

Techniques and Guidelines for

Social Work Practice

F I F T H



E D I T I O N



Bradford W. Sheafor Charles R. Horejsi Gloria A. Horejsi



Techniques and Guidelines for Social Work Practice

F I F T H E D I T I O N

Bradford W. Sheafor

Colorado State University

Charles R. Horejsi

The University of Montana

Gloria A. Horejsi

*Community Medical Center
Missoula, Montana*



ALLYN AND BACON

Boston London Toronto Sydney Tokyo Singapore

Series Editor, Social Work and Family Therapy: Judy Fifer
Vice President, Editor in Chief, Social Sciences: Karen Hanson
Editorial Assistant: Julianna Cancio
Marketing Manager: Jackie Aaron
Executive Marketing Manager: Lisa Kimball
Editorial-Production Administrator: Annette Joseph
Editorial-Production Coordinator: Susan Freese
Editorial-Production Service: TKM Productions
Design and Electronic Composition: Denise Hoffman
Composition Buyer: Linda Cox
Manufacturing Buyer: Julie McNeill
Cover Administrator: Linda Knowles



Copyright © 2000, 1997, 1994, 1991, 1988 by Allyn & Bacon
A Pearson Education Company
160 Gould Street
Needham Heights, MA 02494
Internet: www.abacon.com

All rights reserved. No part of the material protected by this copyright notice may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without the written permission of the copyright owner.

Between the time website information is gathered and then published, it is not unusual for some sites to have closed. Also, the transcription of URLs can result in unintended typographical errors. The publisher would appreciate being notified of any problems with URLs so that they may be corrected in subsequent editions. Thank you.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Sheafor, Bradford W.

Techniques and guidelines for social work practice / Bradford W.
Sheafor, Charles R. Horejsi, Gloria A. Horejsi. — 5th ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-205-29555-X

1. Social service—United States. I. Horejsi, Charles R.
II. Horejsi, Gloria A. III. Title.

HV91.S48 1999

361.3'2—dc21

98-43814

CIP

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 04 03 02 01 00 99

Techniques and Guidelines for Social Work Practice

***To the next generation of social workers
who have chosen to devote their time and talents to
the service of others and the struggle for social justice***

and

To our families

***Nadine, Laura, Brandon, Perry, Christopher,
Angela, Martin, and Katherine
for their love and support***



P R E F A C E

An increasing number of people are influenced, directly and indirectly, by the decisions and actions of social workers. Working in courts, clinics, hospitals, schools, businesses, private practice, and a myriad of social agencies, social workers deliver a wide variety of services directly to clients while they also work toward positive community and social changes. The whole society benefits from social workers' activities because improving the quality of life for an individual, a family, or the people of a community will ultimately have an impact on the general society and elevate the health, happiness, safety, and productivity of all its members.

This book is about what social workers actually do when helping their clients solve problems and/or enhance functioning. Although many excellent books describe the general principles and theories used by social workers, *Techniques and Guidelines for Social Work Practice*, Fifth Edition, focuses on a more concrete level. It describes many of the basic techniques and guidelines that social workers use in everyday practice.

Recognizing that this emphasis on techniques and specific guidelines is unusual in a social work book, we offer the reader an explanation of why we believe this collection of practice tools is needed. It is our perception that most social workers have been exposed to a wide variety of practice theories and conceptual frameworks reported in the literature and taught in social work education programs.* Although that knowledge base is essential, practice is much more than a set of ideas. In reality, practice is a set of actions and behaviors by the social worker. Clients are not directly affected by theory; rather, they are influenced by what the worker actually does—by the specific actions taken by the social worker. In the Foreword to the first edition of this book (1988), Barbara Solomon clearly articulated this point and placed techniques and guidelines into perspective:

It is the utilization of theory to determine practice that distinguishes the professional from the technician. However, our theoretical framework may provide insights as to how a problem develops and even in general terms what we ought to do to resolve it, but rarely will it specify our actions. An ecological systems frame of reference, for example, might dictate that a particular client should be referred to a community resource. It will not, however, specify *how* that referral should be made. Furthermore, no theoretical orientation goes so far as to point out the most effective ways for the social worker to utilize the telephone, testify in court, write a report, use supervision, or engage in many of the activities often considered essential to the social work change process and, therefore, included in this handbook. (p. xi)

* A short synopsis of many of these basic frameworks is included in Chapter 6, "Practice Frameworks for Social Work."

Our emphasis is not intended to suggest that attention to the techniques can or should replace attention to theoretical frameworks. Rather, techniques and specific guidelines complete the package of knowledge and skills that the social worker needs.

