Cultural Competency as a Regulatory Issue
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Cultural Competency as a Regulatory Issue
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www.cswe.org
Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards

Purpose: Social Work Practice, Education, and Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards

The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human and community well-being. Guided by a person and environment construct, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, social work’s purpose is actualized through its quest for social and economic justice, the prevention of conditions that limit human rights, the elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of the quality of life for all persons.

Social work educators serve the profession through their teaching, scholarship, and service. Social work education—at the baccalaureate, master’s, and doctoral levels—shapes the profession’s future through the education of competent professionals, the generation of knowledge, and the exercise of leadership within the professional community.

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) uses the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards to evaluate bachelor’s and master’s-level social work programs. EPAS supports academic rigor and prepares students for practice in a changing world. It permits programs to use traditional and innovative methods to ensure their capacity to prepare socially competent practitioners.
Indicators for the Achievement of the NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice
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E.2 CULTURAL COMPETENCE

(a) A social worker will acknowledge and respect the impact that their own heritage, values, beliefs and preferences can have on their practice and on clients whose background and values may be different from their own.

(b) A social worker will be able to work with a wide range of people who are culturally different from the social worker or who may be considered to be members of vulnerable populations on the basis of attributes such as those listed in section E.1(a).

(c) A social worker will obtain a working knowledge and understanding of their clients’ racial and cultural affiliations, identities, values, beliefs and customs and will be able to apply this knowledge in the provision of services.

(d) When possible, a social worker will provide or secure social work services in the language chosen by the client. If using an interpreter, the social worker will, when possible, engage an independent and qualified professional interpreter.
Indigenous Social Work Practice and Social Work Competence

Declaration of Guiding Responsibilities for Indigenous Social Work Practices

We, the Indigenous People of this earth, have the following responsibilities given to us by the Laws of Creation for the purpose of maintaining harmonious relationships with all forms of life.

We have four gifts to guide our behavior in exercising our responsibilities: Our languages, our ceremonies, our knowledge and traditions, and our relationship to the land.

Our children are recognized as the Keepers of our sacred ways: our responsibility is to ensure that they learn and live by those ways.

Our relationships are recognized by keeping with the Laws of Creation through the transfer of ceremony.

Our sacred ways of knowing must be protected for our collective survival.

INDIGENOUS SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Indigenous Social Work Practice is regulated by demonstrated competencies in the performance of services and functions that are undertaken on behalf of Indigenous populations. These practices are founded upon restoring harmony to Indigenous populations through working with their Sacred Sciences and Practices, which are embodied in the experience of their collective knowledge. These practice requirements are predicated on Indigenous ceremonies and recognized through the teachings of Eminent Scholars.

STANDARDS, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Indigenous Social Workers are committed to the highest ethical standards of practice to address the issues of social justice, integrity, and structural oppression while upholding the core values of respect for human dignity and self-determination.

These Practice Standards recognize the structural oppression of Indigenous peoples through the systemic beliefs that they are inherently inferior and must be assimilated into the dominant Eurocentric culture. This has led to the creation of reservations and the annihilation of traditional structures and processes that support human development and functioning, cultural and environmental functioning, and patterns of social interaction among Indigenous people.

These Practice Standards address the fundamental mission of Social Work, which is social change and social justice. Social workers who want to be recognized as Indigenous Social Workers will have adequate knowledge, practice experience, and demonstrated ability in the following:

1. Cultural knowledge located in the cultural sacred place of practice;
2. Understanding of Indigenous language in the place of practice;
3. Ability to engage with and advocate for Indigenous clients;
4. Knowledge of Indigenous laws, traditions, and practices;
5. Understanding of the impacts of colonization on Indigenous peoples;
6. Ability to work with Indigenous communities in a respectful and culturally appropriate manner.
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Chief Executive Officer

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study guide
seventh edition