

# DETAILED CONTENTS

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## **1 SOCIAL WELFARE: HISTORY, POLITICS, POLICIES, AND SERVICES**

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### **WORKOUT 1**

*Appreciating the Contributions of Social Work to  
Our Lives (Inside or Outside Class)* 2

All social workers learn about the magnificent contributions of Jane Addams to her community and the world. But have you ever heard of Frances Perkins? As the longest-serving Secretary of Labor under President Franklin Roosevelt, she may be the most consequential social worker who ever lived. Here, you are asked to read and interpret one of her writings on social welfare. Do her words sound like those of any of today's policymakers or politicians?

### **WORKOUT 2**

*Learning From Your Professional Community (Outside Class)* 15

This workout provides you with an opportunity to learn more about an event in the history of the social work community from people with firsthand knowledge. The skills required for this workout include honing a research question, interviewing, and interpreting the data you receive from your source.

### **WORKOUT 3**

*Debating Hot-Button Issues in Social Welfare  
(Inside and Outside Class)* 19

Social workers need to possess the skills of articulation and persuasion if they wish to influence public debate on issues of importance to their clients. How do your skills measure up?

### **WORKOUT 4**

*What Does It Mean to Be Poor? Budgeting a Poverty-Level Income  
(Inside and/Outside Class)* 24

Across the country, debate rages about the adequacy of benefits in public welfare programs. Perceptions of what it takes to live an even marginally adequate lifestyle in the United States vary widely. How would you construct a minimally adequate budget for a family? This workout requires you to think critically and to be amenable to compromise with peers.

### **WORKOUT 5**

#### ***Enter the Community Dialogue! Influencing Local Public Policy (Inside Class or E-mail) 33***

What are the local issues currently being debated in your town, and how will their resolution affect those populations with whom social workers have historically been concerned? For example, are budget recissions threatening cuts in programs for disadvantaged youth? Are developers “gentrifying” low-income neighborhoods and contributing to the displacement of residents? Is your city considering moving its homeless shelter into a neighborhood that is resistant to the idea? This workout will get you off the sidelines and into the dialogue!

### **WORKOUT 6**

#### ***An Alternative to Workout 5: Influencing Public Policy (Inside or Outside Class) 39***

Here is an opportunity to brainstorm with your classmates (future colleagues!) about the ways in which you can influence social and political outcomes in your community. Additionally, there is a built-in accountability check that enables you to make a commitment for the future and motivates you to keep it—long after your class is over!

## **2 THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION**

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### **WORKOUT 7**

#### ***Understanding Social Work Regulation in Your State and the Nation (Inside and Outside Class) 46***

At the present time, all states have some statutes on the books that regulate the practice of social work. These regulations address such questions as who may call themselves a social worker, the tasks a social worker can and cannot do, and the like. It is important for you to know the regulatory parameters of your state (and how it differs from other states). Equally important, you need to decide whether licensure, certification, or registration is ultimately a plus for the profession and its clients.

### **WORKOUT 8**

#### ***Using Social Media to Enhance Your Personal Effectiveness (Outside Class) 53***

How might your proficiency with the Internet help you in both your social work education and practice? What kinds of resources are available to you on the Internet? Does this method of retrieving information pose any distinct advantages over more traditional means? Find out here!

### **WORKOUT 9**

#### ***Shaping the Public Perception of Social Work (Outside Class) 58***

What does the popular press (such as mainstream blogs, websites, newspapers, and magazines) have to say about social work and social workers? How does television portray the profession? Like it or not, the world views social work and social workers largely through these dual prisms. Are they accurate?

### **WORKOUT 10**

#### ***Clarifying Your Values (Inside and Outside Class) 64***

With the exception of the clergy, the social work profession is the most value based of all. Thus, if you are contemplating entering this profession, a full examination of your personal values is a prerequisite.

### **WORKOUT 11**

#### ***Helping Clients Formulate Identity: Homosexuality (Inside or Outside Class) 73***

The formulation of identity—and the assertion of that identity to the world—are important developmental tasks. A person's ability to confidently take on these tasks may be seriously impaired if his or her identity—or some aspect of who that person is—is stigmatized in society at large. How would you proclaim your identity to those closest to you if you thought that such self-disclosure might mean disappointment at best or rejection and isolation at worst?

### **WORKOUT 12**

#### ***Helping Clients Move From Oppression to Empowerment (Inside Class With Additional Reading to be Done Outside Class) 77***

Many of our clients have experienced discrimination and oppression based on their race or ethnicity, their mental or physical condition, or their dependent status. To help you understand their point of view, this workout presents an instructive biographical piece: *Impressions of an Indian Girlhood*, *The School Days of an Indian Girl*, and *A Teacher Among Indians* by Zitkala-Sa (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin).

## **3 THE PRACTICE OF SOCIAL WORK**

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### **WORKOUT 13**

#### ***Assessing Clients' Strengths (Inside Class) 104***

Human beings are socialized to focus on their problems and to overcome them. How would our lives, and the lives of our clients, be different if instead we focused upon clients' strengths—their abilities, resources, talents, and skills—as a way of helping them get their needs met?

### **WORKOUT 14**

#### ***The Culturagram (Outside Class) 113***

Cultural competence is a requirement of all social workers. The term denotes both specific knowledge and values, and an ability to “stand outside” your own cultural values and norms and to understand a problem from the perspective of the other, who may come from a very different cultural background. This workout is based on the scholarship of Elaine Congress, a professor at Fordham University, who developed a model for assessing such clients. You will be able to hear her discuss her work—and then try it out for yourself.

### **WORKOUT 15**

#### ***Building the Evidence Base of Social Work: An Ethical Imperative (Inside or Outside Class) 118***

Despite the accumulation of thousands of evaluative research studies, the evidence base of social work practice—rigorously controlled studies that test the effectiveness of interventions with specific populations—is not as strong as it should be. We owe it to our clients to intervene using the most effective, efficient interventions: Indeed, our code of ethics requires it. This workout provides a model for asking questions that lend themselves to a research-based answer.

### **WORKOUT 16**

#### ***Acquiring Goods and Services for Clients: Resource Acquisition (Outside Class) 121***

What kinds of services are available for clients with a variety of needs in your community? Where are the resource gaps? What are the problems that social workers encounter as they try to meet the various needs of their clients? You can find out by completing this workout.

### **WORKOUT 17**

#### ***Hone Your Skills of Clinical Observation (Outside Class) 125***

Just how observant are you? When you see something, what do you really “see”? This question is not an introduction to a parlor game: Observation—with all of your senses—is one of the most powerful tools a social worker has. And your opportunity to test those powers starts here.

## **4 A VISION FOR THE FUTURE**

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### **WORKOUT 18**

#### ***Caring for the Elderly in the 21st Century (Inside and Outside Class) 134***

By 2020, approximately 20% of the U.S. population will be older than 65. Furthermore, people are living longer and so are spending ever-increasing proportions of their lives in this age category. The quality of life that you will have when you are old depends very much on how you prepare for older age now. What are you doing to prepare for your old age? What services and income supports should be available for the elderly now and in the future? This workout helps you think about these things.

### **WORKOUT 19**

#### ***Envisioning the Future of Social Work (Inside Class) 138***

Managed care, privatization, the Internet, and other “new information technologies” are having a profound impact on the social work profession, the services we provide for clients, and the policies guiding the distribution of those services. Yet none of these phenomena was part of our world 15 or 20 years ago. How visionary are you? What do you think the world of social work and social welfare will look like in the new millennium?

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