
Student–Instructor Assessments: Examining the Skills and Competencies of Social Work Students Placed in Military-connected Schools

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Field education is a vital part of learning and training for students pursuing an MSW degree. Guided by competencies created by the Council on Social Work Education, MSW programs are continuously evaluating the effectiveness of field experiences. U.S.-based public schools lack the training and capacity to provide adequate support to military-connected students. To understand the skills and competencies of MSW students placed in military-connected schools, the authors collected data from 30 first-year MSW students and their eight field instructors at two time points (fall and spring) during the 2010–2011 academic year. Both students and instructors gave higher-than-midpoint ratings to students on competencies at both time points. At time 1, students rated themselves lowest on application of complex practice models, policy issues, and working on the macro level with military organizations, whereas instructors rated students lowest on items related to systemic monitoring and research in practice. Progress toward competencies during the academic year was noted for more than half of the competencies. Although as groups, students and field instructors provided similar assessments, similarity within student–instructor dyads was low, suggesting opportunities for growth in the context of field instruction and the need for development of individual student–instructor relationships.

KEY WORDS: *competencies; field education; military social work practice*

Field education is a vital component of the educational and training experience for students in both BSW degree and MSW degree social work programs. Standards set by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) require a minimum of 900 hours of field experience for MSW students (400 for BSW) with one hour of weekly supervision by an MSW graduate or licensed clinical social worker (Pierce, 2008). One major goal in field education is to increase student core competencies in predetermined areas of practice (Pierce, 2008). When students are integrated into practice settings for which little theoretical or empirical knowledge exists, instructors and students are challenged to hone relevant understanding and skills with limited guidance. The military milieu represents one such setting. Reflecting awareness of and sensitivity to the challenges faced by military families, the social work profession has made recent attempts to define core competencies for social work practice in military settings (CSWE, 2010). The development of these military-specific competencies has become an important priority; however,

there is no research to guide strategies that address the challenges of developing these competencies. As such, the level of preparedness among student interns is unknown. To fill this gap in the knowledge base, the present study examined concordance on military-specific competencies among MSW students and their field instructors.

FIELD INSTRUCTION IN SOCIAL WORK

In 2010, more than 32,000 full-time and part-time MSW students were placed in field settings nationally (CSWE, 2011). Along with exposure to and experience gained from clinical interaction with clients during internships, field instruction is one of the most vital components of the professional training process and is recognized as having a critical effect on the development of students into professional practitioners (Gaberson & Oermann, 2007). In social work, field education is the signature pedagogy (Pierce, 2008), representing the central form of instruction and learning through which students are socialized into the practitioner role. The philosophy is that “professional education is not education for

understanding alone; it is preparation for accomplished and responsible practice in the service of others. It is preparation for 'good work'" (Shulman, 2005, p. 53).

One vital aspect of high-quality field education and service learning is the student-supervisor or student-instructor dyad (Bennett & Deal, 2009; Bruce & Austin, 2001). Students and alumni regard their field instruction relationship as key to their learning processes (Bogo, 2006). Critical to the development of this positive working relationship are communication and problem-solving skills (Shulman, 2005). It is within this alliance that two main goals are facilitated: the student's development as a social worker (Power & Bogo, 2002) and the provision of effective and efficient service to clients (Tsui, 2005).

Ensuring that future practitioners have the necessary expertise and knowledge to make solid decisions is critical, especially in high-risk situations (Wilson & Kelly, 2010). Despite its central role in social work education, field work has received scant attention in the literature (Kurzman, 2011). Researchers have explored issues of working alliance (Davidson, 2011), learning and instruction styles (Wolfsfeld & Haj-Yahia, 2010), student satisfaction with field placement and instruction (Fortune, McCarthy, & Abramson, 2001; Kanno & Koeske, 2010), student burnout (Harr & Moore, 2011), field-related anxieties (Chui, 2009; Rosenthal Gelman & Lloyd, 2008), and student reports of self-efficacy (Rishel & Majewski, 2009). However, missing from the literature is a thorough exploration of student performance evaluation. CSWE's adoption of competency-based education now allows for outcomes to be measured (Holloway, 2009).

Although previous studies have collected data from students and instructors about acquisition of competencies (Fortune et al., 2001; Regehr, Regehr, Leeson, & Fusco, 2002), little is known about student progress over time. One recent study of students and instructors showed that they rated student competency scores near the midpoint at the start of the academic year and that ratings increased throughout the year for both groups (Deal, Bennett, Mohr, & Hwang, 2011). However, concordance was not reported. A second study showed little variance in ratings between students and instructors during face-to-face evaluations but greater variance when instructors completed anonymous evaluations (Vinton & Wilke,

2011). A dearth of knowledge exists in terms of understanding competence-based field practice evaluation.

