

### **PROGRAM MISSION AND GOALS**

Based on the mission of Loma Linda University and the purposes of social work education, the mission of the Master of Social Work Program at Loma Linda University is to cultivate compassionate, ethical, and skilled advanced clinical social work practitioners who can effectively promote diversity, combat systemic racism and oppression, and advance intersectional justice while serving in advanced clinical roles within behavioral health systems, institutions, agencies, and underserved communities.

The Faculty of the Department of Social Work and Social Ecology have identified five broad outcome goals for the Master of Social Work Program. These goals are derived from the shared vision of the LLU mission, the MSW Program mission, and the purposes of social work education. These influences embody five key ideas that were used to derive a set of program learning outcomes that encompass the core competencies of social work education: (a) instill in students the knowledge, ethics, values and skills expected of professional social workers; (b) engage students in critical self-reflection and self-assessment to minimize the influence of bias, power, and privilege in the advancement of human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice in local, national, and globally influenced settings; (c) equip students to integrate research and practice for advancing the profession of social work; (d) prepare students to be advanced clinical social work practitioners who engage in anti-racist and anti-oppressive practices when working with diverse populations in behavioral health systems, institutions, agencies, and underserved communities; and (e) transition graduates into professional roles with a commitment to life-long-learning.

### **GENERALIST PRACTICE COMPETENCIES**

The program begins with first-year generalist content common to all graduate social work education. The generalist practice curriculum is grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-the-environment framework, ensuring that students are equipped to promote social well-being and build upon the strength and resilience of all human beings. This includes a dedicated focus on underserved populations, and a commitment to minimizing the influence of bias, power, and privilege. Through a diverse range of prevention and intervention methods, students gain the tools to work effectively with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Integrated throughout the curriculum, students are guided to apply ethical principles, engage in critical thinking, and utilize research-informed practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. There is also an unwavering emphasis on diversity, advocacy for human rights, and the pursuit of social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

#### **Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant policies, laws, and regulations that may affect practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand that ethics are informed by principles of human rights and apply them toward realizing social, racial, economic, and environmental justice in their practice. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision making and apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize and manage personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. Social workers understand how their evolving worldview, personal experiences, and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally, understanding that self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Social workers

use rights-based, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to understand and critique the profession's history, mission, roles, and responsibilities and recognize historical and current contexts of oppression in shaping institutions and social work. Social workers understand the role of other professionals when engaged in interprofessional practice. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure relevant and effective practice. Social workers understand digital technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

Social workers:

1. Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context;
2. Demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
3. Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
4. Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

### **Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environment Justice**

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights. Social workers are knowledgeable about the global intersecting and ongoing injustices throughout history that result in oppression and racism, including social work's role and response. Social workers critically evaluate the distribution of power and privilege in society in order to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice by reducing inequities and ensuring dignity and respect for all. Social workers advocate for and engage in strategies to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social resources, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably, and that civil, political, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

Social workers:

1. Advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels; and
2. Engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

### **Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice**

Social workers understand how racism and oppression shape human experiences and how these two constructs influence practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community levels and in policy and research. Social workers understand the pervasive impact of White supremacy and privilege and use their knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in anti-racist practice. Social workers understand how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity development and affect equity and inclusion. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of factors including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that this intersectionality means that a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege and power. Social workers understand the societal and historical roots of social and racial injustices and the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination. Social workers understand cultural humility and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, racial, technological, and cultural exclusions, may create privilege and power resulting in systemic oppression.

Social workers:

1. Demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels; and
2. Demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences.

#### **Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice**

Social workers use ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches in conducting research and building knowledge. Social workers use research to inform their practice decision making and articulate how their practice experience informs research and evaluation decisions. Social workers critically evaluate and critique current, empirically sound research to inform decisions pertaining to practice, policy, and programs. Social workers understand the inherent bias in research and evaluate design, analysis, and interpretation using an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective. Social workers know how to access, critique, and synthesize the current literature to develop appropriate research questions and hypotheses. Social workers demonstrate knowledge and skills regarding qualitative and quantitative research methods and analysis, and they interpret data derived from these methods. Social workers demonstrate knowledge about methods to assess reliability and validity in social work research. Social workers can articulate and share research findings in ways that are usable to a variety of clients and constituencies. Social workers understand the value of evidence derived from interprofessional and diverse research methods, approaches, and sources.

