



Content Outlines and KSAs

Social Work Licensing Examinations

What are KSAs?

A KSA is a “Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities” statement. These statements describe the discrete knowledge components that may be tested in each part of the examination, and are the basis for individual test questions.

Clinical Examination

I. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, DIVERSITY AND BEHAVIOR IN THE ENVIRONMENT 31%

I.A. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE LIFE CYCLE

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- The theories of human growth and development
- Personality theories
- The process of social development
- The indicators of normal physical growth and development
- The impact of physical, mental, and cognitive disabilities on human development
- Adult development
- The interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors
- Emotional, cognitive, and spiritual development
- Normal sexual development
- Gerontology
- The concept of attachment and bonding
- Child development
- Basic human needs
- Adolescent development
- Self-image throughout the life cycle
- Human genetics
- Dynamics of loss, separation, and grief
- The impact of aging parents on adult children
- The biopsychological responses to illness and disability
- Family life cycle
- Parenting skills and capacities
- Impact of trauma

I.B. HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN THE ENVIRONMENT

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- The Person in Environment (PIE) theory
- Theories of human behavior
- Psychological defense mechanisms
- Normal and abnormal behavior
- The effects of social context on behavior
- The effects of family dynamics on individuals
- Dysfunctional family dynamics
- The impact of physical illness on family dynamics
- The dynamics of sexual abuse
- The dynamics of psychological abuse and neglect
- The dynamics of physical abuse and neglect
- The impact of mental illness on family dynamics
- The characteristics of perpetrators of abuse
- The effects of abuse and neglect on victims
- The effects of life events and crises on the family
- The effects of life events and crises on individuals
- The effects of trauma on behavior
- The effects of trauma on self-image

I.C. EFFECTS OF DIVERSITY

- This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:
- Differences in culture, race, and ethnicity
- The influences of culture, race, and/or ethnicity
- The impact of culture, race, and/or ethnicity on self-image
- The effects of discrimination based on culture, race, and/or ethnicity
- Differences in sexual orientation and/or gender
- The influences of sexual orientation and/or gender
- The impact of sexual orientation and/or gender on self-image
- The effects of discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender
- Differences in age and/or disability factors and characteristics
- The influences of age and/or disability
- The impact of age and/or disability on self-image
- The effects of discrimination based on age and/or disability
- The impact of diversity on styles of communicating
- The effects of spirituality

I.D. ADDICTIONS

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- Substance abuse and/or dependence
- The effects of substance abuse and/or dependence on relationships
- The effects of substance abuse and/or dependence
- Addiction theories
- The effects of drugs and alcohol on behavior
- Other addictions
- The effects of other addictions on behavior and relationships

II. ASSESSMENT, DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT PLANNING

26%

II.A. INFORMATION GATHERING

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- The principles and techniques of interviewing
- The components of a biopsychosocial assessment
- The use of collaterals to obtain relevant information
- The use of standardized instruments in practice

II.B. ASSESSMENT AND DIAGNOSIS

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- The factors and processes used in problem formulation
- The methods used to assess the client's communication skills
- The use of observation
- The methods of involving a client in identifying the presenting problem
- The methods used to assess a client's strengths and weaknesses
- The indicators of motivation and resistance
- The factors used in determining the client's ability to use intervention/treatment
- Psychopathology
- The indicators of biopsychosocial stress
- The components and function of the mental status exam
- Medications

II.B.ASSESSMENT AND DIAGNOSIS (continued)

- The process of social work assessment/diagnosis
- The methods used in assessing clients' ego strengths
- The current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association
- Basic medical terminology
- The biopsychosocial factors related to mental health
- Co-occurring disorders and conditions
- The indicators of sexual abuse
- The indicators of physical abuse and neglect
- The indicators of psychological abuse and neglect
- Risk factors for dangerousness to self and others
- Risk factors related to suicide
- The methods used to assess needed level of care (e.g. geriatrics, other special needs, foster or group care)
- The methods used to assess trauma

