

kiron

Study Guide

SW_DP Social Work as a Discipline & Profession



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons [Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) License.

Purpose and Structure

This document is called a Study Guide. It is a written script to walk you through the topics within a study unit, called a Module, in your Kiron studies. It introduces the subjects in the module and links to the relevant parts in the online courses that you have to take in order to complete the module. It provides video lectures, written pieces, other kinds of enriching materials and suggested exercises from additional open educational resources to elaborate on the topics.

The purpose of this document is to accompany you while you are studying the online courses in the module. It is not a replacement of any course or content within the modules, thus completing this material only helps you progressing in an easier way in your module.

While you can share your thoughts and report errors on this material, your feedback and questions regarding the external contents should be addressed to the producers and owners of those materials. **Kiron uses third-party content and thus the opinions presented do not necessarily represent those of Kiron Open Higher Education.**

Iconography

Below are the meanings of the icons that are used in this document:



General hints, suggestions and other things to check



Video lesson or tutorial resource



Book, web page or other written material resource



Exercise or assessment resource



Discussion point in Kiron Forum, Google Classroom or Google Hangouts



Reference to the Kiron Campus or to a MOOC

Table of Contents

Purpose and Structure	1
Iconography	1
Table of Contents	2
Introduction	4
Learning Outcomes	4
Courses	4
Prerequisites	5
Additional Resources	5
Chapter 1 - An Introduction to Social Work	5
Values, Ethics and Anti-oppressive Practice	5
The Social Work Process	6
Skills in Social Work	7
Complex Identities	7
Developing a Professional Social Work Identity	8
Values and Ethical Practice	8
Attachment Theory and Social Work	9
Reflection as a Process of Integration	9
Chapter 2 - Origins of Social Work	11
Social Origins of Modernity	11
Community and Three Forms of Capital	13
From Charity to Professional Social Work	15
Political Responses to Poverty	15
Social Pedagogy and Subsidiarity	16
Chapter 3 - Social Work Practice: Advocating Social Justice and Change	17
What is Social Work?	17
Integrated Themes of Social Work	18
The History of Social Work	18
Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice	19
Chapter 4 - Social Work with Individuals, Families and Small Groups	20
Engagement Skills and Relationship Building	20
Professional Values and Ethics	21
Core Intervention Planning	22
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy / Motivational Enhancement and Mindfulness Strategies	23
Problem-Solving and Psychoeducation / Multisystemic Interventions	24
Special Considerations when Working with Families	25
Life-Long Learning and Professional Development	26
Chapter 5 - Diversity and Social Justice in Social Work	27

Culture	27
Theoretical Perspectives on Culture	28
Unpacking Intersectionality	28
Social and Cultural Determinants of Health	29
Criminal Justice	30
Environmental Justice	31
Being a Culturally Grounded Ally	31
Sources	33

Introduction

Welcome to Introduction to Social Work as a Discipline and Profession, your first module in the Social Work study track at Kiron!

The purpose of this Study Guide is to support you as you work through the MOOCs and tutorials in this module. This is your ultimate guide to all things political theory and you should use it to further your understanding of the topics covered in your courses.

Learning Outcomes

Once you have completed this module, you will be able to:

- outline the history and development of Social Work as an academic discipline and practical field
- describe the central problems, target groups and fields of Social Work practice
- explain the theories and methods underlying Social Work as a profession
- discuss the core values and ethics in the field of Social Work
- demonstrate the importance of reflective practice through basic Social Work strategies
- recognize the potential impact of diversity

Courses

This module is made up of **5 MOOCs**:

- 1) **An Introduction to Social Work**
- 2) **Origins of Social Work**
- 3) **Social Work Practice: Advocating Social Justice and Change**
- 4) **Social Work Practice with Individuals, Families and Small Groups**
- 5) **Diversity and Social Justice in Social Work**

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this module because it is the first module in the Social Work study track. All you need is an interest in Social Work and an enthusiasm to learn!

If only some of the mentioned topics and learning outcomes are not clear for you right now, do not worry. You will become more familiar with the terminology and have the possibility to check how you perform throughout the course.

Additional Resources

In this Study Guide, we will have links to additional video and text materials to enhance your understanding. Here is a list of the resources that we often refer to in this Study Guide:

- [Encyclopedia of Social Work](#)
- ['9 Most Useful Online Resources for Social Workers'](#)

Chapter 1 - An Introduction to Social Work

[The first MOOC](#) in this module introduces the concepts of good social work practice. Four basic elements underpin professional **good practice: knowledge, values and ethics, the social work process, and skills**. The four component model of good practice acknowledges that the learning of social work cannot just be about theoretical knowledge and academic learning, but has relatable application to the setting of social work practice and the use of skills and values are implicit when directly working with people.

Values, Ethics and Anti-oppressive Practice

As a profession, social work requires a **specific qualification and registration with a professional regulatory body**. This is what officially entitles people to status of 'social worker.' In Wales, for example, social care workers must ensure their practice is informed by the National Occupational Standards for Social Work. It is helpful to understand these officiating bodies are underpinned by a set of social work 'values' of practice that helps to carry the field as a whole.

Traditionally, values are what underpins social work and distinguishes itself from other professional groups. Protecting the public by **maintaining behavior codes** and standards of practice are essential to social work. However, social work values tend to be perceived as adhering to a set of rules. Due to the unique encounters social workers are faced, they must explore personal aspects of values and be aware of how their values affect the work they do. This all considering, one's professional identity and standards of professional integrity informs the complex and difficult situations they must deal with. The **British Association of Social Workers** issued a revised Code of Ethics for Social Work that emphasised its commitment to 3 basic values:

1. **Human Rights:** respect for inherent worth and dignity of all people as expressed in the UN' Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
2. **Social Justice:** a responsibility to promote social justice, in relation to society generally, and in relation to the people with whom they work
3. **Professional Integrity:** A responsibility to respect and uphold the values and principles of the profession and act in a reliable, honest and trustworthy manner. ([BASW Code of Ethics for Social Work - Statement of Principles](#) (p. 8)).¹

In addition to values, the BASW contains a code of ethics. Ethics are an aspect of values to understand the resolution of professional moral dilemmas. The BASW code, for example, includes social workers have to:

- Work with conflicting interests and competing rights
- Have a role to support, protect and empower people, as well as having statutory duties and other obligations that may be coercive and restrict people's freedoms.
- Are constrained by the availability of resources and institutional policies in society.

¹ British Association of Social Workers (BASW), 'Code of Ethics for Social Work - Statement of Principles', http://cdn.basw.co.uk/upload/basw_112315-7.pdf; http://cdn.basw.co.uk/upload/basw_113012-10.pdf

Social workers must be made aware of publicly stated values of their agency and make skilful judgments based on their accumulated knowledge and experience. Ethical considerations are rarely the responsibility of one worker, however, agencies policies and structures of accountability offer both guidance and a standards against measured practices. Accountability, is the process through which employers and the public can judge the quality of individual worker' practice and hold them responsible for their decisions and actions.



[Here](#) is further information about the Code of Ethics held by the NASW.