Social workers:

1. Apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs; and
2. Identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work.

#### **Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice**

Social workers identify social policy at the local, state, federal, and global level that affects well-being, human rights and justice, service delivery, and access to social services. Social workers recognize the historical, social, racial, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. Social workers understand and critique the history and current structures of social policies and services and the role of policy in service delivery through rights-based, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist lenses. Social workers influence policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation within their practice settings with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers actively engage in and advocate for anti-racist and anti-oppressive policy practice to effect change in those settings.

Social workers:

1. Use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services; and
2. Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

## **Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, and privilege as well as their personal values and personal experiences may affect their ability to engage effectively with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers use the principles of interprofessional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate.

Social workers:

1. Apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies; and
2. Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with clients and constituencies.

## **Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in culturally responsive assessment with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Assessment involves a collaborative process of defining presenting challenges and identifying strengths with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to develop a mutually agreed-upon plan. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and use interprofessional collaboration in this process. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, privilege, and their personal values and experiences may affect their assessment and decision making.

Social workers:

1. Apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies; and
2. Demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan.

## **Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior, person-in-environment, and other interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in selecting culturally responsive interventions with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed interventions and participate in interprofessional collaboration to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers facilitate effective transitions and endings.

Social workers:

1. Engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals; and
2. Incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers evaluate processes and outcomes to increase practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers apply anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers use qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness. qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.

Social workers:

1. Select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes; and
2. Critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

## **CLINICAL PRACTICE SPECIALIZATION**

The clinical practice specialization builds upon the strengths-based and ecological practice perspectives of the generalist curriculum by extending, expanding, and enhancing students' abilities to effectively engage in advanced clinical practice. This requires the integration of culturally appropriate generalist and clinical practice theories, and intervention methods as applied to individuals and related systems. Theoretical perspectives include empowerment, strengths approach, attachment, child development, risk and resiliency, trauma, cognitive neuroscience, family systems, cognitive behavior, and psychodynamics—all of which are enhanced by the person-in-the-environment perspective. These theoretical underpinnings support student skill acquisition and development through clinical specialization courses with a firm grounding in engagement, diagnostic assessment, problem-solving, social policy, evidence-informed treatment approaches, and practice evaluation. Integrated in the teaching of all clinical approaches, is an intentional focus on attending to the diverse needs and rights of every individual, with a dedicated emphasis on those who are underserved. Clinical students also learn to recognize and comprehend the significance of continuous self-reflection and to minimize the impact of bias, power, and privilege within the therapeutic relationship. Clinical practice experiences also address the needs and rights of all persons, promoting social and economic justice.

### **Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**

Practitioners in clinical social work recognize the importance of the therapeutic relationship, the person-in-environment, the strengths perspectives, the use of evidenced-based practice, professional use of self with clients, along with adherence to ethical clinical guidelines of professional behavior. Practitioners in clinical social work recognize their role on inter-professional teams in practice and the ethical use of technology tools for clinical social work practice. Practitioners in clinical social work understand and

apply ethical standards, modeling ethical use of treatment modalities in practice (adapted from the CSWE training example).

Social workers:

1. Present as a social work professional (e.g., dress, self-management, professional language, communications, behaviors)
2. Demonstrate professional use of self with client;
3. Identify professional strengths, limitations and challenges;
4. Demonstrate their role on inter-professional teams in practice;
5. Develop, manage, and maintain therapeutic relationships with clients within the person-in-environment and strengths perspectives;
6. Use technology tools ethically for clinical social work practice; and
7. Demonstrate ethical use of clinical modalities in practice.

