene across system levels. Workers bridge individually-oriented methods with group, organizational, and community efforts to help clients ally with others, broaden the participation of clients in defining service priorities, and involve clients as key constituents in systems of service delivery. This multilevel intervention is signature to empowerment practice, whereby the way in which the social worker intervenes with clients is never separate from the multiple contexts which reinforce the oppressive problem-maintaining environment.</i></p> <p><i>Empowerment social workers:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. use strength-oriented empowerment processes to heighten efficacy, competence, and political consciousness 7. demonstrate practice skills necessary to achieve change through integrated clinical and political social work strategies

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	<p>Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.</p> <p>Social workers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes; 2. apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes; 3. critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; 4. apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. 	<p><i>An empowerment method builds upon the generalist foundation in understanding and acting on the dynamic interplay between clients and multiple systems including social, cultural, and political contexts as well as physical environments. Collaboration in evaluation elevates subjugated knowledge, activates energy to achieve goals, and exemplifies the value stance of an empowering social work professional in actualizing the principles of self-determination, individualization, the personal as political, and acceptance.</i></p> <p><i>Empowerment practice is reflective practice. Empowerment practitioners thoughtfully apply scientific knowledge to practice situations, construct practice processes to generate practice-based evidence, engage clients as active partners in critically evaluating the work, and reflect on their own values and skills.</i></p> <p><i>Empowerment social workers:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. continuously monitor and measure own practice effectiveness incorporating the client's perspective 6. actively involve clients in all steps of program evaluation and practice research
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