The Social Work Process

The Social Work Process comprises **a sequence of actions or tasks** that draw on all of the components of practice discussed so far. Although its process is presented sequentially, it **rarely follows a clear linear route and is more often a fluid, circular cycle**: social workers form assessments through to implementation and evaluation and back to assessment again. Despite fluidity, parts of the process, such as assessment, have clearly defined procedures guided by local or national policy. Some tasks may be short and discrete, but many are longer and more complex. Additionally, **tasks often overlap and are revisited over a period of involvement with a service user**.

Understanding the social work process is a prerequisite for becoming a reflective practitioner. **Reflection refers to the ability to work in a thoughtful and systematic way**. Practitioners must be aware (and inform service users) of why they engage in specific tasks and be able to justify their methods of working. Interventions should be meaningful and fit within an overall plan or strategy. Awareness of the different stages of the social work process can assist workers to prepare to be accountable and reflective upon, their actions.



[This](#) is an interesting TED Ed video about Social Work as a mission.

Skills in Social Work

Social workers are required to use a number of critical skills during their everyday work. These skills generally develop through practical application on a daily basis, but it is important to be aware of them from day one. The framework for understanding social work skills is divided into four categories:

- Skills in **thinking**
- Skills in **using the senses**
- Skills in **combining thinking and using the senses**
- Skills in **supporting your studies and practices**

The ability to analyse, manage and reflect is crucial in the field of social work. Case workers deal with complex issues with people who are often caught in difficult and traumatic circumstances. It is therefore essential that social workers can draw on their refined skills of analysing and managing people and situations. In addition, listening and communicating skills

are vital for ensuring clients feel safe and supported. Effective interviewing, negotiating and academic and professional writing skills are also important elements in a social worker's skill set.



[Here](#) is an alternative list of 11 skills all social workers should attain.

Complex Identities

According to Stuart Hall, identities are not fixed but a “**matter of becoming**” and “**being**.” This suggests **identity is something that is never complete and forever changing as a continuous process**.² He also suggests, who we are as people are strongly determined by shared commonalities with those who we share ideas, beliefs or experiences. These definitions permits the possibility individuals are strongly influenced by experiences and relationship through life and how we see ourselves. Examples in social work would be the affinity we share from birth heritage that could demonstrate both strong affinity or sensations of alienation. This is because there are many aspects to life that can help shape identity, including nationality, class, religion, gender, sexuality and ethnicity.

The notion of **ascribed-identity** can be conceptualized as identities that others impose on you. These include, for example, gender-and-age-defined identities rooted in very early social experiences. The difference between **ascribed-identities** and **self-identity** can at times lead to conflict among social work service users, because ascribed-identities tend to fall into categories of being negative and based on stereotypes. Stereotypes represent society's views in rigid and simplistic ways. It is important in social work practice that we spend time thinking about, and becoming aware of our assumptions.



[This](#) is an interesting video discussing personal identity from a philosophical point of view.

Developing a Professional Social Work Identity

Empathy is arguably *the* most essential skill for social workers. It is crucial for understanding the experiences of clients in order to help them in the most effective way. ‘Empathy is one of the basic building blocks that you will need to develop a professional social work identity.

How people **respond to stress and distress depends on their previous experiences** and the sense they have been able to make of them. If a service user's experiences are very different from yours, then you are quite likely to **misunderstand their response**, or even the cause of their distress. Such misunderstanding can lead you, as the practitioner, to react unhelpfully, and to make things worse’.³

² Stuart Hall, ‘The Question of Cultural Identity’ (1992)

³ OpenLearn, ‘2.3 Developing a professional social work identity’,

<http://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/social-care/social-work/introduction-social-work/content-section-2.3>

In the context of social work, Lena Dominelli defines empathy as ‘placing oneself in another’s shoes’. This emphasises the need for the **professional social worker to attempt to understand the experiences and emotions of the other person**. This, of course, requires effort and imagination. There are a number of things social workers can do to demonstrate empathy and a willingness to understand the client’s point of view:

- listening
- giving space and making people feel safe so they can ‘come out’ or reveal very personal aspects of their lives to social workers
- remembering shared responsibilities in relationships and thinking how preferences for shared aspects of care could be maintained and not disrupted (e.g. how and when the service user would choose to take care of their teeth and bathe, and how the carer could support this)
- taking on board the knowledge that carers and service users have about the best ways of helping and caring for an individual.⁴



[This](#) is an excellent TEDx Talk about the power of empathy from a psychological perspective.

Values and Ethical Practice

‘Values’ is a term that is used frequently in social work and the profession has had many debates about what it means. Values refer literally to the **choices and actions that you think are important**. Values provide you with some **personal guidance** in the way you understand any situation and affect the way you respond. You don’t often have to express or articulate what you value because most of the time it is an implicit part of your motivation and thinking. For this reason, **understanding what you value becomes an important element in exploring the way you work with people**.

The term ‘ethics’ is used to refer to the **norms or standards of behaviour people follow** concerning what is regarded as good or bad, right or wrong. In social work, the term a ‘code of ethics’ is used to denote a **set of principles**, standards or rules of conduct for ethical practice. It is also used to talk about ethical dilemmas – i.e. difficult questions about the best course of action to take which incorporates social work values.



[Here](#) is a short quiz about professional boundaries in Social Work



[This](#) is a video about ethical dilemmas in Social Work, how they arise and some approaches to handling them.

⁴ OpenLearn,
<http://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/social-care/social-work/introduction-social-work/content-section-2.3>

Attachment Theory and Social Work

John Bowlby described attachment as the 'lasting psychological connectedness between human beings formed with the person who provides physical and emotional care' (Bowlby, 1969). This research suggests that if children are to thrive emotionally they need a **close, continuous, caregiving relationship in infancy**. Bowlby believed humans were biologically programmed to seek proximity, safety and security from attachment figures in the face of fear or threat. Once removed from their primary caregivers, Bowlby believed children go through a cycle of protest, despair and detachment.⁵

David Howe proposes that attachment theory and other psychosocial theories can help us to understand risks and protective factors in people's lives. He suggests that **social workers can help to identify protective factors in an individual's psychosocial environment**, and help to strengthen them.



Remember to consider the **discussion questions** in the blue boxes on this page of the course.



[This](#) is an additional video about John Bowlby's Psychotherapy and attachment theories.

Reflection as a Process of Integration

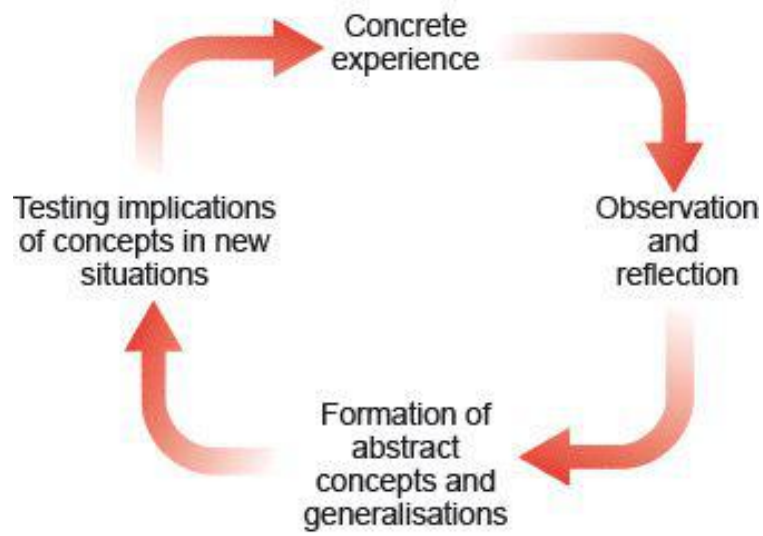
There are many academic disciplines and sources of knowledge that influence social work practice, and these include **sociology, psychology, social policy, law and research**. These can be combined with practice experience, the skills of fellow practitioners and the knowledge of service users to make a potent learning experience, without which professional practice might be less informed.