## **Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice**

Practitioners in clinical social work demonstrate a deep understanding and application of social justice principles, acknowledging the inherent human rights of every individual irrespective of societal position. Going beyond mental health support and intervention, clinical social workers possess extensive knowledge of historical and intersecting injustices, such as oppression and racism, and are committed to addressing these issues within their practice. They actively recognize the adverse effects of oppressive structural barriers and advocate for strategies that dismantle these obstacles, striving for the equitable distribution of social resources, rights, and responsibilities. Through their dedication, clinical social workers safeguard civil, political, economic, social, and cultural human rights. By actively working towards eliminating barriers and promoting equity, they integrate social, racial, economic, and environmental justice into their practice, thereby empowering and nurturing the well-being of their clients through their unwavering respect for human rights.

Social workers:

1. Actively work to protect civil, political, economic, social, and cultural human rights for their clients;
2. Assess, intervene, and advocate for clients in ways that promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice;
3. Advocate for interventions that dismantle oppressive structural barriers and promote the equitable distribution of social resources, rights, and responsibilities;
4. Actively engage in inter- and intra-professional relationships that contribute to systemic change and advocacy at the individual and broader systems levels; and
5. Provide inclusive care, respecting the dignity and unique needs of individuals from diverse backgrounds.

## **Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice**

Clinical social workers possess an advanced understanding of how racism and oppression shape human experiences across individual, family, group, organizational, community, and policy domains. They actively engage in anti-racist practice, recognizing the pervasive impact of privilege and oppression. Clinical social workers grasp the influence of diversity and intersectionality on identity development, equity, and inclusion, considering factors such as age, class, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, nationality, immigration status, race, religion, and sexual orientation and gender identity. They comprehend the societal and historical roots of social and racial injustices, as well as the mechanisms of oppression and discrimination. Furthermore, they embrace cultural humility and acknowledge how a

culture's structures and values create privilege and power, leading to systemic oppression. Through this advanced understanding, clinical social workers are self-reflective, address power dynamics, promote social justice, and actively contribute to transformative change in their professional roles and the communities they serve.

Social workers:

1. Actively engage in anti-racist clinical practice, acknowledging and addressing the pervasive impact of privilege and oppression;
2. Use a cultural humility framework in their clinical work as evidenced by openness, respect, and a willingness to learn from diverse perspectives;
3. Continuously examine their own biases, privileges, and positions of power, and work to create equitable and empowering relationships with their clients; and
4. Provide culturally responsive treatments, respecting the dignity and unique needs of individuals from diverse backgrounds.

#### **Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice**

Social workers actively utilize research to inform their clinical decision-making processes, evaluating current empirical research and engaging in advanced clinical research practices. This includes assessing treatment outcomes, ensuring quality assurance, and conducting program evaluations, all approached from an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective. They integrate the knowledge, experiences, and perspectives gained through direct engagement with clients, communities, and systems to shape their research endeavors, thereby contributing to the ongoing development and enhancement of social work interventions, policies, and programs. Additionally, clinical social workers effectively communicate research findings to diverse audiences, recognizing the value of evidence from a range of interprofessional and diverse research sources. By integrating these competencies, clinical social workers actively contribute to knowledge building, evidence-based practice, and the overall improvement of client outcomes.

Social workers:

1. Consistently seek and evaluate current empirical research to inform their clinical practice and ensure that their interventions are evidence-based;
2. Engage in advanced clinical research practices, including assessing treatment outcomes, ensuring quality assurance, and conducting program evaluations while employing rigorous research methodologies and ethical considerations in these endeavors;
3. Critically examine research designs, results, and conclusions to identify and address any inherent biases or oppressive elements;
4. Draw upon their knowledge, experiences, and insights gained from direct engagement with clients, communities, and systems to shape their use of research. in ways that are relevant and meaningful to clinical social work practice; and
5. Adapt their communication strategies ensuring that clinical research findings are accessible and applicable to various stakeholders, including clients, colleagues, policymakers, and other professionals.

#### **Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice**

Social workers identify and advocate for social policy reform at local, state, federal, and global levels to enhance access to and delivery of clinical services, promoting well-being, human rights, and justice in all areas. They identify and address historical, social, racial, cultural, economic, organizational,

environmental, and global influences on social policy and clinical care, employing a rights-based, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist lens. Social workers engage in clinically informed policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation, collaborating with individuals. Through proactively advocating for anti-racist and anti-oppressive policy practice, they strive to effect change in clinical settings, contributing to a more equitable and inclusive society.

