

COMPETENCY #4:

ENGAGE IN PRACTICE-INFORMED RESEARCH AND RESEARCH-INFORMED PRACTICE

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COMPETENCY 4

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 is derived from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing.

They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice.

3.2 Social Work Core Competencies | Berkeley Social Welfare. (n.d.).

<https://socialwelfare.berkeley.edu/msw-student-handbook/32-social-work-core-competencies#:~:text=Competency%20%234%3A%20Engage%20In%20Practice,and%20in%20evaluating%20their%20practice.>

WHY IS RESEARCH IMPORTANT? WHAT ARE RESEARCH SKILLS?

Research is important for providing the highest quality and most relevant services throughout the profession of social work at all levels: micro, mezzo, and macro

Research skills include finding and interpreting relevant and reliable data through peer reviewed journals, published articles, etc. or conducting one's own ethical research through interviewing, assessing, surveying, etc.

Research skills include critical thinking and apply findings to one's work whether as a clinical, program developer, etc.

NASW

5.1 Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to the Social Work Profession

Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to the Social Work Profession. (n.d.).

<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English/Social-Workers-Ethical-Responsibilities-to-the-Social-Work-Profession>

“Social workers should protect, enhance, and improve the integrity of the profession through appropriate study and research, active discussion, and responsible criticism of the profession.”

TYPES OF RESEARCH

QUALITATIVE VS. QUANTITATIVE



Data Collection

from interview sessions,
discussion with focus
groups, case studies,
and ethnography



Data Collection

from surveys,
experiments,
observations, and
content analysis.

LET'S TAKE A QUICK POLL!!

<https://take.quiz-maker.com/poll4767356x4ab82fdB-148>

RESULTS ARE IN !!!

Do you like engaging in research as a social work practitioner?

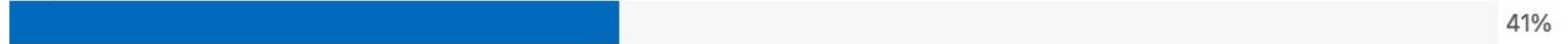
17 votes from 17 voters in 8 days

Sort Results

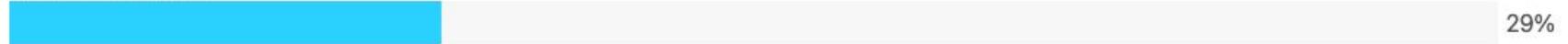
Show Numbers

Created 4th April 2023 - 9:13 AM

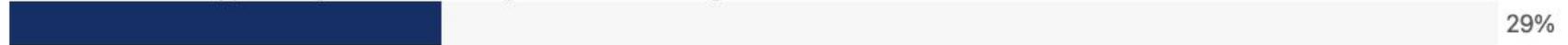
Yes, I love it!



Nah, it's the worst



I've never had the opportunity to research in my social work setting.



SHARING RESEARCH
EXAMPLES FROM OUR
PRACTICE
EXPERIENCES

NELSON

Keener Men's Shelter

(HELP USA)



Nelson's Practicum Placement: Keener Men's Shelter (Help USA)

- I am currently doing my practicum at Keener Men's Shelter, also known as Help Keener. Help Keener is located on Wards Island, NY.
- HELP USA was founded in 1986 to address the nation's growing homelessness crisis. It is considered one of the leaders in the fight against homelessness in New York City.

Social Services Department: A department where I am completing my practicum.

- Emergency shelter from homelessness and violence
- Short-term housing and case management
- Basic needs such as food, clothing, and personal hygiene items
- Mental health and substance abuse counseling
- Job training and placement programs
- Educational and recreational programs
- Transportation services
- Crisis intervention and ongoing support
- Legal counseling and referral services
- Referrals to other community services.

Examples of how Competency #4 plays out in my placement:

- At Help USA, we must enroll at Help University (Online University) to be trained before we are cleared to work. All staff must complete all training to be considered qualified workers. Staff completes the training annually.
- The training informs all the interventions that we use at HELP USA. The training teaches the staff effective methods to assess the client's needs, build a rapport, and better understand the clients we serve.
- We also conduct client's shelter assessments which allow us to get to know the client as an individual, establish areas of potential risk, such as suicidal ideation and mental health, and ascertain a client's preferences and needs. Once one risk level and needs are determined, we can choose the intervention that is deemed as the most appropriate to service the client.
- At Help, when using interventions with our clients, we use evidence-based research to inform our interventions. Still, we also use practice experience with clients to provide individualized care/service.

Specifics situations in which the practice behavior was exhibited in my placement:

Practice Behavior One: Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry and research.

- When working with clients, we constantly assessing if the intervention method is effective in helping the client. It includes evaluating the effectiveness of the independent living plan and the resources provided at the meeting, usually bi-weekly.
- To evaluate our services, we ask our clients to provide feedback/complaint forms on interventions utilized during the meeting/follow-up appointments.
- At Help, we are constantly encouraged to practice experience and feedback from our clients to inform our research to better our service.

MONIQUE

EXAMPLE:

A SAFE WAY FORWARD

[HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/LBRBA9XH](https://youtu.be/LBRBA9XH)

KKW



HOW IT WORKS:



Created to address intimate partner violence.

Looks at the increased risk these relationships have on children.

Provides services to the families as a unit.

Builds supports and provides tools to have a positive relationship

Uses Trauma Focused care for the family.