Connecting academic learning with practice requires the **ability to draw upon knowledge and use it to think about and write in a 'reflective way'**, and to **make sense of practice**. However, reflection requires not only the **intellectual application of ideas**, but also an understanding of this process of learning through experience and self-awareness. Reflective practice includes an **appreciation of, and sensitivity to, your own skills and values**, and an awareness of your own impact on others in relationship-based forms of work.

This approach to reflection has been the focus of writers such as **Donald Schön** (1983) and **David Kolb** (1985). These theorists have been interested in the ways in which **adults learn**, and especially in the different ways that professionals learn and develop their practice. Kolb went on to develop a cycle of learning, as illustrated in the diagram below.⁶

⁵ J. Bowlby, *Child Care and the Growth of Love*, (1969)

⁶ OpenLearn, '2.4 Bringing your learning together in reflective practice', <http://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/social-care/social-work/introduction-social-work/content-section-2.4>



Chapter 2 - Origins of Social Work

In [this chapter](#) you will discover how the development of social work was necessitated by the economic, social and political transformation which marked the transition from a traditional to a modern society. This development took place in various phases which are briefly introduced, in parallel with the various models of "welfare regimes" that came to characterise European nation states. The purpose of the module is to show that "helping" of this formal kind implies the mediation between "private troubles" and "public issues" and is therefore always of a political nature.

Social Origins of Modernity

In order to fully comprehend the practice of social work we must understand its position in relation to the nature of modernity.

What is the nature of modernity?

Modernity has **historically transformed social work from the public sphere to the private sphere**, meaning social work has inherited some benefits and disadvantages from what has come with modernity.

Benefits:

- Advancement of science and technology
- Advancement of rationality
- The notion of human rights
- Advances in democracy

Disadvantages:

- Urbanization and industrialization on a massive scale
 - For example: poverty, exploitation, child labor, urban slums, colonialism, racism, nationalism

In addition to modernity, the **rise of industrialization created centres of production and population**. This process stimulated the **movement of people** away from rural areas into industrial spaces to be recruiting to factory labor. The new production of labor in factories transformed the manner in which labor existed. Factories required families to be split up and labor to become specialized, creating an **exploitation of all forms of labor** (men, women, and children). This created difficult working conditions that demanded specific training and discipline, in order to conform to the demands of large-scale production. This production process created the conditions for a **division of labor**.

On a large scale, industrialization also required the necessity for a **system of transport and communication over long distances**. In the context of welfare, it raised the question of who was **responsible for the "collateral effects" of labor** like accidents, illness/epidemics, unemployment, old age, law and order. Challenging the responsibility of well-being between the public or private sphere.



Now complete ["Week 1: Social origins of modernity"](#) and ["Week 2: Effects of industrialisation"](#)



You must complete the **A1: Assignment** and **Q1: Multiple Choice** in order to progress onto the next week of the course.



[This](#) is an informative chapter from a book about social change and modernity. It's worth a read!



[Here](#) is a good Crash Course video about the Industrial Revolution.

From Mechanical to Organic Solidarity

Emile Durkheim, a 19th century sociologist, defined differences in solidarity between a traditional society and the societies in the age of modernity. Durkheim writes that **traditional society** is characterized by what he calls a "**mechanical solidarity**." The sense that people have a **fixed place in society**. The cohesion of solidarity is ensured by **family bonds and communities** of people experiences. People discover a homogeneity with the commonalities they share with people in their society. Mechanical solidarity tend to operate in **small-scale societies and is usually based on kinship ties of familial networks**.

Modern societies are characterized by "**organic solidarity**," which requires a type of organization based on the **dependence of individual experience within advanced societies**. This experience occurs from a rising interdependence that comes from the specialization of work between people. This experience comes from people who don't already have a relationship with the other people in their societies, as is commonly discovered in urban environments, and thus, require **direct organization to maintain the complexity of these communities**.



Now complete ["Week 3: From mechanical to organic solidarity"](#)



You must complete **Q2: Multiple Choice** in order to progress to Week 4.



[Here](#) is a useful video explaining further Durkheim's theory of mechanical and organic solidarity.

Community and Three Forms of Capital

People tend to live in **social units called communities** and the nature of a community is one of social relations. One role of social work is to sustain these social relationships and contracts. Communities serve important necessities for people, such as:

- **Biological necessity**

- o Children are for an extend period are part of natural social relationship or are created within constructed social relationships after birth.
- **Psychological necessity**
 - o Human abilities such as language, security, sense of self, only develop with interaction of others (social relations).
- **Economic necessity**
 - o Relatively self-sufficiency can only be achieved in groups; the division of labour even in “primitive” societies between food gather or hunting, food preparation, care work etc. are all organized in organic or artificial communities.
- **Social necessity**
 - o These relations construct roles, patterns of behaviour, expectations, lines of authority learned in community.

All of these communities are created from a constructed learning process that is created within the communities themselves. In industrialized countries there is three forms of capital.

- **Financial Capital**
 - o Termed by Karl Marx, these include assets, liabilities, and equity. Financial capital in the development industrial were fundamental in creating types of communities.
- **Human Capital**
 - o People, Process, and structure. Are all forced to participate in the process of obtaining financial capital.
- **Social Capital**
 - o Long-term relationships, networks, reciprocity, etc. These are the relationship between people that become a type of resource that can be exchanged and shape the organization of society.

The combination of all three forms of capital can bring about **balanced communities**, but this is dependent upon the **political arrangements** of our modern systems. One of the major issues of these arrangements is from the influence of capitalism that has brought an **unequal distribution** of all forms of capital.



Now complete [“Week 4: Community and three forms of capital”](#)



[This](#) website explains five different types of capital.

Necessity of “Organized Helping”

The motivation for “organised helping” in modernity can be determined in three responses: The **fear of civil unrest/revolution**, **religions obligation**, and modernity as a means of **enlightenment** (rational responses). Most of these responses were taken in the form of institutional responses.

- **A lack of capital**
 - o Institutional responses such as the development of **workhouses** from what were before known as “poorhouses”. These workhouses **exchanged labour for arranged living conditions**. They were a means to **discipline and exclude**

people, and a process to remind people of the consequences of not conforming to the structures of society.

- **Prisons**
 - Also spaces where elites would **utilize people's labor**. This forced means of labor became a reflection of modernity, which **Foucault** pointed out was a means for **society to be reminded, controlled, and disciplined** into subservience to the structures of society.
- **Emigration**
 - Mass European movement of people to the **colonies**.

There were also a number of responses to modernity that directly responded to the mistreatment of the institutions listed above.