CONTEXT OF MILITARY-CONNECTED SETTINGS

Competency-focused evaluation is especially critical in emerging field practice settings for which theory, practices, and skills are lacking. Military-connected (MC) children cope with numerous challenges, including geographic relocations, parental deployments, reintegration, and changes in household responsibilities and roles (Tunac De Pedro et al., 2011; Mmari, Roche, Sudhinaraset, & Blum, 2008). Although many MC children display considerable resilience in the face of these challenges (Card et al., 2011), others experience adverse academic, socioemotional, and psychological outcomes (Chandra, Burns, Tanielian, & Jaycox, 2011). Compounding these difficulties is a lack of social and institutional understanding of the unique issues faced by military families and children, especially in public institutions in the vicinity of military bases (Flynn & Hassan, 2010). Military children and adolescents spend a substantial portion of their lives in school settings, and approximately 250 civilian public school districts are located near U.S. military bases. School social workers represent one important group with the skills to address issues of school climate, thus easing the challenges faced by MC students. As such, the presence of social work students equipped with relevant theoretical and practical knowledge is paramount.

Specific training related to military culture, experiences of military families, and needs of children with a parent in the military was provided to master's-level social work students working in schools located near military installations. To develop an understanding of the value of these military-specific competencies, the present study explored (1) MSW student and field instructor assessments of students' military-specific competencies; (2) the extent to which differences in competencies between semesters were demonstrated; and (3) the congruence of student and field instructor assessments of students' mastery of competencies.

METHOD

The present study was part of an ongoing project to create highly supportive MC schools. A major California university collaborated with eight school

districts in Southern California whose student populations are highly affected by nearby military bases (approximately 117,000 students in the elementary, middle, and high schools, including 10.1 percent with military affiliations). The university placed social work student interns in MC schools with the goal of transforming the responsiveness of public schools to children of MC families (as well as nonmilitary students). The university provided training to a cadre of MSW students that included education and skills-building instruction focused on MC families and individuals.

Sample and Procedure

The present study featured a cohort of military social work student interns ($n = 30$) and field instructors ($n = 8$). All student participants were in their first year of an MSW program; the sample was predominantly female ($n = 25$). Self-administered surveys were conducted to evaluate student performance and progress and to explore the congruency between students' reports of learning growth and the perceptions of this growth among instructors. Each student intern and instructor dyad independently filled out a structured questionnaire focusing on the student's professional competencies. The questionnaires were completed at two time points, the end of the fall and spring semesters of the 2010–2011 academic year.

Measurement

The questionnaire was adapted from the 2008 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of 10 core competencies established by CSWE (2010) and was tailored to students providing direct social work practice to military families. These core competencies outline social work knowledge, skills, and values necessary for effective practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The questionnaire was developed by the research team with incorporated feedback from field liaisons and instructors (Table 1). The resulting 30 items explored how students operated within diverse realms of social work professional identity; values, roles, and interventions aimed at MC clients; their immediate environments; and relevant organizations. Items were rated on a five-point Likert-type scale (ranging from 1 = not at all to 5 = to a very large extent).

Descriptive statistics of the perceptions students and instructors had of student competencies were

calculated at two time points. In addition, t test analyses were conducted to explore student–instructor concordance and changes in student competency over time. For the first analyses, mean group differences were compared to determine whether students, as a group, assessed their skills higher or lower than their field instructors. In the second series of t test analyses, progress over time was explored. Subsequently, Pearson correlations were used to explore the concordance of competency ratings within each student–instructor dyad.

RESULTS

Means and standard deviations of student and instructor assessments in two semesters, significance levels of t test results for group and time differences, and the Pearson correlations for within-dyad concordance are presented in Table 2.

Student and Instructor Assessments of Competencies

The t tests comparing assessments made by instructors and students revealed no significant mean differences between students and instructors in both semesters. Overall, students and field instructors assessed student competency higher than the midpoint on the rating scale. At the first time point, there was only one item with a mean less than 3; overall mean scores ranged from 2.88 to 4.14 (overall $M = 3.42$). Although the field instructors' mean assessments were quite similar to the students' assessments (overall $M = 3.36$), they rated four competencies with mean scores less than 3. At time 2, ratings increased for both students (range = 3.42–4.38, $M = 3.98$) and instructors (range = 3.13–4.31, $M = 3.85$); none of the mean ratings were less than 3.