Social workers:

1. Exert efforts to drive transformative change within clinical settings that contribute to equity and inclusivity.
2. Utilize a social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive perspective to evaluate how social welfare policies impact the accessibility and delivery of clinical services; and
3. Utilize clinically informed critical thinking to recommend policies that promote human rights, social justice, and equitable access to clinical services.

### **Competency 6: Engage with Individuals**

Social workers employ effective engagement strategies in their clinical practice, utilizing advanced clinical theories to navigate the complex dynamics with individuals. They prioritize self-reflection to address biases, power dynamics, privileges, personal values, and experiences that may influence their interactions with diverse clients. By embracing interprofessional collaboration, clinical social workers facilitate meaningful engagement with clients, constituents, and other professionals, promoting a wholistic approach to client care that supports positive outcomes.

Social workers:

1. Use advanced developmental, systems, and clinical practice theories to engage clients and constituents in the promotion positive goal attainment; and
2. Actively create inclusive and supportive clinical environments by employing empathy, reflection, and appropriate use of self to engage clients in culturally responsive interactions.

### **Competency 7: Assess Individuals**

Clinical social workers, apply specialized knowledge and skills to conduct comprehensive assessments that inform the delivery of effective interventions. Further, they draw on developmental, systems, and clinical practice theories in conducting culturally responsive assessments with diverse clients and constituents. Through a collaborative process with clients and constituents, social workers use assessment data to define challenges, identify strengths, and develop mutually agreed-upon intervention plans. They consider the larger practice context and engage in interprofessional collaboration as needed, while remaining self-reflective and aware of biases, power dynamics, privilege, and personal values that may influence the assessment process and decision-making.

Social workers:

1. Conduct comprehensive clinical assessments by completing thorough assessment reports, utilizing appropriate assessment tools and techniques that adhere to professional clinical and social work standards and guidelines.
2. Apply specialized knowledge and theories to their clinical assessment practices, incorporating feedback from clients and colleagues to ensure the cultural sensitivity of the assessments.
3. Effectively utilize assessment data to inform the development of clinical intervention plans.



## **Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals**

Clinical social workers recognize that clinical intervention is an ongoing and integral component of advanced social work practice. They possess a deep understanding of developmental, systems, and clinical practice theories which provides the framework for the selection of culturally responsive evidence-based interventions with individuals. Drawing on their clinical practice abilities, they tailor interventions to meet the unique needs of their clients, by skillfully identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed approaches supported by the latest research and best practices. Through active engagement in interprofessional collaboration, they work alongside other professionals to achieve client goals using a coordinated and wholistic approach. Additionally, they facilitate effective transitions and endings, ensuring smooth and well-supported processes with clients and constituents.

Social workers:

1. Apply relevant developmental, systems, and clinical practice theories effectively when working with individuals.
2. Skillfully analyze evidence-informed approaches for integration into practice utilizing the latest research and best practices to guide decision-making and intervention strategies.
3. Consistently implement culturally responsive evidence-based interventions that align with the unique needs of clients.
4. Actively engage in collaborative efforts with other professionals, fostering interprofessional teamwork and coordination to achieve client goals.
5. Facilitate effective transitions and endings, ensuring smooth and well-supported processes with clients and constituents.

## **Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals**

Clinical social workers recognize that evaluation is integral to their work with diverse individuals. They assess processes and outcomes, aiming to improve service delivery and facilitate goal achievement. With a commitment to equity and all areas of justice, they use appropriate evaluation techniques that are culturally appropriate and sensitive to the needs of the populations they serve. Drawing on research methodologies and clinical practice theories, they critically evaluate outcomes and identify areas for improvement. By utilizing qualitative and quantitative methods, they gather data to evaluate their clinical practice and make informed decisions for the betterment of their clients.

Social workers:

1. Consistently assess clinical practice outcomes, utilizing appropriate research informed designs and evaluation techniques that are culturally sensitive and aligned with the needs of diverse individuals.
2. Proactively identify areas for improvement in service delivery by critically evaluating outcomes, drawing on research methodologies and clinical practice theories, and implementing evidence-based interventions and change strategies based on evaluation findings.