- **Charities, humanitarianism, or philanthropy:** the message of these principles was the need to rescue and rehabilitate people to recreated the conditions societies and communities to avoid the effects of exclusion.
- **Political responses:** labor movements took up a cause of poverty in the form of socialist party programs and social policy.
- **Cooperative movements:** brought people together as producers and consumers to avoid the impacts of division of labor.
- **Women's movements:** women could play a social and political role through the private domain. This was extremely relevant in the subject of welfare because it was primarily women in these roles of philanthropy.

The central message of these responses was to look **beyond the individual efforts** of people but also the social and political efforts that allow people to live together based on the principles of **rights and equality**. As such, **social work was inserted into these institutional responses**, as actors that engaged with the family units of life and the re-organizations of society.



Now complete "[Week 5: Necessity of "organised helping"](#)"



You must complete **Q3: Multiple Choice** in order to progress to Week 6.



[Here](#) is an interesting TEDx talk about social change through community organizing.

From Charity to Professional Social Work

There was very little distribution of wealth in the 19th century during the Industrial Revolution. The "organized helping" system was to be accomplished through an **educational process** (ie. social work), so volunteers would receive **specific training**. Charitable help was established with one aim to **inspect all financial contracts** to ensure that all expenses were **correctly implemented and recorded**. The issue with this practice was that the nature of private inspection directly challenges the ideas of people's individual autonomy, when society

expected everyone to be self-sufficient. This issue **challenged the social and moral principles of social workers** who attempted to apply methods of guidance and intervention.

Freud's work exploring the **"logic" of the unconscious** helped to bridge the gap for social workers to engage with **people who behaved differently** to what was considered against people own interests. This helped with the individual explanations which is defined as "case work". The process of identifying social problems as the result of failed development to full adult autonomy. This casework required the psychological training to obtain a **full picture** of clients' situations. Case work is also called the **psycho-social approach** to social work.



Now complete ["Week 6: From charity to professional social work"](#)



[This](#) is a useful source explaining the history of professional social work.

Political Responses to Poverty

'Politics and public policy are responsible for widespread poverty, inequality, and economic exploitation. The appropriate response is not a call for yet more government intervention. Libertarians contend that existing inequalities and exploitative relationships are not resultant merely of free and voluntary exchange. Force and coercion lie at their base; **economic exploitation** is – in a very concrete sense – linked to physical domination.

Students of history may find this insight to be a rather obvious one, yet it is surprisingly underappreciated in both popular and academic discourse about politics and economics. So much of today is based on the concept of intersectionality. Which is the idea of **examining the interplay and intersection of various forms of power**, privilege (or lack thereof) and discrimination. Very rarely do commentators confront this other intersectional phenomenon: the **historical intersection of political and economic power**.⁷

Case work was not the only method that developed in the history of social work. Social workers were aware of the **structural conditions** that developed as a result of the shift into 'modernity'. The [Settlement House Movement](#) were primary actors that explored these structural effects by **establishing up settlement housing**, in order to experiment with local communities. This stimulated what we now call **community work**. These spaces of settlement were important in **examining the causes of poverty** and learn how to cooperatively understand the issues shaping poverty.



Now complete ["Week 7: Political responses to poverty"](#)



[Here](#) is a very informative article about the relationship between politics and poverty in the US.

⁷ David D'Amato, 'Poverty is a Political Problem, Not Just an Economic One', <https://thehill.com/opinion/civil-rights/366487-poverty-is-a-political-problem-not-just-an-economic-one>



[This](#) video discusses important issues about welfare policy and media representations of the poor.

Social Pedagogy and Subsidiarity

Another tradition of social work is social pedagogy. The practice of social pedagogy is the **awareness that a successful modern society requires constant education** that goes beyond just schools, but also the **learning of a life**. This requires learning environment that is **inherently informal**, as to provide a holistic social education that is outside of the school classroom. One example is the introduction of **Youth Clubs**.

The coordination or organizations that stimulated social pedagogy required the **political engineering of welfares and subsidiarity**. Subsidiarity is when the state moves from its role as primarily social welfare provider to instead taking on a supportive role towards **private initiative or developing new charities**. Social pedagogy is geared for the idea that opportunities are for everyone and not just the poor, and thus, is a **process of creating community** in a lifelong learning project.



Now complete [“Week 8: Social pedagogy and subsidiary”](#)



You must complete **Q6: Multiple Choice** in order to progress to “Conclusion”



[This](#) is a useful description of social pedagogy.

Chapter 3 - Social Work Practice: Advocating Social Justice and Change

In [this course](#) you will discover the ways in which social workers make a positive impact on the strive for social justice and social change. You will gain an understanding of the values guiding social workers in their professional lives and the frameworks used to handle the complex situations social workers face on a daily basis.

What is Social Work?

The professional definition of Social Work, approved by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), is '**a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and empowerment and liberation of people.**'⁸ The IFSW also states that social work promotes social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities.

Social workers are guided by the **National Association of Social Workers' (NASW) Code of Ethics** document. The code of ethics is based on core values of the social work profession and aims to govern social workers' decisions and practices. The NASW Code of Ethics informs social workers of the ways to **not only protect their clients but how to protect themselves**, the public and the profession as a whole. It is also a crucial element of the infrastructures in place to ensure accountability.

The first three core value in the code of ethics are as follows

1. **Service.** Service in the social work sector is fuelled by the intent to help others.
2. The notion of **striving for social justice.** This involves acknowledging that social injustice exists, but striving to correct such injustices wherever they occur.
3. The **value of dignity and worth of a person.** This principle ensures social workers treat *all* their clients, regardless of how wrong or right their actions may be, with respect and dignity.



Now complete ["Module 1: What is Social Work?"](#)



[Here](#) is an eye-opening video about all the jobs you probably weren't aware social workers are responsible for.

Integrated Themes of Social Work

Ecological Systems Framework

The underlying principle of this framework is that everything affects everything else. In other words, when one part of a system changes, other parts will also change. In the context of social work, this framework looks at people in their environment. This refers to how the individual interacts with their environment, their family and other small groups. The ecological

⁸ edX, ["Definition of Social Work"](#)

systems framework helps social workers to better understand how the individual and the environment interact with one another.

Strengths Perspective

This framework draws on the strengths that individuals, families and communities can bring to the change effort. For example, if an individual has just lost their job, the strengths perspective encourages social workers to look at the individual's strengths and the ways in which the community can help him/her in the next steps of the relief process. This framework emphasises the need to empower individuals in difficult situations in order to bring about the best possible solutions.



Now complete [“Module 2: Integrated Themes of Social Work”](#)



[Here](#) is a more detailed explanation of the Strengths Perspective.

The History of Social Work

It is important to consider the history of social work and social policies when studying this discipline. Looking back at previous events and developments allows us **learn from mistakes and appreciate the change** that has already occurred. It can be empowering and inspiring.

The history of the social work profession in the United States goes back to the **late 19th century** when immigration increased, creating large populations of individuals and families living in insecure and overcrowded circumstances. Issues such as **poverty, hunger and lack of proper sanitation**, as well as **no access to education or secure employment**, required intervention from individuals and organisations already working in the communities. Social work was not a formal profession at this time so it was left to the efforts of existing community members to address the spiralling issues. The **Charity Organization Societies** and the **Settlement House Movements** were two of the first social work organisations in the US, both originating in the late 1800s. Their main aims were to provide relief to those living in poverty. This initially occurred through wealthy people visiting poorer individuals and offering help in any way they could. Today this is considered the first precursor to the social work profession.