According to average scores over time, students rated themselves lowest on “using social policy analysis as a basis for action and advocacy” (item 17) and “selecting and modifying appropriate multisystemic intervention strategies” (item 24). Instructors rated the student competency “using social policy analysis” lowest and rated student competencies related to “research utilization—evaluating existing research and translating it to practice” (item 11) and “locating, evaluating, and analyzing current research literature” (item 10)—as low.

Students rated 2 competencies highest: “use of interpersonal skills such as empathy and cultural

Table 1: Description of Military-Specific Competencies for MSW Students

Item	Competency
1	Demonstrating a professional demeanor that reflects awareness of and respect for military culture, students, and families
2	Employing strategies of ethical reasoning in an environment that may have policy and value conflicts between social work service delivery, personal values, and professional ethics
3	Analyzing the unique relationship among the client, the family, the military, and organizations
4	Using professional judgment to meet the needs of all clients, including students, families, and schools
5	Analyzing appropriate models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation within the context of military social work
6	Using appropriate practice models with military students, their families, and their communities
7	Recognizing the potential risk and protective factors among military students that may be due to parental military service
8	Identifying the needs of military students and families and communicating those needs to schools and other civilian providers
9	Teaching skills to promote self-sufficiency, self-advocacy, and empowerment within the context of practice with military students
10	Locating, evaluating, and analyzing current research literature related to military social work
11	Evaluating and translating existing research to practice with military students and their families
12	Recognizing and assessing social support systems and socioeconomic resources specific to service members, veterans, their families, and their communities
13	Recognizing the impact of military transitions and other stressful life events throughout the military student family's life course
14	Identifying issues related to loss, stressors, changes, and transitions over the life cycle when designing interventions with military students and their families
15	Demonstrating the ability to critically appraise the impact of the school social environment on the overall well-being of military students and their families
16	Communicating effectively with military-related service organizations to provide effective social work services and accurate benefits, entitlements, and information about services to military students and their families
17	Using social policy analysis as a basis for action and advocacy with the school system
18	Assessing the school climate as it relates to military students and their families
19	Demonstrating capacity to identify evidence-based practices relevant to social work practice in schools
20	Recognizing the unique issues and culture presented by military students and their families
21	Establishing a culturally responsive therapeutic relationship that addresses the unique issues associated with confidentiality and reporting requirements within school and military contexts
22	Explaining the nature, limits, rights, and responsibilities of the military student who seeks services
23	Explaining the stigma, risks, and benefits of seeking or not seeking services
24	Selecting and modifying appropriate multisystemic intervention strategies based on continuous clinical assessment of military students
25	Using empathy, cultural responsiveness, and other interpersonal skills in completing an assignment
26	Using a range of appropriate clinical and preventive interventions for various diagnoses and psychosocial concerns identified in the assessment, including crisis intervention and advocacy strategies
27	Assessing the extent to which school climate and culture responds to military students and their circumstances and needs
28	Engaging military student clients in ongoing monitoring and evaluation of practice processes and outcomes
29	Demonstrating the capacity to reflect on personal responses (that is, affect and worldview) that influence progress during and at completion of treatment
30	Evaluating personal practice to determine the effectiveness of interventions on military student issues

responsiveness” (item 25) and “professional demeanor that reflects awareness of and respect for military culture, students, and families” (item 1). Other competencies rated by students near the midpoint included “recognition of the unique issues and culture presented by the military students and their families” (item 20) and “understanding the unique circumstances these clients face, such as transitions and stressful life events” (item 13). Mirroring these results, instructors also tended to rate these competencies as the strongest.

Progress between Two Semesters

The extent to which progress in competencies was made over time was examined. Results of a paired-sample *t* test (Table 2) show that students and field instructors identified progress for all items. In 17 of the 30 competencies, students rated themselves as having a significantly higher level of competency than during the first semester, whereas field instructors rated them significantly higher on 19 of the 30 competencies. Most likely due to a “ceiling effect,” the least amount of perceived progress was made on items with the highest student ratings

Table 2: Student and Field Instructor Assessments of Student Competencies during Fall and Spring Semesters

