

## PROFESSIONAL USE OF SELF

Learning a set of skills and techniques is vital to social work as in other fields, but the professional social worker blends those techniques with a heightened awareness of human dynamics. Social workers do not necessarily utilize the sophisticated tools of our late century as much as they use a keen sense of self as a major tool.

The professional social worker serves as a role model, a guide, a coach, an advocate and/or a partner with client systems and, therefore, needs to understand strengths and weaknesses in each of those roles. Professional social workers need to possess the humility to recognize weaknesses as well as the confidence to utilize strengths. Social workers must seek out opportunities for personal and professional growth, understanding that only through that growth will they be able to assist on an ever-broadening range.

Foundation Level:

*Knowledge:* Possesses awareness of own strengths and weaknesses; knowledgeable of the factors necessary in achieving a balance between work and personal issues in life; understands the need to place client/community needs over one's own; is able to recognize personal growth and skill and possesses confidence to initiate use of those skills.

*Values:* Appreciates the need for and value of leading an integrated personal and professional life; committed to focusing on ways to enhance strengths and improve skills; identifies with the profession—can articulate and practice within a coherent and consistent value system; appreciates constructive criticism.

*Skills:* Is flexible and adaptable in assuming various social work roles as they relate to needs of clients, systems, or communities; can effectively cope with change; is able to ask for feedback from supervisors; distinguishes need for and appropriately uses self-disclosure.

Advanced Level:

*Knowledge:* Primarily outer-focused; understands own personal biases, judgments, and prejudices and is aware of how those impact work with clients or client systems; able to gauge this impact on others and adjust accordingly; possesses the ability to know when it is time to refer client elsewhere, obtain a consultation, or terminate.

*Values:* Is committed to mentoring new professionals; is respectful of the mutual impact of the change process on the worker and the client; recognized the contributions of other's skills, knowledge, values and resources in the change process.

*Skills:* Is able to accommodate own needs, strengths and weaknesses to the organizational structure; manages authority relationships in a professional manner; can identify and modify personal and professional barriers to effective practice