



Social Workers
Registration Board

Kāhui Whakamana Tauwhiro

GENERAL SCOPE OF PRACTICE 2017

POLICY STATEMENT

Social Work – General Scope of Practice SWRB 2017

Social workers are employed in various positions. Some of these positions are not titled 'social worker.'

General Scope of Practice:

Social workers are registered professionals who are educated to work collaboratively with clients and communities to assess, manage and evaluate individual and interpersonal situations incorporating analysis of environmental, cultural, structural, societal and economic issues.

Social work seeks to enable and empower people and their communities to address life challenges, enhance well-being and challenge societal barriers. Across a variety of practice settings, social workers use indigenous, social sciences and humanities knowledge, social work theories, skills, strategies and interventions.

Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work practice.

Social workers assess and manage risk, trauma and safety and apply critical thinking and professional judgment.

Social workers create and review social policy, undertake socio-political research, community development, community organising, networking and advocacy in relation to social justice, poverty and inequality.

Social workers use their expertise in professional and/or team leadership, social work management, supervision, coaching, mentoring, teaching and tutoring social work, and advisory roles.

Such practice is undertaken in accordance with Te Tiriti o Waitangi based practice, the IFSW IASSW joint definition of social work, the Social Work Registration Board's Code of Conduct and 10 core competencies, the ANZASW's Code of Ethics and within the generally accepted standards relevant to the individual social worker's area of practice and level of expertise.

What is the Practice of Social Work?

To assist interpretation, especially for persons in non-traditional or role-emergent practice contexts, the SWRB developed a definition of the practice of social work which is set out below:

The Practice of Social Work – what do social workers do?

The Social Workers Registration Board defines the practice of social work as the following:

1. Wherever possible, establishing collaborative relationships with clients and their communities to overcome barriers and obtain support, based on an understanding of their history and the personal, spiritual, whānau, social, and cultural meanings of who they are and what they want to achieve. 'Client' includes but is not limited to individuals, family, whānau, hapū, iwi, groups, organisations, communities, staff, supervisees and students.
2. The assessment and evaluation of client situations and needs incorporating analysis of structural, cultural, social and economic issues using indigenous, social sciences and humanities knowledge, social work theories, skills, strategies and interventions.
3. Across a wide range of practice settings work collaboratively with clients to:
 - a. Identify, explore and assess strengths, needs, situations, and support networks and understand the client's perspective in order to determine and prioritise goals;
 - b. Analyse micro, meso and macro influences on clients and the client's social system;
 - c. Develop plans to enhance client well-being;
 - d. Enhance their well-being, resilience and ability to cope with major life stresses such as grief, loss, trauma and other major events and challenges. The focus of this work may be at personal and/or systemic levels;
 - e. Research, assess and refer clients to community resources. This includes working with clients to develop their capacity and confidence to advocate for themselves or providing or arranging advocacy for people who do not have a voice, as well as negotiating and challenging institutional barriers.
 - f. Review and reflect on goals, plans, situations and modify these if required.
4. Apply critical thinking and professional judgement to assess and manage risk where there is potential or actual abuse, neglect or harm to self and others. Interventions may include the use of statutory power.
5. Direct practice with clients in the context of a 'front line' role which may include counselling and case management. This could be as a sole practitioner or in a team or roopu.

6. Professional and/or team leadership, social work management, supervision, coaching, mentoring, consultancy and advisory roles where the person influences the practice of social work. 'Practice' is wider than 'front line' social work and may be paid or voluntary.
7. Teaching and tutoring social work practice, theory and skills.
8. Social policy analysis, policy creation and review and practice development, as well as socio-political research.
9. International, social and community development; community organising, networking and advocacy in relation to social justice, poverty and inequality. Maximizing strengths or assets already existing in communities; developing and supporting groups or organisations to build resilience and enhance social well-being and functioning.
10. Engaging in processes to ensure competence in the above.