Item	Student		Field Instructor		S-FI Correlation	
	Time 1 <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Time 2 <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Time 1 <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Time 2 <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Time 1	Time 2
1	4.14 (0.97)	4.33 (0.68)	3.81 (0.83)	4.31 (0.79)	-.18	.03
2	3.57 (0.97)	4.18 (0.67)**	3.44 (0.70)	3.92 (0.80)*	.09	-.13
3	3.32 (1.02)	4.07 (0.68)**	3.56 (0.80)	4.04 (0.77)*	.27	-.08
4	3.73 (0.91)	4.21 (0.69)	3.59 (0.75)	4.08 (0.69)*	.32	-.11
5	3.07 (0.90)	3.78 (0.75)**	3.33 (0.78)	3.80 (0.65)*	.11	.12
6	3.00 (0.89)	3.81 (0.75)***	3.44 (0.75)	4.08 (0.65)**	-.15	.08
7	3.67 (1.04)	4.27 (0.53)*	3.85 (0.77)	4.13 (0.61)	-.05	.19
8	3.35 (1.09)	4.15 (0.67)	3.48 (0.89)	3.96 (0.55)*	.30	-.11
9	3.44 (0.85)	4.04 (0.82)**	3.44 (0.93)	4.04 (0.75)*	.07	.00
10	3.29 (1.05)	3.68 (1.11)	2.87 (0.92)	3.27 (1.12)	-.26	.08
11	3.12 (1.07)	3.64 (0.99)*	2.78 (0.80)	3.13 (1.30)	-.22	-.19
12	3.46 (1.10)	4.04 (0.75)*	3.42 (0.86)	3.80 (1.04)	-.47***	-.08
13	3.96 (0.92)	4.27 (0.67)	3.96 (0.89)	4.20 (1.04)	-.15	.26
14	3.35 (1.09)	4.08 (0.65)*	3.62 (0.80)	4.25 (0.68)**	.04	-.34
15	3.38 (1.02)	3.88 (0.78)	3.42 (0.99)	4.04 (0.69)**	.16	-.42
16	3.00 (1.10)	3.75 (0.94)*	3.04 (0.98)	3.87 (0.69)**	-.05	.10
17	3.00 (0.98)	3.42 (0.99)	2.74 (0.62)	3.15 (0.88)	.18	.02
18	3.64 (0.99)	3.88 (0.91)	3.11 (1.09)	3.69 (0.93)**	.19	-.20
19	3.37 (1.00)	3.88 (0.99)	3.37 (0.88)	3.65 (1.02)	-.18	.03
20	4.00 (0.90)	4.15 (0.88)	3.93 (0.87)	4.36 (0.76)*	.15	.51*
21	3.59 (0.93)	3.88 (0.82)	3.36 (0.70)	3.88 (0.82)**	-.16	.23
22	3.26 (1.02)	3.88 (0.78)*	3.26 (0.69)	3.67 (0.64)**	-.13	-.03
23	3.23 (1.14)	3.96 (0.85)**	3.18 (0.91)	3.69 (0.62)*	-.45	-.07
24	2.88 (1.12)	3.58 (0.78)	3.00 (0.75)	3.67 (0.87)*	-.07	-.24
25	3.93 (0.98)	4.38 (0.57)**	3.81 (0.56)	4.31 (0.62)***	.28	.17
26	3.21 (0.90)	3.85 (0.72)**	3.26 (0.66)	3.81 (0.80)**	-.30	.04
27	3.54 (1.00)	4.07 (0.66)	3.27 (0.83)	3.72 (0.89)	.20	-.09
28	3.16 (1.07)	4.00 (0.78)***	2.92 (1.06)	3.46 (0.66)	-.18	.15
29	3.66 (1.11)	4.19 (0.68)*	3.41 (0.80)	3.69 (0.79)	-.36	-.06
30	3.42 (0.99)	3.96 (0.73)*	3.12 (0.91)	3.80 (0.71)*	-.04	.23

Note: See Table 1 for descriptive list of competencies. The *t* test for dependent samples comparing students and instructors revealed no significant differences. S-FI = student-field instructor.

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

during the first semester (such as recognizing the unique issues and culture of military students and reflecting awareness and respect). Like students, field instructors reported the least amount of progress on the two highest rated competencies from the first semester (items 7 and 13). Students reported making the most progress on competencies related to utilization of appropriate practice models and engagement of military students in ongoing monitoring and evaluation, as well as effective communication with community organizations; these competencies were rated as weaker during the first semester by both students and their instructors. Similar patterns were identified in the field instructors' assessments. Student competencies that were rated low during the first semester were rated much higher by instructors at time 2 (for example, communicating effectively with military-related organizations and selecting and modifying appropriate multisystemic interventions).