Plan and Structure

This book has four major parts. Parts I and II describe basic concepts and principles of practice that lay the foundation for understanding the 160 specific techniques and guidelines found in Parts III and IV.

Part I, “Social Work and the Social Worker,” reviews background knowledge and characteristics we believe a social worker must possess, including the following:

- A clear conception of the domain of social work and the competencies the social worker is expected to bring to the change process (Chapter 1)
- An understanding of the challenges a social worker faces in merging his or her personal life with professional roles and responsibilities (Chapter 2)
- The native talents or artistic abilities necessary for perceptively creating and entering into the interpersonal relations that are at the heart of practice (Chapter 3)
- A commitment to draw on and apply the science of social work, the profession’s knowledge base, and its ethical principles (Chapter 3)

Part II, “The Building Blocks of Social Work Practice,” stresses the need for the social worker to understand the roles, principles, theories, and change and decision-making processes that are the central features of effective helping. To serve clients ranging from individuals to communities, a social worker must have:

- An understanding of the varied roles performed by social workers in delivering human services and the specific functions associated with these roles (Chapter 4)
- The ability to apply the fundamental practice principles of social work (Chapter 5)
- A basic knowledge of the various perspectives, theories, and models that have proven useful in practice (Chapter 6)
- Skill in guiding clients through the change process and helping them make sound decisions about how to improve their lives (Chapter 7)

From this point to the end of the book, we present specific techniques and guidelines. Each presentation follows the same format or structure. It begins with a technique or guideline **Number** and **Name** (e.g., 11.3: Making a Referral). In this example, 11.3 signifies the third technique or guideline in Chapter 11. This system of numbering is used to refer the reader to related information in other parts of the

book. These numbers are also keys to using the *Cross-Reference Guide*, which is intended to help the reader locate techniques useful when working with specific client groups.

Following each number and name is a one-sentence description of *Purpose*. This very brief statement is intended to help the reader quickly determine if the technique or guideline is relevant to his or her concern or interest.

Under the heading labeled *Discussion*, anywhere from a few to many paragraphs are used to describe the technique or guideline and its application. After the discussion is completed, we present a *Selected Bibliography*, which usually lists three to five books or articles that we consider particularly useful for obtaining additional information. We have made an effort to identify sources that are current and available in most university libraries.

In Part III of the book, “Techniques Common to All Social Work Practice,” we have included techniques that strengthen the social worker’s performance regardless of agency setting and independent of whether the client is an individual, family, group, organization, or community. Underlying our selection was the belief that the social worker must:

- Have the interpersonal competence to carry out effective communication and engage in a set of basic helping activities (Chapter 8)
- Be skilled at organizing the details of service delivery and effectively managing his or her own workload (Chapter 9)
- Be able to maintain a pattern of personal and professional growth and development that keeps him or her current, enriched, and energized (Chapter 10)

Part IV, “Techniques and Guidelines for Phases of the Planned Change Process,” lists techniques and guidelines for both direct and indirect practice in chapters organized around the five phases of the change process. Although various authors use differing descriptions of this process, we have elected to use the following:

- Intake and Engagement (Chapter 11)
- Data Collection and Assessment (Chapter 12)
- Planning and Contracting (Chapter 13)
- Intervention and Monitoring (Chapter 14)
- Evaluation and Termination (Chapter 15)

In this edition, we have expanded our descriptions of what should be accomplished in these phases in the introduction to each chapter. We then refined the general concepts to more clearly describe the direct practice applications (Section A) and the indirect practice applications (Section B) of those chapters. A worker can readily examine several suggested techniques or guidelines by identifying the phase of the change process, determining if the activity is a direct or indirect intervention, and then locating the appropriate chapter and section.

Although 160 different techniques and guidelines are described in Parts III and IV of this book, many more exist. We have selected a sufficient range with the intent that one or more will be useful in most practice situations. If not, the ***Suggested Readings*** will lead the worker to other approaches. Most of these techniques need not be applied rigidly. They should be approached with the idea of both *adopting* and *adapting* them for practice.

Definition of Terms

Writing about social work practice inherently presents some language problems. One has to read only a few social work texts or articles to become at least a little confused with the terminology used to describe practice. Perhaps that is to be expected in a profession that focuses on complex and dynamic human and social interactions. This book cannot overcome these long-standing problems of terminology, nor can it present definitions that will be acceptable to every reader. Yet the ideas presented here will be more readily understood if we make the meanings of three terms more explicit.