Now complete [“Module 3: The History of Social Work”](#)



What do you consider to be the greatest historical achievement of the social work profession?



[Here](#) is a video discussing some of the grand challenges for social work according to the American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare (AASWSW).



[This](#) is also a useful summary of the history of social work by the NASW.

Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice

In this section you will consider positionalities, identity, intersectionality and privilege. These are all crucial factors to consider when training or working as a social worker. Discrimination is arguably the greatest barrier to equality and social justice. Discrimination can be viewed on both **an interpersonal level and a structural level**. This means that discrimination can occur between individuals but it is also ingrained into **societies' mechanisms and structures**.

'Discrimination is defined as the **outward behavioral response by an advantaged group**, a group who receives advantages and is dominant and powerful, that is unfavorable or negative toward a targeted group, a group who lacks power and privilege (Lum, [2004](#)). The **predecessor of discrimination is prejudice**; the act of thinking that one group is better than, or holds a greater value than, another group is the predecessor of discrimination (Palmer, [1993](#)). Discrimination is an act or series of actions taken against a targeted group with the intention of preventing, devaluing, negating, or humiliating them. When discrimination functions, an advantaged group creates opportunities to advance their members while withholding information, resources, access, and support from targeted groups. Thus, the byproduct of discrimination is twofold in that: (a) advantaged group members may receive opportunities undeservedly and (b) **targeted group members who are qualified may be overlooked**, passed over, or denied opportunities. Through discriminatory acts, advantaged group members unjustifiably receive preferential treatment, additional assistance and/or information, or they are treated less punitively than targeted group members.'⁹

'Privilege is the invisible advantage and resultant unearned benefits afforded to dominant groups of people because of a variety of sociodemographic traits. Privilege provides economic and social boosts to dominant groups while supporting the structural barriers to other groups imposed by prejudice. **Privilege nurtures dependence, distances us from others, and creates a barrier to reflective social work practice**. Acknowledging the effects of privilege increases our capacity to affirm our humanity and that of the communities we serve.'¹⁰



Now complete ["Module 4: Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice"](#)



[This](#) is a great Crash Course video about discrimination.

⁹ Kendra DeLoach McCutcheon, 'Discrimination', in *Encyclopedia of Social Work*, <http://socialwork.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199975839.001.0001/acrefore-9780199975839-e-897>

¹⁰ Cheryl L. Franks and Marion Riedel, 'Privilege', in *Encyclopedia of Social Work*, <http://socialwork.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199975839.001.0001/acrefore-9780199975839-e-305>

Chapter 4 - Social Work with Individuals, Families and Small Groups

In [this course](#) you will examine the ways in which social work practice restores, maintains and promotes social functioning as it relates to individuals, families, and small groups. You discuss social work values and ethics as well as issues of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, religion, and ability as these relate to social work practice. This course also draws on behavioral and social science theories to inform the practice concepts and skills presented. You will learn how to perform various social work roles (i.e. counselor/clinical social worker, group facilitator, mediator, and advocate), recognizing that these roles must adhere to social work values and ethics.

Engagement Skills and Relationship Building

As a social worker it is essential to take into account **family structures** when working on a case. It is outlined in the **NASW Code of Ethics** that social workers must value each and every person that one works with, including those individuals associated with the client. Families and individuals have a voice and they will, in most cases, collaborate with the efforts of social workers. However, this requires empathy, patience and professionalism from case workers, and it is crucial to create a safe environment for cooperation.

One way to build engagement with individuals, families and groups is to provide a palpable sense of **hope**. Alongside this, clients must feel **their expertise in their own situation is valued** to the highest degree. Social workers must remember that their role is to facilitate positive change, *not* to judge a client's experiences. A sense of **collaboration and cooperation** is also essential as this fosters an environment of teamwork. Most importantly, and relating to all of the above, the client(s) **must feel respected** at all times. Empowering all those involved in a case is a great predictor of a positive outcome.

Listening is the most important skill social workers must utilise to build strong working relationships. It is vital that even the most overworked of social workers takes the time to listen to the client's emotions, concerns and questions. This will further help to foster positive engagement.¹¹



Now complete [“Module 2: Engagement Skills and Relationship Building”](#)



Remember to complete the **case studies and discussion prompts** and ensure you complete the end of module **quiz**.



What are the different stages of change and building solutions? Can you think of an example?



[This](#) is a good summary of the key ways to build a strong social worker-client relationship.

¹¹ M. Ruffolo, [‘Engagement Skills and Relationship Building’](#)

Professional Values and Ethics

As we have discussed previously in this Kiron module, social workers are guided by a code of ethics. In the United States the code of ethics is issued by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), and their British counterpart is the British Association of Social Workers (BASW). The NASW is guided by six basic values:

- Service
- Social justice
- Dignity and worth of a person
- The importance of human relationships
- Integrity
- Competence

Alongside these core values, Abigail Eiler from the University of Michigan recommends eight principles to ensure ethical practice.

- Always have **high standards** for your practice.
- Be **respectful** while demonstrating professional boundaries.
- Always complete assigned tasks on time.
- Achieving and maintaining a high level of **professional integrity** is crucial.
- Never stop learning.
- Wholeheartedly respect others - your colleagues, clients, communities and partners.
- Always make clients your **primary responsibility** while on duty.
- Respect the **privacy** of clients and keep sensitive information **confidential** at all times.

The Code of Ethics guides social workers in their decision making and their professional behavior.¹²



Now complete [“Module 3: Professional Values and Ethics”](#)



Remember to complete the **discussion prompts** and the end of module **quiz**. Plus don't forget to watch the roleplay **social worker-client interviews**.



Why is self-awareness a crucial element effective and ethical engagement?



[Here](#) is an alternative introductory video to the social work profession.

Core Intervention Planning

Intervention planning is a key part of social work practice. Change planning ‘represents the development of a strategy to help move clients towards their goals’. It is vital to gain an **in-depth understanding of what the client wants** to achieve from the program of intervention.

¹² Abigail Eiler, [‘Professional Values and Ethics’](#)

Intervention plans must be tailored to the individual. Change strategies should also be created and enacted **collaboratively with all actors and groups in the client's life**. The process must be **informed by all the relevant data** from preceding interviews and data collection.

It is important to bear in mind that you must be **flexible** with your intervention plans. Circumstances may change and new information may come to light, so it is crucial that the plan is **modified to fit with new developments**. Finally, the strategy must be meaningful to the client and communicated properly to them.

As part of an intervention strategy a social worker will set goals for their client. It is essential **not to overwhelm clients** with too many goals at the same time, so it is recommended to focus on no more than one or two main goals at a time. The first goal should always be **safety**. If the client or anyone involved in the change process is at risk of any kind of harm then this must be dealt with immediately. Secondly, the social worker must discover **what is important to the client**. What change does the client want to see?

The SMART approach guides social workers in their intervention planning:

Specific
Measurable
Attainable
Relevant
Time bound

The goals of an intervention *must* be **attainable** for the client, therefore, it is crucial to consider the skills the client has and will need in order to achieve the goal. The plan should also be active, so that clients can work towards achieving the aims on a daily basis.¹³



Now complete [“Module 4: Core Intervention Planning”](#)



Remember to complete the **activities** and the end of module **quiz**.