Concordance between Student and Instructor Assessments

In addition to comparing mean assessments at two time points, we examined within-dyad instructor-student ratings. Although the *t* test for dependent samples comparing students with instructors revealed no significant differences, our correlational analysis provided an additional perspective. Correlational analyses indicated intradyad correlations at time 1 (range = .32 to -.47, median = -.05) and time 2 (range = .51 to -.42, median = .00) (see Table 2); although students and field supervisors provided similar assessments as groups, student-instructor dyads differed. That is, each student and supervisor had different perceptions of the student's competencies. In fact, high negative correlations (as high as $r = -.42$) existed for some competencies. When correlations were examined over time, no consistent patterns emerged; competencies for which intradyad agreement was high at time 1 had lower agreement at time 2 and vice versa.

DISCUSSION

Children in MC families have unique experiences including but not limited to deployments, family reconfiguration, reintegration, multiple relocations, and secondary posttraumatic stress (Tunac De Pedro et al., 2011). As such, MSW students in MC settings are charged with learning and implementing social work skills and competencies

within a very specific cultural context. Although field instruction competency assessment is paramount across all social work settings, because of the specific, unique experiences of military-affiliated students and families, this is particularly true for social work students in MC schools. Exploring the skills and competencies of students from the perspectives of students and field instructors provided an opportunity to understand and enhance social work training in these settings.

Our first goal was to gain a basic understanding of how social work students who were placed in MC schools and their instructors rated the student skills and competencies after the fall and spring semester of field placement. Similar to findings in another study (Deal et al., 2011), we found that the assessment of students' military-specific skills and competencies remained near the midpoint in both groups at both time points. These results may be interpreted in two ways. They may be indicative of students' confidence in their skills and ability to express and display these skills to their field instructors. This would indicate that most students are highly competent, especially with regard to their knowledge, respect, and awareness of military issues, as well as their basic interpersonal skills upon entry into placement settings. As such, high ratings by both students and instructors on interpersonal skills may be understood as a reflection of inherent "helping" capabilities and the self-selection of individuals into helping professions such as social work. Likewise, the fact that students displayed cultural sensitivity to military issues at such an early stage in their training may imply that students who chose to work in MC schools had prior personal or professional experience with military issues. However, a second hypothesis related to leniency bias or inflation of evaluation scores may also be valid. Previous findings suggest that at certain stages in their field experience, students may not be aware of the knowledge they lack and therefore overestimate their competence (Wilson & Kelly, 2010). Because of the inclusion of first-year students in the present study, this bias may have played a role. However, it is unlikely that instructors were influenced by leniency bias (Vinton & Wilke, 2011). The findings do seem indicative of high overall student competence.

The skills and competencies rated by instructors as being the weakest at the outset were connected to policy, evaluation of current research literature

related to MC families, translation of research into practice, and evaluation of practice. These findings may be understood within the scope of this study as a reflection, to a certain degree, of the timing of exposure to these topics in the classroom setting. Students traditionally take program evaluation courses during their concentration year. The finding related to translation of evidence-based practices mirrored the findings of others who noted a weakness in students' understanding of the relationship between theory and practice (Wilson & Kelly, 2010). Students' difficulty with integrating class materials and field work may be indicative of the philosophical tension that can occur between the academic and practice communities, resulting in an incongruent emphasis on competencies (Lyter & Smith, 2004). Taken together, these findings serve as a reminder that students need guidance on how to translate classroom learning into practice. By successfully making connections between field and classroom work, students can overcome challenges related to satisfaction with field experiences (Fortune et al., 2001). For students in this study, these included evidence-based skills and practice competencies that support military-specific practice.

The second aim of this work was to better understand the perceptions of students and instructors of the growth of MSW students working in a military-specific setting. Similar to a previous study (Deal et al., 2011), both groups noted student progress from time 1 to time 2 on most competencies. These findings indicated that students advanced in their development, were able to infuse classroom learning into the military field setting, and mastered skills learned during the field experience. This suggests that field instructors and students made an active attempt to advance the competencies that were identified as more challenging for students. Although it remains unclear how field instructors and students cultivate competencies, there are two pathways by which military-specific knowledge and skills transmission might be accomplished. Students and their field instructors may form relationships over time in which field instructors are able to supportively indicate areas in which students need improvement and ways in which they can achieve this growth, and in which students are able to recognize and incorporate corrective feedback. A competing possibility is that the skills students demonstrate during the first semester

are a reflection of their prior experiences, individual personalities, and inherent comfort in the environment. For example, some MSW interns who selected a military placement had prior military-related experiences, including being a child of a parent in the military, a spouse of a service member, and having served in the military. Over time, students use the knowledge they gain in the classroom as a framework with which to understand their innate abilities, allowing them to be more thoughtful and systematic about how they engage in the field. Further, the classroom may provide new learning opportunities and knowledge that students can then infuse into the field setting, as reflected by improvements over time in this study.