The reader should be alert to the term ***client***. Common usage implies a narrow view of an individual who is the consumer of services. As used in this book, the term has a broader connotation. The client of the social worker may be an individual, a family or another form of household, or even a small group, committee, organization, neighborhood, community, or larger social system. Throughout the book, the term *client* is occasionally expanded to mention *clienteles*, *clients*, *client groups*, or *client systems*, reminding the reader that the narrow definition of client is not intended.

A ***technique*** is viewed as a circumscribed, goal-oriented behavior performed in a practice situation by the social worker. It is a planned action deliberately taken by the practitioner. The application of a simple technique (e.g., using an “I-message”) may take only a few seconds, whereas more complex techniques (e.g., family sculpting) may require an hour or more.

Guidelines, by comparison, are a set of directions intended to influence the social worker’s behavior and decisions. Guidelines are essentially lists of do’s and don’ts. They might be used when working with a specific type of client (e.g., a child, a client with a mental illness) or when carrying out workload management tasks (e.g., recording or writing reports).

Supplements for Instructors

For instructors using this book in their classes, two supportive resources are available. First, we have placed a document entitled “Ideas for Teaching from *Techniques and Guidelines for Social Work Practice*” on Allyn and Bacon’s website (see

<http://www.abacon.com/sheafor>). In that material, we describe ways we have used the materials in this book to help beginning-level students learn to serve clients using social work's knowledge, ethical prescriptions, as well as specific techniques and guidelines that will enhance their practice effectiveness. Second, this Fifth Edition of *Techniques and Guidelines* is the first to have an Instructor's Manual. This manual can be obtained from your regional Allyn and Bacon representative or by writing Allyn and Bacon (160 Gould Street, Needham Heights, MA 02494).

Acknowledgments

We would like to recognize a number of people who have contributed to the techniques and guidelines we present in this book, including current and former students and professional colleagues who have graciously given their time and expertise to offer constructive criticisms on selected sections of this book. A special thank-you is extended to each of the following individuals:

- Leslie Adler, M.S.W.; Allison Campbell, M.S.W.; Terri Gorman, M.S.W.; Jan Overmyer, M.S.W.; Christine Stevens, M.S.W.; and Jennifer York, M.S.W. (direct practice evaluation)
- Angeline Barretta-Herman, Ph.D. (staff meetings)
- Barbara Benjamin, M.S.W.; Bob Jackson, Ph.D.; Lowell Jenkins, M.S.W.; and Randy Wood, M.S.W. (practice frameworks)
- Mary Birch, M.S.W. (small groups)
- Jo Ann Blake, M.A.; Lance Eller, B.S.W.; and Mark Long (chemical dependency)
- Charlotte Booth, M.S.W. (hard-to-reach clients)
- Vicky Buchan, Ph.D., and Charles Neidt, Ph.D. (understanding quantitative data)
- Robert Deaton, Ed.D. (suicide)
- Jerry Finn, Ph.D. (using electronic technology)
- Kathleen Gallacher, M.A., and Kristin Dahl Horejsi, M.S. (child development)
- Cindy Garthwait, M.S.W. (working with the elderly)
- Sr. Anne Hogan, M.S.W.; Ryan Tolleson-Knee, M.S.W.; and Shaen McElravy, M.S.W. (merging person and profession)
- Helen Holmquist, B.A. (eating disorders)
- Ken Hoole, M.S.W. and Suzanne Grubaugh, B.S.W. (gay and lesbian issues)
- Mike Jakupcak, Ed.D.; Bill LaForest, M.S.W.; and George Camp, Ph.D. (mental retardation)
- Dan Morgan, M.S.W., and Cindy Bartling, M.S.W. (children and adolescents)
- Kevin Oltjenbruns, Ph.D. (grief and loss)
- Peter Pecora, Ph.D. (evaluation)
- Jeannette Sale, B.S.W., Kelly Slattery-Robinson, B.S.W., and Frank Clark, Ph.D. (battered women)
- Mona Schatz, D.S.W. (social work roles and functions)
- Barbara W. Shank, Ph.D. (sexual misconduct)

- Michael Silverglat, M.D., and Mel Mason, M.S.W. (psychotropic medication and mental illness)
- John Spores, Ph.D.; Iris Heavy Runner, M.S.W.; Rodney Brod, Ph.D.; Victor A. Baez, Ph.D.; and Janet Finn, Ph.D. (cross-cultural interaction)
- Elizabeth Tracy, Ph.D., and James Whittaker, Ph.D. (social support assessment)
- Sue Wilkins, B.S.W. (involuntary and manipulative clients)