Why is it important to monitor the change once a plan has been initiated?



[This](#) is a useful resource for more information on all the stages of intervention planning.



[Here](#) is a useful overview of all the topics you have covered so far in this course.

¹³ M. Ruffolo, [‘Core Intervention Planning’](#)

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy / Motivational Enhancement and Mindfulness Strategies

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a **short-term, structured and goal-oriented psychotherapy**, in which a therapist and client work actively together to identify and change negative patterns of thoughts and behaviors. CBT works to develop new **coping mechanisms** that can be enacted in daily life to improve conditions such as anxiety, depression, OCD, sleep difficulties, relationship problems and anger management issues. CBT helps to **identify behaviours and thoughts that are damaging** to a client's wellbeing and attempts to discover real, tangible problems that may be creating a strain on the client's mental (and/or physical) health.

CBT model of coping is based on helping clients be able to identify what they're feeling and to **use these feelings as a signal to implement the coping strategies** the therapist has helped them develop. We want the client to understand what they are thinking about and expecting to happen when they have these extreme emotions. We want them to consider alternative attitudes and actions that they can use to help better manage these emotions and solve the problems that they're confronted by. Most importantly, the CBT coping model is focused on having **clients evaluate how they did after a situation** is over and what they learned from that situation. By doing so, this helps them not only better ingrain the strategies, but to think more effectively about solving problems in the future.

Behavioral therapy requires an in-depth examination of both the behaviors and environment of a client. It is critical to build up a detailed picture of the specific context of the problem behaviors. Social workers use the ABC strategy for this in any given instance of the problem behavior:

Antecedent - what occurred before the behavior?

Behavior - define the behavior and whether or not it increases or decreases.

Consequences - what happened after or as a result of the behavior?¹⁴



Now complete ["Module 5: Exploring a Few Evidence Informed Interventions"](#)



Remember to complete the **activities** and the end of module **quiz**.



Name **2** benefits of collecting a behavioral profile of clients before implementing a full intervention.



[This](#) source provides an in-depth explanation of Motivational Enhancement therapy.

¹⁴ Daniel Fischer, ["Using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy"](#)

Problem-Solving and Psychoeducation / Multisystemic Interventions

Problem-solving approaches must first define the problem. A problem is considered any life situation - either current or anticipated - that requires an individual to make an **adaptive response to the situation**. A solution is defined as the end goal of the problem-solving process. The solutions must be **specific to the circumstances** and they should focus on coping mechanisms.

The **SSTA model** is used to identify the relevant steps in the problem-solving approach. This process teaches people to stop and take a step back from the situation before acting. The SSTA model encourages clients to:

Stop
Slow down their process
Think
Act

'Psychoeducation is a **flexible strengths-based approach** to care that incorporates both educational and therapeutic techniques and can be adapted to serve those with various medical, psychiatric, and other life challenges. The educational component offers key **information and care strategies** about both general and particular aspects of illness or life challenge, so that **recipients have a frame of reference** for their experience. The psychotherapeutic component offers **safety, structure, feedback, and time** for participants to absorb information that may be unfamiliar and challenging and may trigger complex emotions. When implemented by skilled facilitators, the synergy and balance between the two enables participants to **increase understanding of and responsibility for monitoring symptoms and triggers**, place personal symptoms and response patterns in context, process complex emotions, and build coping and wellness skills that promote hope and that can be applied in everyday circumstances.'¹⁵

Multisystemic therapy is an intensive **family- and community-based treatment program** designed to make positive changes in the various social systems (home, school, community, peer relations) that contribute to the serious antisocial behaviors of children and adolescents who are at risk for **out-of-home placement**. These out-of-home placements might include foster care, group homes, residential care, correctional facilities, or hospitalization. The main aims of multisystemic therapy are:

- develop in parents or caregivers the capacity to manage future difficulties
- reduce juvenile criminal activity
- reduce other types of antisocial behaviors, such as drug abuse
- achieve these outcomes at a cost savings by decreasing rates of incarceration and other out-of-home placements.¹⁶

¹⁵ Oxford Bibliographies, 'Psychoeducation',
<http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195389678/obo-9780195389678-0224.xml>

¹⁶ Encyclopedia of Mental Disorders, 'Multisystemic Therapy',
<http://www.minddisorders.com/Kau-Nu/Multisystemic-therapy.html>



Now complete [“Module 6: Exploring More Evidence Informed Interventions”](#)



Remember to complete the **activities** and the end of module **quiz**.



What is a ‘Fit Circle’?



For more detailed information about psychoeducation, have a look at [this](#) text.



[Here](#) is a very interesting short documentary about some cases where multisystemic therapy was used.

Special Considerations when Working with Families

Sigmund Freud and Carl Rogers, two influential psychologists, believed that family life shape one's personality. However, many scholars argue that the most influential and dominant forces controlling human behavior are actually the **internal subjective beliefs that we have about our families and about ourselves, as a result of our interactions with our families**. Therefore, since psychological measures were seen as a result of destructive interactions, it was believed that treatment would be most effective if family members were kept out of the treatment room. This meant that clients were segregated from their families, a legacy that continues in cognitive behavioral therapy and motivational interviewing.

The family therapy perspective is a radical departure from this and **focuses instead on the complexity of family interactions**. It is a contextual approach that **relocates the responsibility for the problems** and the focus of treatment from the internal world of the individual, the cognition of the individual, to the family of origin where they may have had these problems. Thus, **internal issues are relocated to the entire family**.

One of the most important concepts of small group theory that influence family therapy was the **distinction between process and content**. Therapists recognized the need to understand not just what the group member said which can be considered relevant content, but also how this content was being communicated. It can therefore be useful to refer to process in this session as a set of **relational messages**.



Now complete **“Module 7: Special Considerations when Working with Families”**



Remember to complete the **activities** and the end of module **quiz**.



Why is it important to consider the way clients communicate to others in the family?



[Here](#) is a brief overview of family therapy in social work.



[This](#) is a short mock social work interview with a family

Life-Long Learning and Professional Development

Social workers are encouraged to become more familiar with what is referred to as '**professional identity**'. This represents the integration of your **knowledge, skills, experiences and values** to identify how you might actually implement your practice of social work. Some questions to consider:

- Who am I becoming?
- What am I learning?
- What are my strengths, values and capacities?
- How can I contribute to the wider world?

These questions aim to help you **identify your personal and professional values and connect them to your learning** in the field of social work. It is crucial to reflect on what you have learnt throughout this process, especially on occasions where you have worked directly with a client. These **experiences are arguably the most informative part** of the learning process. When reflecting on such circumstances, you should ask yourself:

- What do I know now?
- So what?
- Now what?

These questions should guide your thought process when assessing what you have learnt.

Another activity new social workers are encouraged to do is an "**Integrative Learning Process**". This process helps you to understand the knowledge and skills that you bring to every encounter and encourages you to look at your values, beliefs and motivations. The next step is to **develop future goals** for yourself that involve increasing certain areas of skills and certain areas of practice. This integrative learning process is something that you should do on a regular basis, reflection is part of our whole process.



Now complete "[Module 8: Life-Long Learning and Professional Development](#)"



Remember to complete the **activities** and the end of module **quiz**.



Use [this list](#) to remind yourself of the key skills for social workers to develop.