II.C.TREATMENT PLANNING

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- The criteria used in selecting intervention/treatment modalities
- The components of intervention, treatment, or service plans
- The methods used to match interventions to client problems
- The methods used to develop an intervention/treatment plan
- Discharge, aftercare, and follow-up planning
- The use of measurable objectives in intervention, treatment, or service plans
- The difference between objective and subjective data
- The application of research to practice
- The methods used to formulate a timeframe for interventions

III. PSYCHOTHERAPY, CLINICAL INTERVENTIONS AND CASE MANAGEMENT

25%

III.A.THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- The concept of feedback
- The concept of congruence in communication
- The methods used in summarizing communication
- The methods used to facilitate communication
- Verbal and nonverbal communication techniques
- The methods for feedback
- The concept of empathy
- How the client's behavior with a social worker is representative of his/her relationship patterns
- The concept of acceptance
- The principles of relationship building
- Professional objectivity in the social worker-client relationship
- The social worker-client relationship
- Methods to clarify the role of the social worker
- Techniques to clarify client responsibilities
- Concepts of transference and counter-transference
- The social worker-client relationship in facilitating treatment

III.B.THE INTERVENTION PROCESS

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- Biopsychosocial models
- The problem-solving model
- Crisis intervention/treatment approaches
- Cognitive approaches
- Psychodynamic approaches
- Task-centered approaches
- Behavioral approaches
- The types of social work interventions/treatments
- Psychotherapies
- Solution-focused and brief interventions
- Recognition of functional roles in family dynamics
- Approaches used in working with traumatized clients
- Methods of conflict resolution
- Empowerment strategies in interventions
- Prevention strategies
- The use of objectives to guide the intervention process
- The techniques used to evaluate a client's progress
- The phases of intervention/treatment
- The indicators of client readiness for termination
- Partializing techniques
- Supportive techniques
- Motivational approaches
- Contracting with clients
- Approaches for engaging involuntary/mandated clients
- The use of goal-setting
- Various intervention/treatment strategies
- The techniques to teach coping and other skills to clients
- The use of out-of-home placement as an intervention/treatment method
- Client self-monitoring techniques
- Techniques for stress management
- Techniques for anger management
- Techniques for harm reduction
- Permanency planning
- Models of family life education in social work practice
- Models of family-centered social work practice
- The approaches to family therapy
- Couples intervention/treatment approaches
- The approaches to social group work
- The approaches to group psychotherapy
- Differential use of group process
- The techniques for managing group process and maintaining group functioning
- Differential use of therapeutic techniques
- Integrative case management
- The indicators of client readiness to change

III.C.MANAGEMENT OF CASES

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- Case recording for practice evaluation or supervision
- Methods for performance appraisal and evaluation
- The effects policies, procedures, regulations, and laws have on practice
- Client education about service/benefit policies
- The effects of agency functioning on service delivery
- The concept of client advocacy
- The impact of social welfare legislation
- Documentation and the management of practice records
- Written communication skills for a variety of professional responsibilities

III.D.CONSULTATION AND INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- Models of peer supervision
- The expertise of other professions
- Consultation approaches
- Interdisciplinary collaboration
- Multidisciplinary team approaches
- Elements of a case presentation
- Elements of client reports
- Client referral for services
- Coordination of client services
- Methods of networking

IV. PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND VALUES

18%

IV.A.ETHICAL ISSUES

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- The principles and processes of informed consent
- Professional boundary issues
- Dual relationships
- Identification and resolution of ethical dilemmas
- Ethical and legal issues

IV.B.CONFIDENTIALITY AND ITS LIMITS

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- Legal and ethical issues regarding confidentiality, including electronic information
- Ethical and legal issues regarding mandatory reporting of abuse

IV.C.VALUE ISSUES

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- The influence of the social worker's own values and beliefs on the social worker-client relationship
- The effects of culture, race, and ethnicity on values
- Professional values and ethics
- Client self-determination
- Stages of professional development
- The influence of the social worker's own values and beliefs on interdisciplinary collaboration
- Respect for client values and beliefs