We also express our appreciation to Sue Polich (The University of Montana), who typed several portions of this book, and to Joyce Takacs, Linda Tippet, Karen Scott, Dawn Carlson, and Karla Burleson (Colorado State University), who helped create a work environment that facilitated the completion of this manuscript.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the following individuals, who reviewed previous editions of this book: Mary Boes, University of Northern Iowa; Joan Dworkin, California State University–Sacramento; Patricia Ann Guillory, Southern University at New Orleans; Larry Lister, University of Hawaii at Manoa; Santos Torres, Jr., University of Pittsburg; and Kay van Buskirk, Mankato State University.

Techniques and Guidelines for Social Work Practice

C O N T E N T S

Preface	xvii
----------------	-------------

PART I Social Work and the Social Worker I

CHAPTER I

The Domain of the Social Work Profession 3

The Social Work Domain	4
<i>Social Work's Purpose</i>	4
<i>Social Work's Focus</i>	7
<i>Social Work's Scope</i>	8
<i>Social Work's Sanction</i>	9
An Overview of Social Work Practice	10
Conclusion	14
Selected Bibliography	14

CHAPTER 2

Merging Person with Profession 15

Selecting Social Work as a Career	16
<i>Social Work as a Life Companion</i>	16
<i>The School-to-Job Transition</i>	16
<i>Earning a Living as a Social Worker</i>	18
Establishing Oneself as a Social Worker	19
<i>Acquiring a Reputation</i>	19
<i>Conflict over Agency Policy</i>	20
<i>Promoting Social Justice</i>	22
<i>Political Involvement</i>	23
The Interplay of One's Personal and Professional Lives	24
<i>Being Changed by Clients</i>	25
<i>Personal Responses to the Client in Need</i>	25
<i>The Social Worker's Family</i>	26
A Fitness Program for the Social Worker	27
<i>Friendships and Community</i>	27
<i>Self-Worth and Self-Image</i>	28

<i>Physical and Emotional Well-Being</i>	28
<i>Intellectual Growth</i>	30
<i>Religion and Spirituality</i>	31
<i>Artistic Expression</i>	32
Having Fun in Social Work	33
Conclusion	34
Selected Bibliography	34

CHAPTER 3

Merging the Person's Art with the Profession's Science 36

The Social Worker as Artist	36
<i>Compassion and Courage</i>	37
<i>Professional Relationship</i>	37
<i>Creativity</i>	38
<i>Hopefulness and Energy</i>	39
<i>Judgment</i>	40
<i>Personal Values</i>	40
<i>Professional Style</i>	43
The Social Worker as Scientist	43
<i>Knowledge Regarding Social Phenomena</i>	45
<i>Knowledge Regarding Social Conditions and Social Problems</i>	46
<i>Knowledge Regarding the Social Work Profession</i>	47
<i>Knowledge Regarding Social Work Practice</i>	49
Conclusion	52
Selected Bibliography	52

PART II The Building Blocks of Social Work Practice 53

CHAPTER 4

The Roles and Functions Performed by Social Workers 55

Defining Professional Roles	55
1. <i>The Social Worker as Broker</i>	56
2. <i>The Social Worker as Advocate</i>	57
3. <i>The Social Worker as Teacher</i>	58
4. <i>The Social Worker as Counselor/Clinician</i>	59
5. <i>The Social Worker as Case Manager</i>	60
6. <i>The Social Worker as Workload Manager</i>	62
7. <i>The Social Worker as Staff Developer</i>	63
8. <i>The Social Worker as Administrator</i>	64
9. <i>The Social Worker as Social Change Agent</i>	65

10. <i>The Social Worker as Professional</i>	66
Conclusion	67
Selected Bibliography	67