Chapter 5 - Diversity and Social Justice in Social Work

In [this course](#) you will explore the knowledge base that underlies skills needed to work towards justice. You will learn about types and sources of power, multiple social locations, social constructions, social processes, social identities, conflicts, and how all these interact. You will learn how multiple kinds of boundaries are especially important - across groups, between organizations and system levels, and within and between people, related to intersecting social locations.

Culture

This section discusses some of the most impactful cultural processes. First, **assimilation** is the process of completely leaving one's own culture behind and instead fully adopting the symbols, norms, behaviors and beliefs of a new culture, often the dominant culture.

Next, **acculturation** is the process of mixing or integrating some aspects of a new culture with the norms, values, and behavior of one's culture of origin. Often minority culture groups will acculturate or make cultural adjustments strategically to be more accepted by dominant society. For example, learning the necessary **social skills to fit into systems** of education, employment, and social settings; to avoid social and economic marginalization.

Finally, **enculturation** is the process of recapturing one's culture of origin. This can include efforts to learn more about where one's family came from, identify with behaviors and values of one's culture of origin, and **reclaim a sense of belonging** to one's community.

Yet another critical concept in unpacking culture is the term **oppression**. Social justice scholars define oppression in many ways. But broadly it is considered as a system that **maintains advantage and disadvantage based on stereotyped** social group memberships. At the individual level, a person can exhibit attitudes and behaviors that may be harmful or reinforce stereotypes. On the institutional level, there can be **policies or laws** and expectations for behavior and **norms within larger systems** like education, legal system, religious organizations, government, healthcare, businesses, and even within families.

People can also **internalize their oppression** or begin to believe that they're less valuable to society based on their social group membership and the persistent stereotypes about their social group. Internalized oppression can result in **self-hate and shame**.¹⁷



Now complete ["Module 1: Culture"](#)



Remember to complete the short **recap quiz**. Make sure to consider the [Read & Reflect task](#) on Social Work's role in addressing oppression.



[Here](#) is a short introductory video about institutionalised oppression.

¹⁷ Dr. Jamie Mitchell, ["Culture"](#)

Theoretical Perspectives on Culture

Theories help social scientists to examine, evaluate, organize and interpret human behavior in social phenomena. Theories are **a set of interrelated assumptions** used to explain how or why something happens, or to predict if and when something will happen. Most often, theory is developed systematically by rigorously applying methodologies, linking propositions and specifying how individual concepts are related. Importantly, however, theories are not perfect in their abilities to explain or predict something. They **can be challenged and disproved**.

When applied to social work practice, theory provides **a lens through which we can see social problems more clearly**. Theories provide perspective on underlying issues and help social work researchers, and clinicians to plan, and evaluate interventions. The early work of structural functionalism is credited to Auguste Comte, a French philosopher who drew parallels between the functioning interconnected social body of society to the biological functions of living organisms, such as how tissues, organs and cells work together. Later, more modern theorists such as Emile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons, and Robert Burton built upon these early concepts to emphasize the importance of social consensus and maintaining social balance. They identified some aspects of social life as dysfunctional, because they threatened to disrupt social stability. Within this theoretical framework, **social differentiation is key**. Social change is achieved not for conflict in struggle, but by **everyone having a distinct role and playing their part to keep the whole of society functioning** like the role each organ in the body plays to keep the bodily system functioning in health.¹⁸



Now complete [“Module 2: Theoretical Perspectives on Culture”](#)



Remember to complete the **activities** and **short recap quiz** in this section.



[Here](#) is a useful article about oppression and anti-oppression theory.

Unpacking Intersectionality

Intersectionality is commonly discussed as a way of understanding social location. That is, how people experience **inequality or disadvantage in society depending on their multiple social identities**, such as race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, religion, national origin, age, and disability status. If people with different social identities are treated differently within structural systems, such as education, criminal justice and healthcare, they have **vastly different realities**, lived experiences, and opportunities to live full, meaningful, and healthy lives.

Through the lens of intersectionality, the effects of this type of discrimination become cumulative. It combines, overlaps, or intersects to burden an individual's daily existence. Intersectionality is not a comprehensive theory in and of itself; rather it is **a tool that helps us to analyze inequality as it affects individuals** caught up in multiple intersecting structural systems in society.

¹⁸ Dr. Jamie Mitchell, [‘Theoretical Perspectives on Culture’](#)

Kimberlé Crenshaw transformed our collective discussion about intersectionality when she published a landmark article in the Stanford Law Review in 1993. Crenshaw highlighted **intersectionality as the proper framework to investigate violence and employment discrimination** against African American women. She teased apart the systems that make use of racism and sexism to disadvantage women of color on multiple levels.¹⁹



Now complete [“Module 3: Unpacking Intersectionality”](#)



Remember to complete the **activities** and **short recap quiz** in this section.



[Here](#) is an excellent TED talk by Kimberlé Crenshaw about the ‘urgency of intersectionality’.

Social and Cultural Determinants of Health

Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have **systematically experienced greater social or economic obstacles to health** based on their racial or ethnic group, religion, socioeconomic status, gender, age, mental health, cognitive, sensory, or physical disability, sexual orientation or gender identity, geographic location, or **other characteristics historically link to discrimination or exclusion**. Not all health differences are health disparities.

According to Dr. Paula Braveman, a noted scholar of health disparities, **health equity refers to a goal of achieving social justice in health**. This means that no one is denied the possibility to be healthy for belonging to a group that has been historically, economically, or socially disadvantaged. This is the principle underlying a **commitment to reduce and ultimately eliminate disparities in health** and their underlying social determinants. Health disparities are the metric that we use to measure progress toward achieving health equity.

Social determinants of health are social and economic factors with either direct or indirect effects on health. There are some key social factors, such as one's **income or educational attainment**, that are correlated to many health outcomes across populations, racial ethnic groups, and communities. Other social determinants are specific to a particular health condition or certain populations that are disproportionately affected more so than others. While health is deeply impacted by personal lifestyle choices and access to and utilization of high quality medical care, health is also shaped by the conditions in which we live, work, and go to school, and our social and **economic opportunities to be healthy**.²⁰



Now complete [“Module 4: Social & Cultural Determinants of Health”](#)



Remember to complete the **activities** and **recap quiz** in this section.

¹⁹ Dr. Jamie Mitchell, [‘Unpacking Intersectionality’](#)

²⁰ Dr. Jamie Mitchell, [‘Social and Cultural Determinants of Health’](#)



[This](#) is the NASW's resource about health disparities.

Criminal Justice

The criminal justice system is an expansive **set of agencies and processes** established by local, state and national government to **control crime and impose penalties** on those who violate laws. According to the National Center for Victims of Crime, there's no single criminal justice system in the United States but rather, many similar individual systems. The function of these systems depends on the jurisdiction that's in charge. The **jurisdictions could include the city, the county, the state, federal, or tribal governments, or even military installations**. Every jurisdiction has varying laws, agencies, and methods for administering criminal justice processes.

There are also **many components that compose the criminal justice system** and processes. These components include **law enforcement** who investigate crimes, gather evidence of criminal activity, arrest people and testify in criminal proceedings, and there are also **prosecutors** who work for and represent the state or federal government. According to the National Center for Victims of Crimes, it is a prosecutor's job to review the evidence brought to them by law enforcement, and to decide whether or not to file charges or decline to pursue a case. Prosecutors present evidence in court, question witnesses, and decide whether to negotiate plea bargains with defendants.