Our final aim was to explore the concordance between student and field instructor assessments of students' military-specific skills and competencies. Overall, there was a high level of agreement between field instructor and student assessments as groups and high overall evaluations at both time points. The concordance between the two groups was more reflective of agreement on high-scoring competencies. Both groups agreed that students possess the practical skills to engage with clients; this finding is congruent with Regehr et al. (2002), who found significant agreement between instructors and students on concrete aspects of practice. However, lower rated competencies varied between groups.

Although there were no significant group differences between the ratings of students and field instructors on competencies, this was not the case within dyads. These discrepancies may be due to differences between students' and instructors' expectations of competencies or a focus on different behaviors (practice skills) when they assessed competencies. These findings differ from at least one previous study that found that students' self-evaluations of competencies—although not significantly correlated with face-to-face evaluations by field instructors—were significantly correlated with anonymous field instructor evaluations (Vinton & Wilke, 2011). Our finding that ratings were not correlated within dyads, despite anonymous evaluations, raises questions about the level of communication between students and instructors regarding the students' work throughout the academic year. The present findings highlight the role of field instructors in enhancing communication to help students increase their opportunities to gain competence in key areas. When openly discussed, areas for growth as perceived by both the

student and the field instructor can be incorporated into the learning agreement during the following semester; this is an ideal tool for reciprocal learning (Cederbaum & Klusaritz, 2009) and allows for continued examination of the student's mastery of competencies.

Our findings point to the need to establish and maintain active communication between instructors and students during the field experience. This starts early in the field experience, when the field instructor and student discuss expectations, goals, and areas for growth. During the supervision process, students can reflect on the work in which they are engaged, and field instructors can provide supportive and instructive feedback for continued learning and growth. Active communication further requires students to discuss their classroom learning with field instructors, providing an opportunity for instructors to help students understand how classroom concepts are applied in a clinical setting. This will provide a pathway for students to translate classroom learning into practice skills. Field instructors can also communicate with university field liaisons to update them on the skills they believe students need to be successful in the field and areas in which classroom learning might be enhanced to complement changes in the field. This allows classroom instruction to grow alongside practice. The process of communication should be reflexive and ongoing, allowing for creative approaches to emerge along with evidence-informed interventions.

Further research is needed to explore concordance between students and field instructors on competency development, within and outside of MC settings. Specifically, more attention should be paid to factors that hinder effective communication between students and instructors, difficulties faced by students in evaluating and translating research into practice, and methods instructors can use to facilitate learning processes. These findings highlight the need to enhance communication between students and instructors on competencies that require growth and advancement and to enhance students' ability to translate research into practice. **CS**

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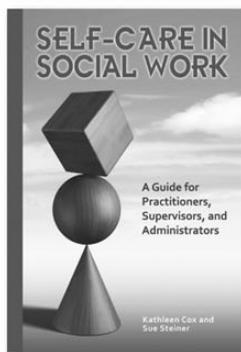
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SELF-CARE IN SOCIAL WORK

A Guide for Practitioners, Supervisors, and Administrators

Kathleen Cox and Sue Steiner



Social workers encounter a number of unique forms of occupational stress on a daily basis. The more thoroughly they understand the stressors they face, the better-prepared social workers will be able to manage them successfully. *Self-Care in Social Work* is a

guide to promote effective self-care tailored to the needs of social workers, including both individual and organizational approaches. On a personal level, it goes beyond the typical prescriptions to exercise, eat well, sleep more, and get a massage or meditate. In fact, the book is based on the premise that self-care should not be an add-on activity only happening in the rare instance when there is some free time. Instead, it is conceptualized as a state of mind and considered an integral part of a social worker's training.

In *Self-Care in Social Work*, the reader is taught how to approach individually oriented self-care through the development of self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-efficacy. At the organizational level, readers are guided through a process of learning about areas of match and mismatch between themselves and their agency structure and culture. This book is particularly timely as the economic downturn continues to create stressful working conditions by pressuring agencies to do more with less.

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