CHAPTER 5

Guiding Principles for Social Workers 68

Principles Focused on the Social Worker as a Professional Person	68
1. <i>The Social Worker Should Practice Social Work</i>	68
2. <i>The Social Worker Should Engage in Conscious Use of Self</i>	69
3. <i>The Social Worker Should Maintain Professional Objectivity</i>	70
4. <i>The Social Worker Should Respect Human Diversity</i>	70
5. <i>The Social Worker Should Seek Personal and Professional Growth</i>	71
Principles That Guide Practice Activities	71
6. <i>The Social Worker Should Do No Harm</i>	71
7. <i>The Social Worker Should Engage in Conscious Knowledge-Guided Practice</i>	72
8. <i>The Social Worker Should Engage in Conscious Value-Guided and Ethical Practice</i>	72
9. <i>The Social Worker Should Be Concerned with the Whole Person</i>	73
10. <i>The Social Worker Should Treat the Client with Dignity</i>	74
11. <i>The Social Worker Should Individualize the Client</i>	74
12. <i>The Social Worker Should Lend Vision to the Client</i>	75
13. <i>The Social Worker Should Build on Client Strengths</i>	75
14. <i>The Social Worker Should Maximize Client Participation</i>	76
15. <i>The Social Worker Should Maximize Client Self-Determination</i>	76
16. <i>The Social Worker Should Help the Client Learn Self-Directed Problem-Solving Skills</i>	77
17. <i>The Social Worker Should Maximize Client Empowerment</i>	77
18. <i>The Social Worker Should Protect Client Confidentiality</i>	78
19. <i>The Social Worker Should Adhere to the Philosophy of Normalization</i>	79
20. <i>The Social Worker Should Continuously Evaluate the Progress of the Change Process</i>	79
21. <i>The Social Worker Should Be Accountable to Clients, Agency, Community, and the Social Work Profession</i>	80
Conclusion	80
Selected Bibliography	81

CHAPTER 6

Practice Frameworks for Social Work 82

Requirements of a Practice Framework	82
Guidelines for Selecting a Practice Framework	83
Selected Practice Frameworks	86

<i>Selected Practice Perspectives</i>	86
The Generalist Perspective	87
The General Systems Perspective	89
The Ecosystems Perspective	91
The Strengths Perspective	93
The Ethnic-Sensitive Perspective	94
The Feminist Perspective	95
<i>Selected Practice Theories and Models</i>	96
Practice Based on Psychodynamic Theory	97
Practice Based on Behavioral Theory	98
Practice Based on Cognitive-Behavioral Theory	99
Practice Based on Person-Centered Theory	100
The Interactional Model	100
The Structural Model	101
The Crisis Intervention Model	102
The Task-Centered Model	103
The Solution-Focused Model	104
Practice Based on the Family Therapies	105
Practice Based on Models of Family Preservation	107
Practice Based on the Clubhouse Model	108
Practice Based on Small Group Theories	109
Practice Based on the Addiction Model	111
Practice Based on Models of Self-Help	112
Models for Changing Organizations	113
Models for Changing Communities	116
Conclusion	117
Selected Bibliography	118

CHAPTER 7

Facilitating Change through Decision Making 119

Elements of the Change Process	119
The Context of Planned Change	122
Reasons Why Clients May Seek Change	123
<i>Individual Change</i>	123
<i>Family and Group Change</i>	123
<i>Organizational Change</i>	124
<i>Community Change</i>	124
Identifying the Actors in Planned Change	124
Phases of the Planned Change Process	125
Critical Thinking in Planned Change	127
Decision Making in Planned Change	130
Conclusion	132
Selected Bibliography	132

PART III Techniques Common to All Social Work Practice 133

CHAPTER 8

Basic Communication and Helping Skills 134

- 8.1 Basic Communication Skills 136
- 8.2 Creating an Effective Helping Relationship 140
- 8.3 Basic Helping Skills 143
- 8.4 Nonverbal Communication 156
- 8.5 The "I-Statement" 158
- 8.6 Understanding Emotions and Feelings 159
- 8.7 Responding to Defensive Communication 162
- 8.8 Cross-Cultural Helping 165

CHAPTER 9

Workload and Caseload Management 171

- 9.1 Managing Time at Work 172
- 9.2 Report Writing 175
- 9.3 Letter Writing 177
- 9.4 Using Information Technology 178
- 9.5 Effective Telephone Communications 184
- 9.6 Controlling Workload 185
- 9.7 Maintaining Casenotes for Narrative Recording 186
- 9.8 Problem-Oriented Recording (POR) and the SOAP Format 188
- 9.9 Process Recording 190
- 9.10 Testifying in Court 192
- 9.11 Dealing with Managed Care 194

CHAPTER 10

Personal and Professional Development 197

- 10.1 Getting a Social Work Job 197
- 10.2 Elements of Professional Behavior 200
- 10.3 Using Agency Supervision 202
- 10.4 Presenting to a Professional Audience 204
- 10.5 Writing to a Professional Audience 207
- 10.6 Coping with Bureaucracy 211
- 10.7 Stress Management 213
- 10.8 Using Humor in Social Work 216
- 10.9 Making Ethical Decisions 219
- 10.10 Avoiding Malpractice Suits 225