The current **prison population is over two million**. Historically and politically, the Nixon administration is credited with initiating the cycle of mass incarceration, by largely **criminalizing African-Americans struggling with drug addictions**, rather than increasing available resources for treatment and rehabilitation. These more compassionate and effective approaches to reducing incarceration that are being advocated today are often patterned along racial and socioeconomic lines. **Racial trends in mass incarceration reveal that one in three black males is expected to go to prison in his lifetime**. That trend is just 1 in 17 for white males. While Latinos are imprisoned at a rate that is 1.4 times the rate of whites. And while **black men only account for an estimated 6.5% of the US population, they make up just over 40% of the US prison population**. We have scientific evidence to prove that African-Americans are not for example, selling or abusing drugs at a higher rate than other racial and ethnic groups.²¹



Now complete ["Module 5: Criminal Justice"](#)



Remember to complete the **activities** and **recap quiz** in this section.



[This](#) useful article lays out the role of social workers in the criminal justice system.

²¹ Dr. Jamie Mitchell, ["Criminal Justice"](#)

Environmental Justice

According to Dr. Jason Corburn of the University of California Berkeley, racially segregated neighborhoods - which tend to cluster economically disadvantaged populations and people of color - were constructed and **perpetuated through governmental housing policies, zoning regulations, discrimination in bank lending**, and racially restrictive covenants. Particular geographic areas and neighborhoods are sometimes the only places welcoming or affordable for vulnerable populations. Those neighborhoods also often suffer from **lower property prices**. Meaning less revenues for local school districts, closer proximity to industrial pollution and fewer health promoting resources such as grocery stores.²²

Environmental justice reflects the fundamental reality that **vulnerable communities are all too often subject to the disproportionate burden of pollution and contamination**. For example, one child could be exposed to lead paint on the walls of her home; drinking water from the tap that might have lead contamination in it; a playground that has arsenic in the soil and is developing asthma because of the polluting facilities next door; and she also goes to a school that has mold in the walls and ceilings. These are real things that happen on an everyday basis and affect hundreds of thousands of people in the United States alone. It is important to remember that **not everybody has the ability to simply uproot themselves from a community** where they have lived for decades, where their families raised them, where they raised their children. People don't have the **financial mobility** necessarily to simply get up and go, even in times of emergency or risk.²³



Now complete [“Module 6: Environmental Justice”](#)



Remember to complete the **activities** and **recap quiz** in this section.



[This](#) is a great video about the history of environmental justice in the US.

Being a Culturally Grounded Ally

‘Allies are people who **recognize the unearned privilege** they receive from society’s patterns of injustice and take responsibility for changing these patterns. Allies include men who work to end sexism, white people who work to end racism, heterosexual people who work to end heterosexism, able-bodied people who work to end ableism, and so on. Part of becoming an ally is also recognizing one’s own experience of oppression. For example, **a white woman can learn from her experience of sexism and apply it in becoming an ally to people of colour**, or a person who grew up in poverty can learn from that experience how to respect others’ feelings of helplessness because of a disability.’²⁴

²² Dr. Jamie Mitchell, [‘Environmental Justice’](#)

²³ Anjali Waikar, ‘What is Environmental Justice?’, in *Natural Resources Defence Council*, <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/what-is-environmental-justice>

²⁴ Anne Bishop, ‘What is an Ally?’, in *Dufferin Diversity Network*, <http://www.diversitydufferin.com/how-to-be.html>

The decision to be an ally to an individual is often accompanied by a **personal introspection**. We often become allies to individuals who for any number of reasons face barriers to having their voices heard and respected in privileged places like schools, workplaces, politics, and community organizations. When we align ourselves with individuals whose voices are marginalized, it's important that we **respect their point of view and interpretation of events** and actions that may impact them. It can get socially uncomfortable to publicly support someone who is marginalized. But being an ally requires that we be willing to persevere and **use our platform and privilege to amplify the voices** of others with less visibility.

It is somewhat different to be an ally to an individual, than to advocate for an issue: instead of protecting and supporting one person, the goal shifts to **moving an agenda forward**. We are still required to be **reflective** and filter our actions and beliefs through interrogating, **who has privilege? How is that privilege being used? And how are words and actions advancing the cause for social justice?**²⁵



Now complete [“Module 7: Being a Culturally Grounded Ally”](#)



Remember to complete the **activities** and **recap quiz** in this section.



[This](#) is an interesting guide to being an ally.



[Here](#) is a video with 5 tips for being an ally.

²⁵ Dr. Jamie Mitchell, [‘Being a Culturally Grounded Ally’](#)

Sources

Chapter 1 - An Introduction to Social Work

British Association of Social Workers (BASW), 'Code of Ethics for Social Work - Statement of Principles', http://cdn.basw.co.uk/upload/basw_112315-7.pdf; http://cdn.basw.co.uk/upload/basw_113012-10.pdf

Stuart Hall, 'The Question of Cultural Identity', (1992)

J. Bowlby, *Child Care and the Growth of Love*, (1969)

Chapter 2 - Origins of Social Work

David D'Amato, 'Poverty is a Political Problem, Not Just an Economic One', <https://thehill.com/opinion/civil-rights/366487-poverty-is-a-political-problem-not-just-an-economic-one>

Chapter 3 - Social Work Practice: Advocating Social Justice and Change

Kendra DeLoach McCutcheon, 'Discrimination', in *Encyclopedia of Social Work*, <http://socialwork.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199975839.001.0001/acrefore-9780199975839-e-897>

Cheryl L. Franks and Marion Riedel, 'Privilege', in *Encyclopedia of Social Work*, <http://socialwork.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199975839.001.0001/acrefore-9780199975839-e-305>

Chapter 4 - Social Work with Individuals, Families and Small Groups

Oxford Bibliographies, 'Psychoeducation', <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195389678/obo-9780195389678-0224.xml>

Encyclopedia of Mental Disorders, 'Multisystemic Therapy', <http://www.minddisorders.com/Kau-Nu/Multisystemic-therapy.html>

Chapter 5 - Diversity and Social Justice in Social Work

Anjali Waikar, 'What is Environmental Justice?', in *Natural Resources Defence Council*, <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/what-is-environmental-justice>

Anne Bishop, 'What is an Ally?', in *Dufferin Diversity Network*, <http://www.diversitydufferin.com/how-to-be.html>

Legal Disclaimer

This document contains links and references to original copies of copyrighted and open access material, the use of which has not always been specifically instructed or authorized by the copyright owner. In accord with our nonprofit mission, we are providing links to these resources to support Kiron students in their studies, which is already in line with the legal disclaimers and privacy policies of the content owners. Please refer to the [Kiron Privacy Policy](#) for the details.

Kindly note that none of the authors, contributors, administrators or anyone else connected with Kiron in any way can be responsible for your use of the information contained in or linked from the additional third party resources.

Contributors:

Maria Blöcher

Responsible for Content:

Kiron Open Higher Education gGmbH

Herzbergstraße 82-84

10365 Berlin

This Study Guide was made possible by funding of the
German Federal Ministry of Education



Bundesministerium
für Bildung
und Forschung