LOURDES

[Swk 699 Presentation Lourdes Tayas 5 Slides Final.pptx](#)



Lourdes Tayas' Field Placement

Agency: Forestdale, Inc, Forest Hills, & in Jamaica Queens, NY.

Demographic served:

Servicing residents of Queens, children, and families to have fundamental assets needed to thrive and live independently.

Programs :

Forestdale, Inc. is a not-for-profit agency assisting children and families through the ff:

- Foster Care
- Parenting – Strong Father & strong mother
- Health Homes
- Health Services including Medical & Mental Health,
- Education & Life Coaching
- Preventive and Family Support Services

Lourdes' clinical focus

- Mental & Behavioral Health
- Preventative – Family Treatment Rehabilitation & Family Support
- **The Solution Focused Therapy**



Example of Practice-Informed Research & Research-Informed Practice

- **Solution-Focused Counseling**, or “Solution Based Casework” is the Preventive and Family Support model being utilized to support the children and families enrolled under our Family Treatment Rehabilitation & Family Support Services.

SBC’S approach focuses on problem-solving with an emphasis on solutions, incorporating our values of being respectful and hopeful building on positive dimensions, and strengths of the person, rather than the deficits, weaknesses, and problems.

4 Milestones

Milestone 1: Building a Consensus - Having honest conversations about family safety, parental capacity, and child vulnerability in a safe way that builds toward family engagement in change.

Milestone 2: Getting Organized on Outcomes - Moving from talking about what needs to change to formalizing specific and measurable outcomes that the family (and their providers) will work on.

Milestone 3: Specific ACTION Plans – Working with families and providers to co-develop specific Action Plans to help them realize their outcomes amidst the challenges of their everyday lives.

Milestone 4: Documenting and Celebrating – Working with families and providers to problem-solve challenges and notice their successes in ensuring family safety and individual self-management.

Research informed-practice continued..

Consensus-Building Interview Techniques

1. Normalizing Developmental Challenges
2. Tracking the Sequence/History
3. Searching for Exceptions to the Problem
4. Separating Intentions from Actions.

The Big 5 – Individual Level Issues in Child Welfare

Criminal Activities

Anger/Control Issues

Substance Abuse

Emotional Stability

Sexual Offending

Personal experience

Knowledge: I have gained a significant understanding of how the system of child welfare works in New York City, being one of the cities with a robust Child Protective Services program. The interconnection starts from identifying child abuse or neglect, removing the child from the family, placements to kinship care, (if possible), to foster homes, and possibly back to parents, or for adoption.

The enlisting of several not-for-profits agencies, all around New York to service these children and families is crucial for the system to work. For example, Forestdale, Inc. where I worked and had my internship in Behavioral Health is among those agencies with Foster Care, & Preventive Programs are linked with other services.

From Child Protective Agency, families either be referred to Family Support or Family-Treatment Rehabilitation, both under Preventive Services. Then if needing step-up services and removal are needed one more time, Foster Care is the next level, where I also had the privilege to have my clinical internship done these past two semesters.

Also, learned that these programs are tied up with our City Health Clinics and Hospitals, NY State Office of Mental Health, and Office of Family & Children Support, etc. with the primary purpose of reducing hospitalizations which are costly to the city and for our vulnerable community members, as well.

Values: Working with a diverse population that we served, the majority, from poor, immigrant families, cultural humility is a huge factor in engagement. Open honest communication, inclusion, equity, and respect for the inherent worth of every person are what we do.

Skills: In trying to engage our families and children either to consent to services available or to be referred outside, clear, honest, communication skills are crucial. Problem-solving, active listening, confronting (if possible), Motivational Interviewing, encouragement, searching for feelings, thoughts, empathy, and compassion are always at the center of our services.

In Conclusion:

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Solution Focused Counseling or Solution Based Counseling is a practice in which the theme is research evidence and is integrated with clinical experience, client values, preferences, and circumstances.

It is important to know the unique values, preferences, and circumstances, of the scientific evidence that supports and informs their practice.

I believe SBC is appropriate for our agency based on success in obtaining concrete information about our clients, short-term approach intervention, collaboration, involvement of our clients in decision making, shared information, values, expectations of client, outcome, characteristics, and content

ANNA

Healing for Soul Empowerment
Network

International sector
currently in research phase
and grant application for
program implementation and
intervention work in Jamaica
and Barbados



CATEGORIES OF RESEARCH THAT I AM CONDUCTING AT HFS

Trauma
HIV
Violence
Domestic Violence
Implementation
Science
Substance Use
Syndemics

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

- Research target location and regional location in each category, finding reputable peer reviewed journals and scholarly publications
- Organize findings with citations
- Summarize findings
- Identify gaps in research
- Recommend partners and areas of focus
- Collaboratively design programs &
- Apply for grants in the identified areas of focus
- & Implement

ENGAGEMENT AND ASSESSMENT PHASE: MACRO PRACTICE

Identify the problem

Identify the assets, strengths, and capacities of the community

Community Based Participatory Approach: Community and researchers are equal within the process

Collaborative and Interdisciplinary Solutions

Gather funding, resources, create and implement programs

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE FOR US AS SOCIAL WORKERS
TO GROW PROFESSIONALLY IN RESEARCH SKILLS?

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR SOCIAL WORKERS TO
ENGAGE IN PRACTICE INFORMED RESEARCH?